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# GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (GEAP) 2021-2025

March 2022



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# 1 Message from the CEO

I am very pleased to present Pyrenees Shire Council's Gender Equality Plan 2022-25.

Gender equality in the workplace is important to help our staff and community thrive, and we know this because research shows societies with greater gender equality have better outcomes for everyone.

This plan helps cement and guide practices and process we have been putting in place to build an equal workplace for our staff. Our goal is to make sure all our staff and community members have access to equal opportunities and resources, regardless of their background or gender.



While we have been working towards gender equality at Council, we know there is more we can do to create an equitable workplace and to lead the way for gender equality in our community.

This includes looking at the gender composition at all levels of the workforce; recruitment and promotion policies, practices, and language; equal pay rates for staff doing the same job; flexible leave and working arrangements; and zero tolerance for sexism, discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Our Gender Equality Plan covers our objectives and strategies to continue creating an equitable workplace, with our goal to be an employer of choice for gender equality.

We are committed to leading the way for our staff and community for gender equity, and we look forward to working with our staff members over the next four years to help us continue to achieve equality in our workplace.

Mr Jim Nolan CEO Pyrenees Shire Council



# **2** INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1 Background

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires each council to address its obligations to promote gender equality in the workplace, consider gender equality when developing policies and programs and delivering services to the public.

Gender equality is an important social and economic goal. Societies with greater gender equality have lower rates of violence towards women and children, and better outcomes for women in terms of social, political, and economic participation.

Pyrenees Shire Council understands its pivotal leadership role to advance gender equality within the organisation and within the community and in the design and delivery of Council's services and programs.

Council recognises that improving gender equality for women is an important issue and has endorsed the development of Council's first Gender Equality Action Plan, which will guide actions over the next four years. The Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025 is an internal Council document that will provide an integrated whole-of-Council approach to increase gender equality for women within the Council. The Plan guides initiatives to address gender equality across Council.

Pyrenees Shire Council will achieve its objectives through promoting, auditing, delivering on action plans, conducting gender impact assessments, and reporting to the Gender Equality Commission every two years.

Under section 46 (4) of the Local Government Act 2020, the Chief Executive Officer also has obligations to develop and maintain a Workforce Plan. The overarching principle of workforce planning is to ensure that the Pyrenees Shire Council has assessed, planned, and reviewed its current state and future requirements to deliver on our Council Plan and strategy commitments.

Council has already been active in the space of gender equality in the past. It is a member of the "Communities of Respect & Equality Alliance" (CORE) through Women's Health Grampians and participated in the Act@Work program as well as the "Listen, Learn, Lead" initiative by the Victorian State Government. The council has also embedded gender equality initiatives in strategic plans such as the Health and Wellbeing plan.

The Council also provides a culturally safe workplace through acknowledgement of country, implementation of Reconciliation Action Plan and participation in "Walk in my shoes" and "Harmony Day" activities.

The work under the Gender Equality Act and the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) will build and extend on the previous work.



# 2.2 Key terms and definitions

Gender Equality:	Is defined as the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, non – binary, trans and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, non-binary, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
Gender Equity:	Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
Sex:	Refers to a person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as male or female. Some people may not be exclusively male or female, which is referred to as intersex. Some people identify as neither male nor female (non-binary).
Gender:	Refers to the way a person in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex.
Trans and Gender Diverse:	Is an umbrella term used to describe all those gender identity is at odds with their biological sex.
Intersectionality:	Refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Aspects of a person's identity can include social characteristics such as: Aboriginality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, colour (of skin), nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status.



## 2.3 Vision

"Pyrenees to be an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality"

In achieving our vision, Council will build a more inclusive workplace for all women, men, non-binary and gender diverse people with or without other intersectional attributes.

# 2.4 Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) Objectives

Pyrenees Shire Council aims to continue the integration of gender, intersectionality, and equality in the workplace. To achieve this Pyrenees Shire Council will focus on the reduction of gender segregation throughout the workforce, more leadership opportunities for women, the development of training opportunities and closing the gender pay gap.

The following Gender Equality Principles in the Gender Equality Act 2020 have guided the development of this GEAP:

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

These principles are supported by the workplace gender equality indicators of:

- 1. Gender composition of governing bodies
- 2. Gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- 3. Gendered work segregation
- 4. Recruitment and promotion
- 5. Gender pay equality
- 6. Leave and flexibility
- 7. Workplace sexual harassment



# 2.5 Gender Equality Methodology

Consideration of intersectional factors have been key to the development of the GEAP 2021-2025. This recognises that people may experience multiple forms of disadvantage or discrimination related to sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability and/or any other attribute that may exacerbate gender inequality.

Preparation of the GEAP has involved the analysis of Pyrenees Shire Council's workforce baseline audit data and People Matter survey data according to the workplace gender equality indicators and intersectional factors.

This has highlighted priority areas for inclusion in the GEAP and for the further development of strategic documents and processes as outlined in this document.

The workforce baseline audit data analysis from the period of the 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 identified areas for potential further data collection and analysis. The data collection methods will mature and evolve to align with the data recording and requirements of the Commissioner. With the audit data being point in time information, our ability to provide more detailed responses will improve and mature over time as we take steps to align our internal reporting systems.

### 2.6 Employee and Council (Governing Body) Engagement

Employee engagement for Council's Workforce Gender Audit was undertaken through participation in the "People Matters Survey":

- The survey was conducted from the 1 June 2021 until 2 July 2021.
- Participation was voluntary and all staff were encouraged and given the opportunity to participate.
- Within Pyrenees Shire Council's workforce 60 staff members participated and a participation rate of 44% was achieved.

Before the survey took place, the Manager People & Culture attended multiple team meetings at various workplaces to inform staff about the Gender Equality Act and the purpose and importance of the "People Matters Survey". Furthermore, it was discussed at the Staff Consultative Committee, which includes union and employee representatives. Gender equality has become a permanent agenda item on its (Staff Consultative Committee) agenda.

The Gender Equality Act and the required GEAP were discussed with committee members at the Staff Consultative Committee meetings 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021; 5<sup>th</sup> May 20221; 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021; 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022. Furthermore, all along the consultation process multiple correspondence took place between Pyrenees Shire Council and the Australian Services Union and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation.

Councillors were briefed and consulted at a meeting on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in the presents of the Executive Leadership Team and the Manager People & Culture.



Two staff consultation sessions facilitated by Women's Health Grampians, were held to identify actions for inclusion into the GEAP. These sessions were attended by 45 staff with a gender breakdown – 73.5% women and 26.5% men.

The Draft was sent electronically to all staff for feedback. Three responses were received in the 5 working days feedback was open (1 verbal, 2 emails. Feedback was received by three staff with a gender breakdown – 33.3% women and 66.6% men. The feedback was considered and addressed as necessary in the final version of this plan.

The final draft was endorsed by the Staff Consultative Committee on 29 March 2022.

GEAP was discussed by Council (Governing Body) in the Council meeting held 19 April 2022. Council agreed to provide an appropriate level of resourcing to implement the Pyrenees Gender Equality Action Plan,



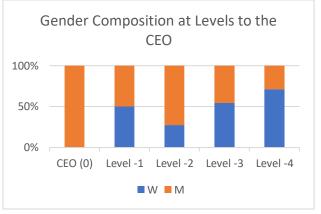
# 2.7 Summary Audit Findings

NOTE: the Audit findings were supported by the People Matter Survey (Summary is provided in Appendix 1.).

Findings from the Workforce Gender Audit include: Indicator 1 – Gender composition at all levels of the workforce

Gender Composition of the Workforce Pyrenees Shire Council has a total of 124 staff with the gender distribution of 61 per cent (n=76) women and 39 per cent (n=48) men. The gender audit did not include any self-describing gender data.

In the Pyrenees Shire Council (PSC) workplace men are over three times more likely than women to work in full-time employment and women are four times more likely than men to work in part-time employment.



Workforce by Gender Across Levels to the CEO

Men have a higher representation than the overall organisations gender composition in levels -2 to the CEO. Women have a higher representation in the -3 and -4 levels to the CEO.

#### Indicator 2 – Gender composition of governing bodies

Pyrenees Shire does not have gender balance with 80 per cent men (4) and 20 per cent women (1) on Council. The Mayor is a male in the 2021/22 year.

#### Indicator 3 – Pay equity

The overall pay gap using the average annualised base salary is 15.4 per cent in favour of men - this equates to \$13,201 /annum. This is higher than the current Victorian Public Service pay gap that is 10.7 per cent in favour of men.

For PSC the pay gap for:

- Median annualised base salary is 8.0 per cent in favour of men.
- Median total remuneration is 8.0 per cent in favour of men.

#### Indicator 4 – Sexual harassment in the workplace

Based on the Gender Audit, Pyrenees Shire Council received one formal sexual harassment complaint in the 12-month period ending 30 June 2021.

#### Indicator 5 – Recruitment and promotion practices



#### **Recruitment and Exits**

• There were zero recruitment and exits recorded in the Gender Audit during the reporting period.

#### Promotions

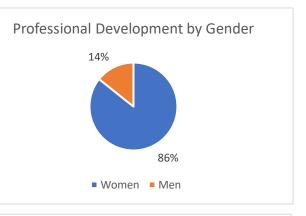
 There were zero promotions recorded in the Gender Audit during the reporting period.

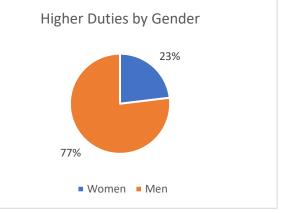
**Professional Development** 

 Seven people (6 women and 1 man) participated in professional training. This is 5.6 per cent of the workforce. 100 per cent of those undertaking training had full-time ongoing work.

**Higher Duties** 

 13 staff accessed higher duties during the reporting period – 3 women and 10 men.
 100 per cent of those undertaking higher duties had full-time ongoing work. Given the workplace gender split, a higher proportion of men appear to have been awarded higher duties during the reporting period.





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

- 11 people used formal flexible working arrangements in the 12 months to 30 June 2021, which equates to 8.8 per cent of the workforce.
- Three men used formal flexible working arrangements which is 2.4 per cent of total workforce and 6.3 per cent of the male workforce.
- Eight women use formal flexible working arrangements which is 6.5 per cent of the total workforce and 10.5 per cent of the female workforce.
- Two people took parental leave in the 12 months ending 30 June 2021. These were both women. No men took parental leave in the reporting period.
- No one exited the organisation during parental leave.
- One person accessed family violence leave.
- No one was recorded as accessing carers leave.

#### Indicator 7 – Gendered segregation in the workplace

The gender composition of the total workforce is 61 per cent women and 39 per cent men. There is a higher proportion of men in labouring, machinery operations and technical trades. There is a higher proportion of women in the clerical and administration community



and personal service workers. The professional's category is balanced, but there is a higher proportion of male managers compared to female managers.





# 3 GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

Strategy	Action ion of governing body	Measurement / Process Indicator	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase participation of women in Council elections	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy:</li> <li>Identify and assess barriers that diverse applicants may face in nominating for Council.</li> <li>Promotion of Gender, Intersectionality and culturally safe opportunities in Mayor / Councillor (employees and public)</li> <li>Increase community engagement to demystify role of council to women and people from gender diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>Provide opportunities to have female Councillors (past and present), and Councillors of different backgrounds (e.g. age, gender, ability) talk about their experience on Council at community events as a way of encouraging more women to stand for Council. And / or participate in Local Women Leading Change events</li> </ul>	Target – 40% women standing for council elections	2024	CEO / Council
	<ul> <li>Training and Skills:</li> <li>Promote or support attendance by community members (esp women and gender diverse people) at the Leadership Ballarat Programs</li> </ul>	Support one internal and one public member each year at LBP. (50% women or gender diverse people)	2023-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C
	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy:</li> <li>Sign up to the VLGA Victorian Local Government Women's Charter as a way of promoting gender equality at the Councillor level</li> </ul>	Council is a signatory to the Women's Charter	2022	CEO, Council



2. Gender composition at all levels of the workforce					
Implement Employee training to raise awareness	<ul> <li>Training and Skills:</li> <li>Gender Equality and Intersectionality awareness training programs,</li> </ul>	All Employees have attended training	2023-2025	Manager P&C	
Increase opportunities for employees in part- time or from gendered segregated work to gain experience.	<ul> <li>Training and Skills:</li> <li>Opportunities provided for acting in higher positions or secondment for part-time and full-time employees, including mentoring and support programs for women seeking promotion</li> </ul>	Increased satisfaction with opportunities to access promotional opportunities (satisfaction survey)	2023-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C	
Support leadership development for women, gender diverse staff and staff with diverse backgrounds.	<ul> <li>Training and Skills:</li> <li>Activate mentoring program internally and with neighbouring councils for part-time and full-time employees to gain leadership development support.</li> </ul>	5 women, gender diverse employees or employees from diverse backgrounds have participated.	2023-2025	Manager P&C	
	<ul> <li>Training and Skills:</li> <li>Promote opportunities for female staff to be leaders and spokespeople, such as involvement on committees, boards, networks, and award nominations.</li> </ul>	Internal committees and working groups achieve minimum 40/60 gender mix.	2022-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C	
Improve data collection	<ul> <li>Policies, Procedures and Principles</li> <li>Amend HR processes to collect and monitor employee demographics</li> </ul>	Data collection process implemented and utilised in setting targets, analysing progress and reporting.	2023	Manager P&C	
3. Gendered work segregation					
Reduce the percentage of identified gendered operational cohorts across council	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy</li> <li>Communicate and consult with Identified community cohorts (including employees) who are</li> </ul>	Annual analysis of the gender composition in each organisational structural level and teams.	2022-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C	



		•		
	underrepresented through gendered work segregation	Annual gender pay equity audits Collect and monitor employee demographics		
	<ul> <li>Policies, Procedures and Principles</li> <li>Research the gender split of graduate rates in engineering fields and consider setting targets for employment at Pyrenees Shire Council</li> <li>Establish staff and staff diversity targets e.g. female outdoor staff, male home carers in internal and external communications?</li> <li>Identify and support opportunities for women to fill apprentice/trainee roles.</li> </ul>	Annual analysis of the gender composition in each organisational structural level and teams.	2022-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C
4. Recruitment and	promotion			
Increase the number of applicants and appointees with diverse backgrounds.	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy</li> <li>Communicate and consult with Identified community cohorts (including employees) with physical disabilities, vision impairment, hearing impairment, and from non-English speaking backgrounds.</li> </ul>	Increase in the number of employees who identify as belonging to an identified diverse background. (review of data)	2022-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C
Ensure that induction of new staff raises awareness.	<ul> <li>Training and Skills:</li> <li>Updated Induction process including Gender Equality and Intersectionality and flexible working arrangement</li> </ul>	Induction program updated (review induction program)	2023-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C
Improve recruitment practices	<ul> <li>Policies, Procedures and Principles</li> <li>Develop and implement gender and intersectional balance guidelines and unconscious bias training for recruiting managers</li> </ul>	Guidelines developed and training to recruitment panels implemented	2023-2025	Manager P&C, ELT



5. Gender pay equality					
Develop policy to improve pay disparities.	<ul> <li>Policies, Procedures and Principles</li> <li>Establish a policy of salary on commencement at base level and guidelines for any negotiation above base and review remuneration policy with clear and transparent processes</li> <li>Annual pay equity analysis to the Executive for action and remediation especially at Levels 1 and 2.</li> </ul>	Annual pay equity analysis to understand the reasons for any pay gaps	2023-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C	
Remove barriers to work for carers and parents.	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy:</li> <li>Advocate for improved access to childcare to enable carers and parents to apply for, and gain employment and deliver support for carers who return to work after parental leave.</li> </ul>	Community survey of needs, and plan to address needs developed.	2023-2025	Manager Community Wellbeing and Development	
Reduce identified rates of underemployment	<ul> <li>Policies, Procedures and Principles</li> <li>Develop guidelines to address under-employment for part-time staff who want to increase hours</li> </ul>	Survey for baseline – 2022 Staff satisfaction every two years	2022-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C	
6. Leave and flexibil	ity				
Improve options and awareness of leave and flexibility arrangements.	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy:</li> <li>Promote flexible working arrangement options highlighting different genders for all gender and intersectionality and for part-time and full-time employees.</li> </ul>	Staff Satisfaction with availability of flexible work arrangements	2022-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C	
Embed Flexible options into Position Descriptions and job adverts	<ul> <li>Policies, Procedures and Principles</li> <li>Review position descriptions for new positions and, where relevant, explicitly reaffirm commitment to flexible work arrangements relating to employment basis.</li> </ul>	Review position descriptions	2023-2025	ELT, SLT, Manager P&C, Recruitment Managers	



7. Workplace sexual harassment				
Increase awareness of workplace sexual harassment prevention.	<ul> <li>Training and Skills:</li> <li>Workplace free from sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination training and bystander training.</li> <li>Complaints handling training</li> </ul>	All Employees have attended training on two year cycle	2023-2025	Manager P&C
	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy</li> <li>Develop a communication and awareness plan supported by messaging from CEO and ELT on a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, discrimination, unfair treatment, and sexism</li> </ul>	Survey Employees to evaluate improved awareness. Baseline 2022.	2022,2024	Manager P&C, ELT
	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy</li> <li>Develop and distribute an internal campaign and tools that clearly articulate what sexism and discrimination looks like and how to call out and prevent it</li> </ul>	Survey Employees to evaluate improved awareness. Baseline 2022.	2022,2024	Manager P&C, ELT
Improve reporting and support.	<ul> <li>Communications and advocacy</li> <li>Investigate developing more diverse contact points to support staff.</li> </ul>	New contact points implemented. (Staff Satisfaction)	2023-2025	Manager P&C, ELT



# 4 Appendix 1.

### Summary Gender Equality – People Matter Survey

The purpose of this document is to provide staff with an overview of the "People Matter Survey" results.

#### **Background Information**

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020, Council is required to collect and report key employee experience data for their workplace gender audit. For this purpose, Pyrenees Shire Council signed up to the "People Matter Survey". The overall aim of the survey is to improve the working lives of employees, so that Local Government is better equipped to deliver for the Victorian community.

#### **General Information**

- The survey was conducted from the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 until 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021.
- Participation was voluntary and all staff were encouraged and given the opportunity to participate.
- 15,049 employees from 72 local councils took part in the survey. An overall response rate of 32% was achieved across local government.
- Within Pyrenees Shire Council's workforce 60 staff members participated and a participation rate of 44 percent was achieved, which is very good.

#### **Gender Equality Indicators**

The Gender Equality Act 2020 sets out seven workplace gender equality indicators. They represent the key areas where workplace gender inequality persists – and where progress towards gender equality must be demonstrated.

Council must collect and report data against these indicators in their workplace gender audit. Furthermore, Council is required to make reasonable and material progress in relation to the workplace gender equality indicators.

The workplace gender equality indicators are:

- gender pay equity
- gender composition at all levels of the workforce
- gender composition of governing bodies
- workplace sexual harassment
- recruitment and promotion
- gendered work segregation
- leave and flexibility

The survey provided Council with five (5) indicator results.

The graph below shows a summary of Workplace Gender Equality Indicators.



#### Gender Equality Act 2020 - Workplace gender equality indicators



**Favourable** responses are 'agree' or 'did not experience the negative behaviour e.g. for bullying'

**Neutral** responses are 'neither agree nor disagree', 'don't know' or 'unsure whether they experienced the negative behaviour'.

**Unfavourable** responses are 'disagree' or 'experienced the negative behaviour'. Benchmark data in the right-hand side of the table are 'Favourable' responses.

# The indicator results show that Council is either similar to the benchmark in Local Government or above it.

Furthermore, the survey provided some data for negative behaviour.



Favourable responses did not experience the negative behaviour

**Neutral** responses were unsure whether they had experienced the negative behaviour or not

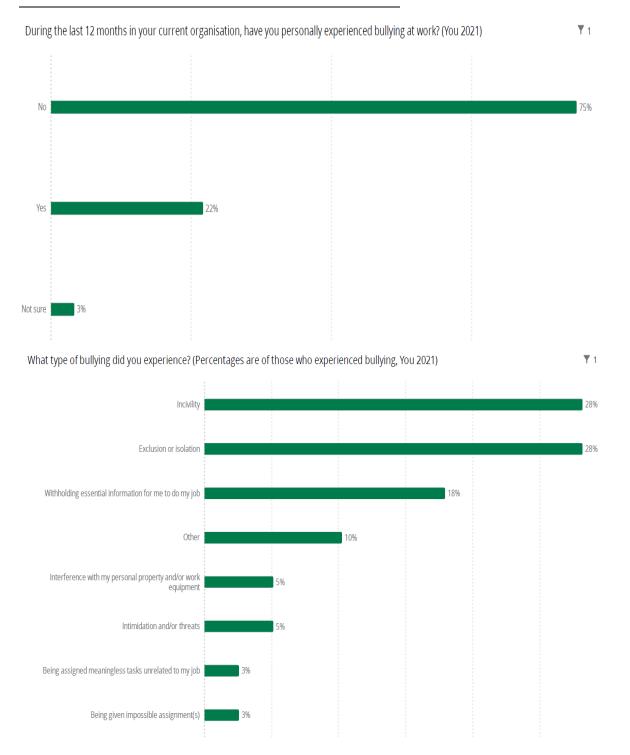
Unfavourable responses experienced the negative behaviour.



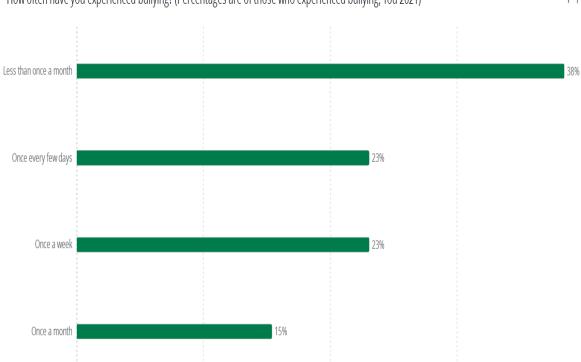
The following graphs (page 4 - 9) show more detailed information about "Bullying". **Bullying** 

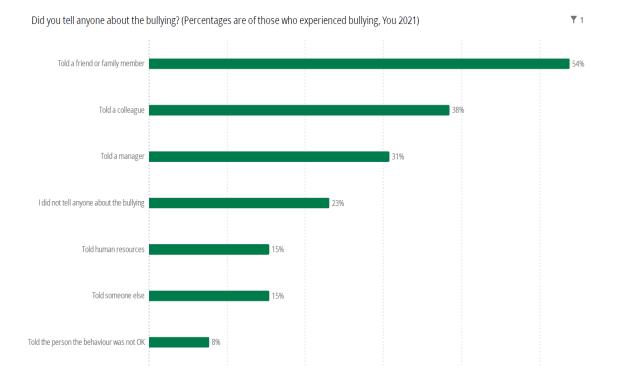
Experienced bullying - You 2021







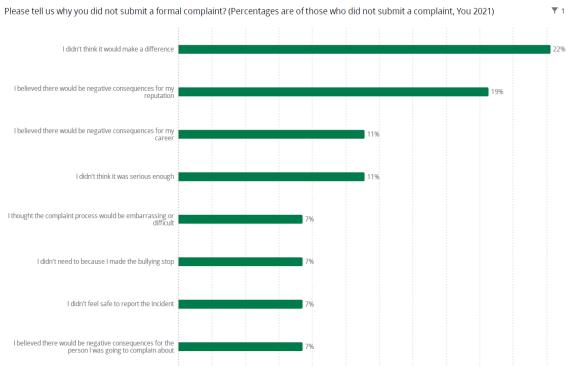




# How often have you experienced bullying? (Percentages are of those who experienced bullying, You 2021)

**Y** 1

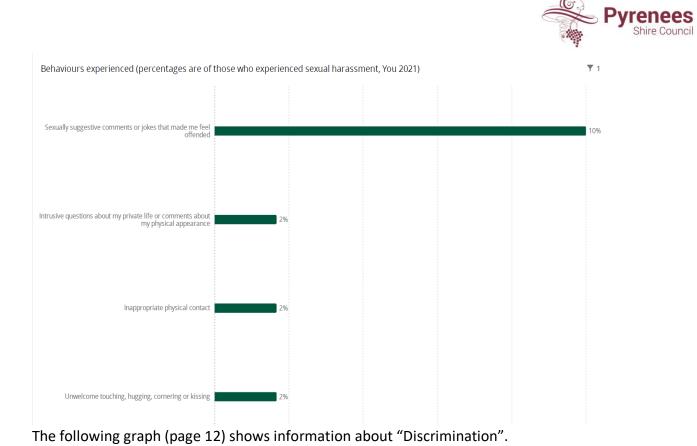




# The following graphs (page 10 – 11) show more detailed information about "Sexual Harassment". Sexual Harassment

Experienced sexual harassment: You 2021

10% experienced **T** 1



**T** 1

# **Discrimination**

Experienced discrimination: You 2021

3% experienced

No further detailed data available.