

SUMMARY REPORT

The Municipal Association of Victoria's Gender
Equality and Preventing Violence Against
Women Survey of Victorian Councils
2018/2019

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Acronyms

CBD	Central Business District	LG	Local government
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual+
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services	MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
EBA	Enterprise Bargaining Agreement	MPHWP	Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans
FFV	Free from Violence	PFV	Preventing/prevention of family violence
FTE	Full Time Equivalent	PVAW	Preventing/prevention of violence against women
FV	Family violence	WER	Workplace Equality and Respect
GE	Gender equality	WHS	Women's Health Service
HR	Human Resources		
IWD	International Women's Day		

Acknowledgements

The MAV acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land we work and live on, and offer our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We would like to thank the 65 councils who responded to this survey. Your engagement helps us to build an accurate picture of the important work that councils are undertaking in this space.

This survey was made possible thanks to Victorian government funding of the preventing violence against women role at the MAV.

Introduction

The Municipal Association of Victoria's Gender Equality and Preventing Violence Against Women Survey of Victorian Councils 2018/2019 (referred to as 'the Survey' or 'the 2018/19 Survey' throughout the reports) was a voluntary survey that all 79 Victorian councils were invited to participate in between July and September 2019. The Survey aimed to collect data, insights and feedback from councils about the work they have undertaken to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women in the 2018/19 financial year.

This was the fourth Gender Equality and Preventing Violence Against Women Survey of Victorian Councils conducted by the MAV, with previous surveys occurring in 2013, 2015 and 2017. The 2018/19 Survey builds on the picture created from these previous results and contributes to the growing evidence of the how, why, and what is needed for councils to effectively engage in the promotion of gender equality and prevention of violence against women. Comparisons to the 2017 Survey results are available in the Full Report. Overall, the 2018/19 Survey demonstrates that councils are increasing their engagement and commitment to this work.

The questions in the Survey were categorised into eight sections. All responses have been thematically analysed and are reflected in the structure of this report:

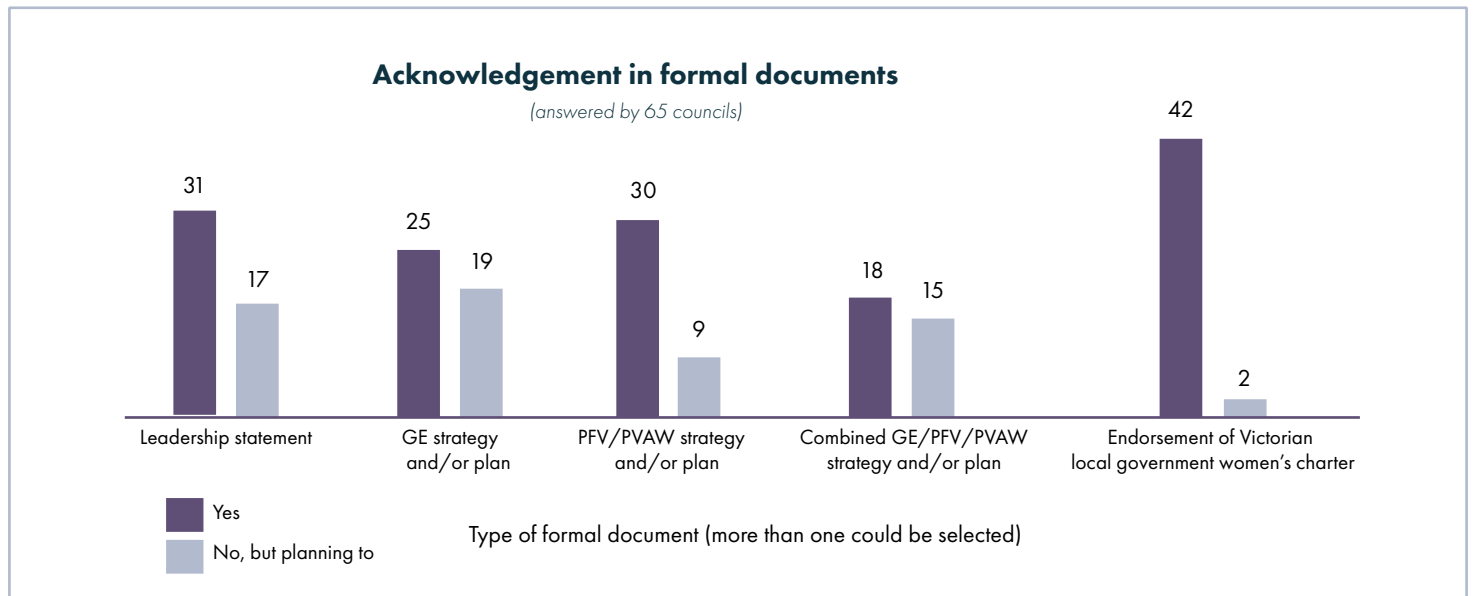
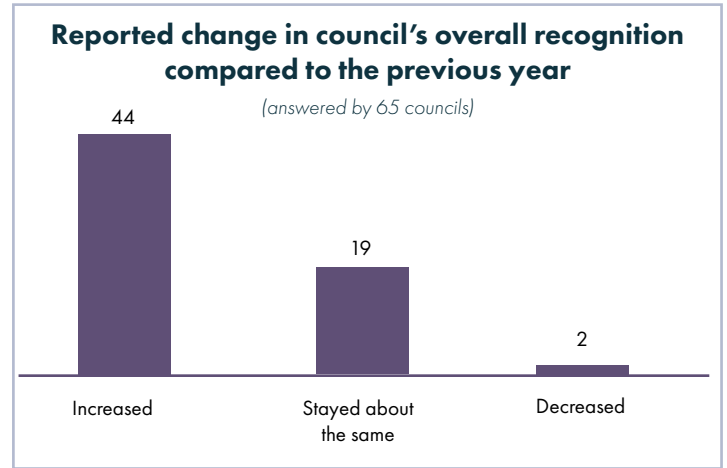
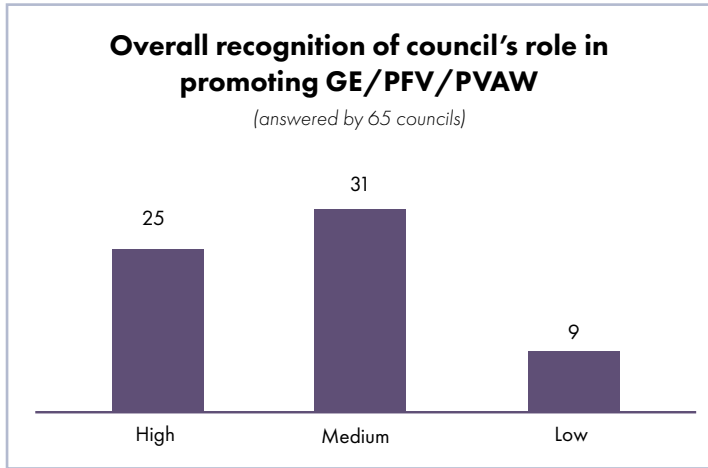
- > Acknowledgement and recognition
- > Resourcing
- > Data collection and inclusion
- > Policies, plans and service implementation areas
- > Training
- > Human Resources
- > Support for staff experiencing family violence
- > Reflections on the role of the MAV in this space.

The 2018/19 Survey also coincided with the introduction of the requirement for councils to report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) on measures to address family violence in their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans. The MAV worked with DHHS to include five questions in the Survey to satisfy this requirement and minimise the reporting burden on councils. Responses to these questions were provided to DHHS for analysis.

This Summary Report is intended as a quick, easy to use snapshot of the overall findings with additional data and analysis provided in a [Full Report](#) for those interested. We hope it proves to be a useful tool and can assist councils to progress and position their work on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

RECOGNITION AND COMMITMENT

The Survey asked councils to rate their overall recognition of gender equality, PVAW and PFV, about their formal commitment, and the mechanisms they have in place to enact this commitment. Councils were also asked about their participation in campaigns and initiatives to publicly recognise these issues.

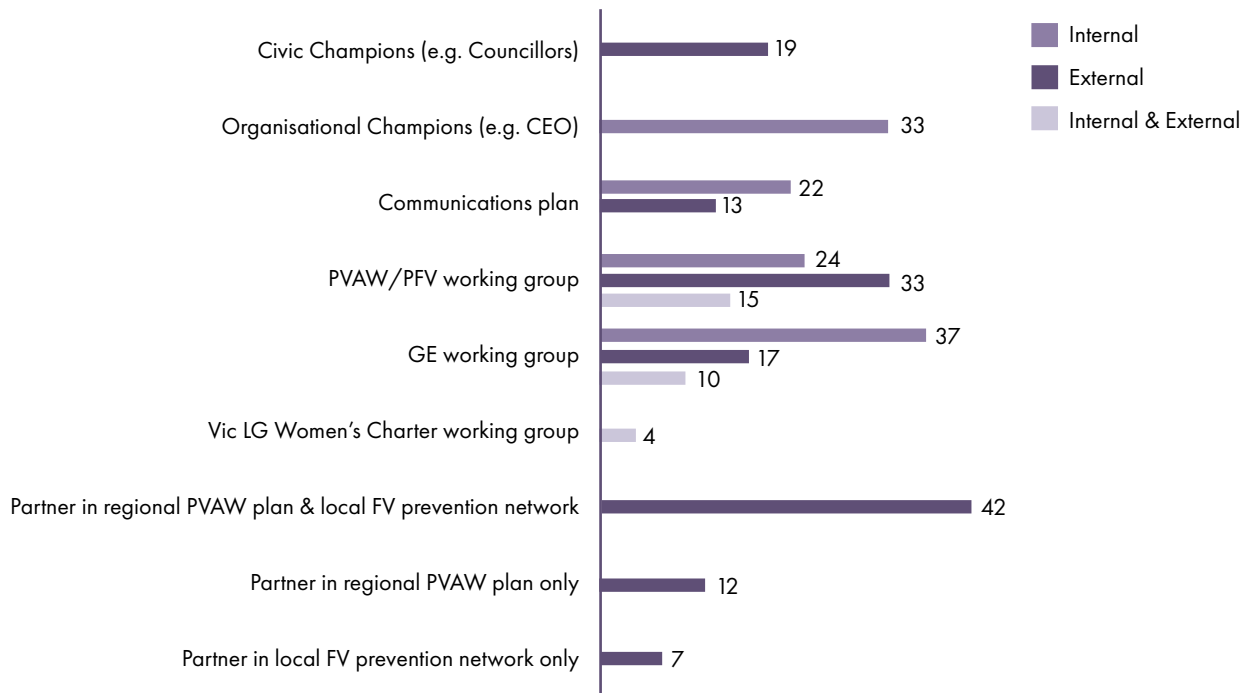


"Publication of the Equality & Respect 2030 Strategy was key in increasing recognition of... Council's commitment to prevent violence. The Preventing Family Violence Advisory Committee is well into its establishment and engaging a broader number of active members, including Councillors. Lastly, there has been an increase in funding for initiatives... increasing recognition to the value of working in PVAW/GE for [our council]. There have also been associated Councillor notices of motions, including for a Family Violence Conference and additional budget for 2019/2020."

-Interface Council

Mechanisms to progress formal acknowledgement and local partnerships

(answered by 58-61 councils)



Public campaign/recognition

(answered by 65 councils)



"Two internal events were organised for IWD 2019: After-hours event featuring guest speaker Miriam Issa and networking. Lunchtime event featuring three female staff members sharing their stories."

- Regional city council – International Women's Day

"In partnership with local agencies we hosted a pledge ceremony in CBD. Co-hosted a gender equity session at local high school with community health service. Implemented a Stop it at the Start campaign including local media/newspaper."

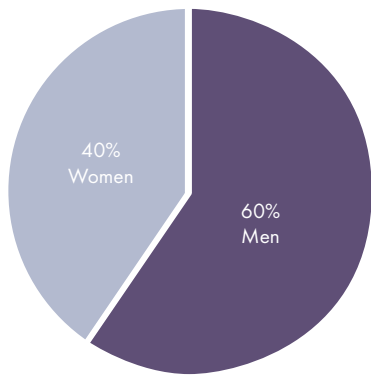
-Rural council – 16 Days of Activism

"Honouring women... [is] included under Council's annual Awards in September." -Metro council - Awards

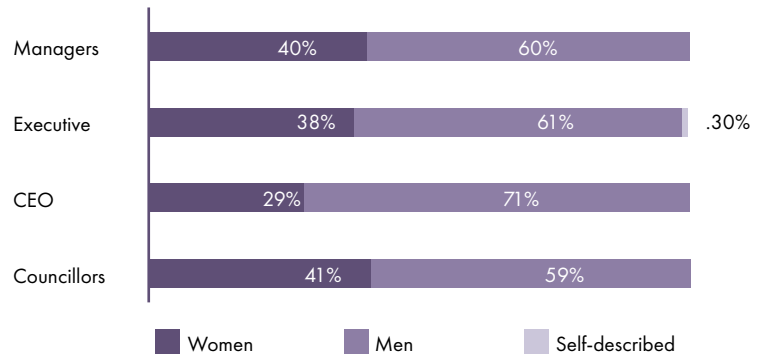
GENDER, LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

Councils were asked to provide gender disaggregated data about Councillors, CEOs, Executive leaders, and Managers. In addition, they were asked if a gender and/or diversity lens is applied to council committees.

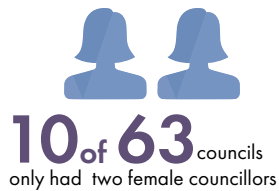
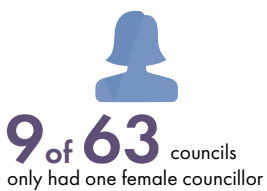
Gender representation across all leadership positions



Leadership roles and reported gender representation



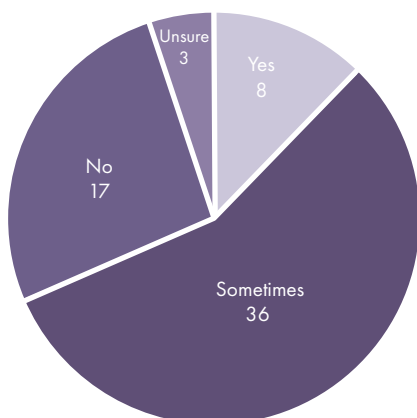
Gender representation amongst councillors across councils is not evenly distributed



Similar findings across other leadership roles which are further described in full report.

Applied a gender and/or diversity lens to representation on council committees

(answered by 64 councils)



“Council Officers are conscious of having gender balance on committees. There is no formal policy or guideline to educate and encourage staff to do this though. This is particularly the case in Council’s Community Partnerships Team.”
-Rural council

“We try to ensure strong diversity on our committees, however this is not always possible in a small regional council. There is a higher representation of men on Committees.”
-Rural council

PLANS, POLICIES AND SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION AREAS

The Survey asked about the collection and use of gender disaggregated data, the inclusion of sex and gender diversity in planning and implementation of GE/PVAW/PFV work as well as if councils consider gender, PVAW and PFV across a range of plans, policies and service implementation areas.

A brief desktop analysis of Council Plans found that

70 / 79 referenced gender equality/equity, women, prevention of violence against women, and/or family violence.

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans

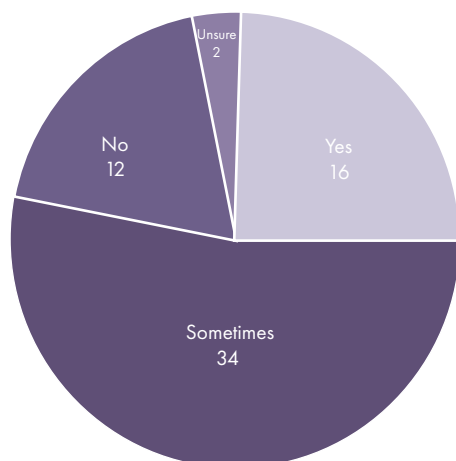
For the first time in 2019, councils were required to report to the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the measures to address family violence included in municipal public health and wellbeing plans. This requirement is in accordance with recommendation 94 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and has been incorporated into the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. Five questions were incorporated into the Survey to satisfy this reporting and responses were provided to the department for analysis.

The questions broadly sought to identify the types of strategies and actions included in plans, the types of indicators used to assess progress, and the facilitators and barriers to implementing initiatives.

Of the 79 councils, 75 met their legislated requirement to report on family violence initiatives in their 2017–2021 municipal public health and wellbeing plans (response rate: 95%). The DHHS, the Office for Women, Department of Premier and Cabinet and the MAV are committed to working together to support councils as they continue to develop and implement their family violence initiatives.

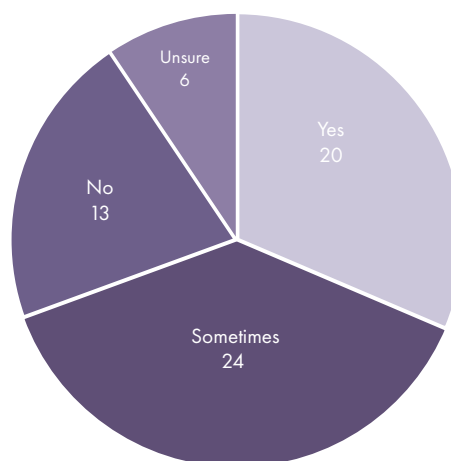
Collect and use gender disaggregated data to inform policies, service planning, implementation and evaluation

(answered by 64 councils)



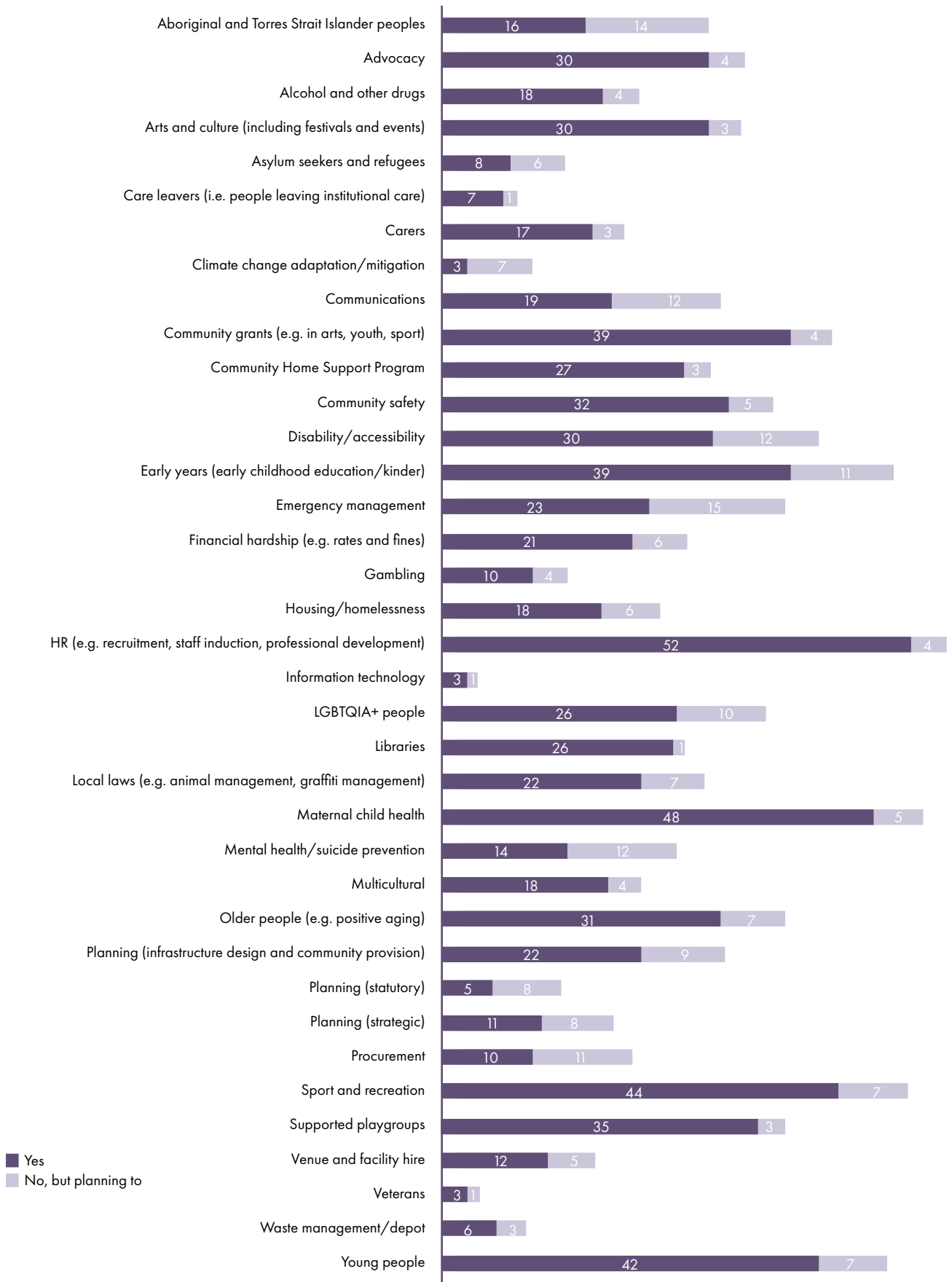
Inclusion of sex and gender diversity in policies, plans and implementation of GE/PFV/PVAW work

(answered by 63 councils)



Considered GE/PFV/PVAW in policy, planning or service implementation area

(answered by 64 councils)

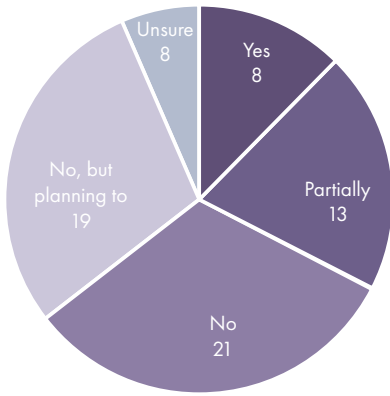


RESOURCING

The Survey asked about council investment of funds and staff time in GE/PVAW/PFV, as well as if they take a strategic approach to this.

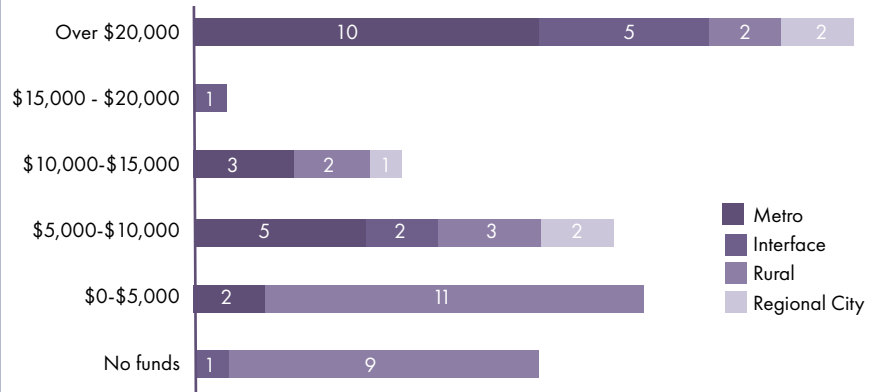
Applied a gender lens to strategic resourcing and/or budget

(answered by 65 councils)



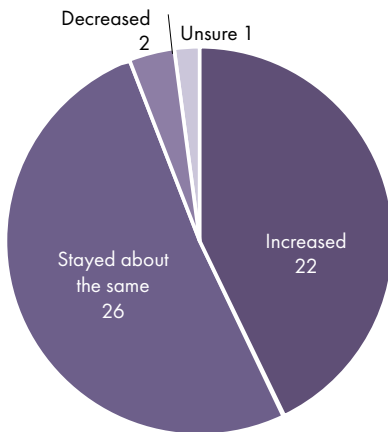
Funds allocated to GE/PFV/PVAW by council type

(answered by 61 councils)



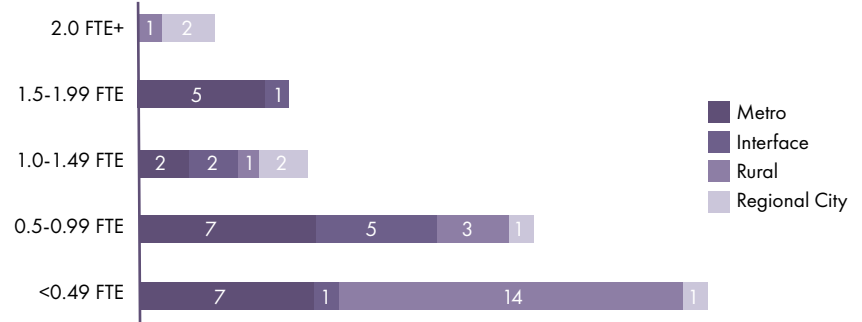
Reported change in funding allocation compared to the previous year

(answered by 51 councils)



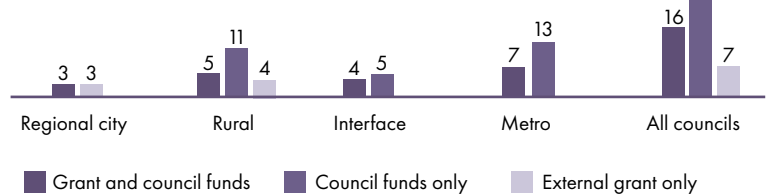
FTE allocated to position/s with carriage of GE/PFV/PVAW portfolio

(answered by 55 councils)



Funding source for position/s with carriage of GE/PVAW/PFV portfolio

(answered by 55 councils)



59

Councils reported that additional staff contributed time to the portfolio.

623

Staff and an equivalent of **44.8 FTE** positions contributed to GE/PFV/PVAW across councils in the 2018/19 financial year, in addition to dedicated positions.

The average contribution reported per council was **11** staff equating to an average of

0.8 FTE.

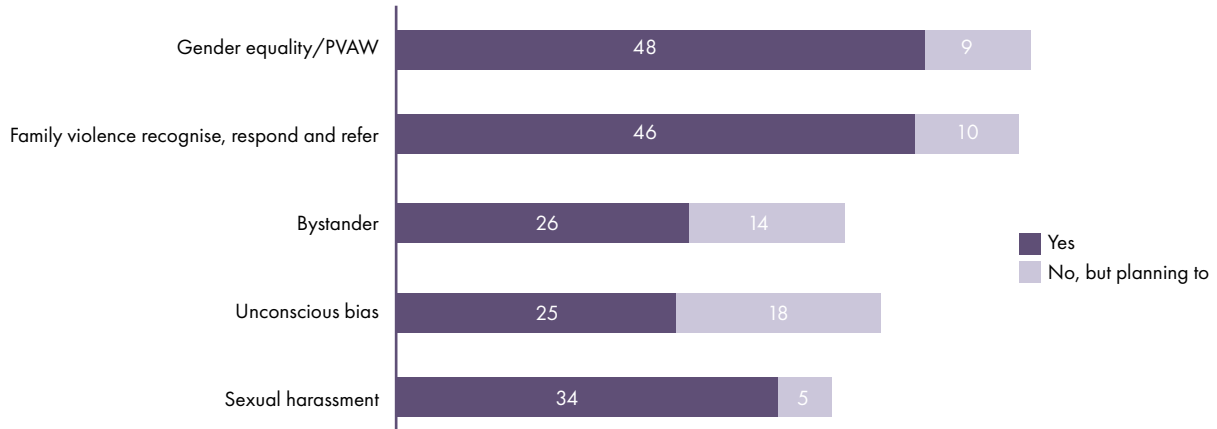
A description of the roles of PVAW 'contributors' versus 'practitioners' can be found in Victoria's **10 Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response**.

TRAINING

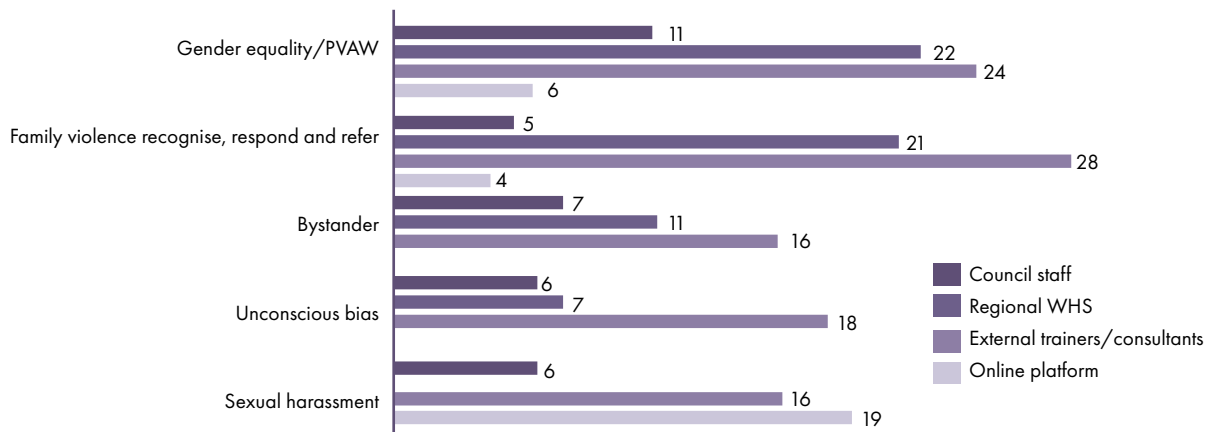
Councils were asked a number of questions about the types of relevant training they had offered.

Type of training offered by councils

(answered by 64 councils)



Training method/provider



36 councils identified unmet training needs, including:

- > Sexual harassment
- > Unconscious bias
- > Harassment and discrimination
- > Intersectionality
- > Specific training tailored to council roles
- > Gender audit tools specific to council business or roles

Seven councils identified costs and lack of local providers with expertise in council operations and needs as key barriers to accessing training for their staff.

“We want GE/PVAW training tailored for our communications and media team but could not find a provider that would meet our needs” -Metro council

HUMAN RESOURCES

This section of the Survey asked about common strategies, policies and approaches that can be implemented by councils to promote gender equality in the workplace.

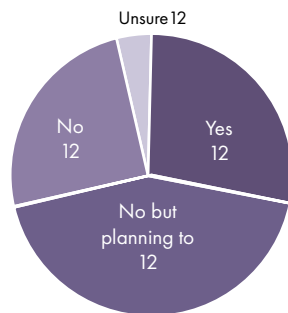
Gender audit of recruitment:

“As part of our ‘Free from violence’ grant we intend on undertaking a gender audit during the last quarter of this year. We will be trialling different tools to work out the most appropriate for a local government context, and will be aiming to embed them into organisation processes, both internal and external facing, moving forward.”

-Metro council

Completed a gender audit of employment and/or recruitment policies & practices

(answered by 63 councils)



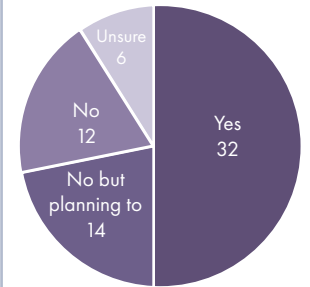
Unconscious bias in recruitment:

“All recruitment advertisements are put through an online tool that measures gender bias of wording. We strive to achieve gender equity on all interview panels.”

-Rural council

Implemented strategies to address unconscious bias in recruitment

(answered by 64 councils)



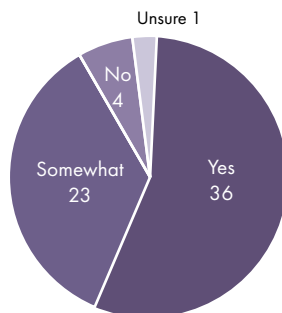
Flexible work:

“Still some way to go to see this promoted and utilised more broadly. Currently still quite dependent on individual leaders and work areas as to whether or not flexible work arrangements are promoted. Change in culture around acceptance of new way of working. Organisation Strategy will assist in this process of change.”

-Regional City council

Actively promote flexible work arrangements

(answered by 64 councils)



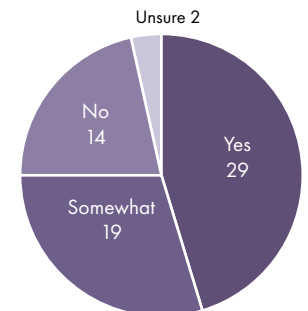
Sexual harassment:

“This is included in Council’s Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy, and is meant to be part of the induction process, however the policy has not been accessible through the induction process.”

-Interface council

Actively promote sexual harassment policy

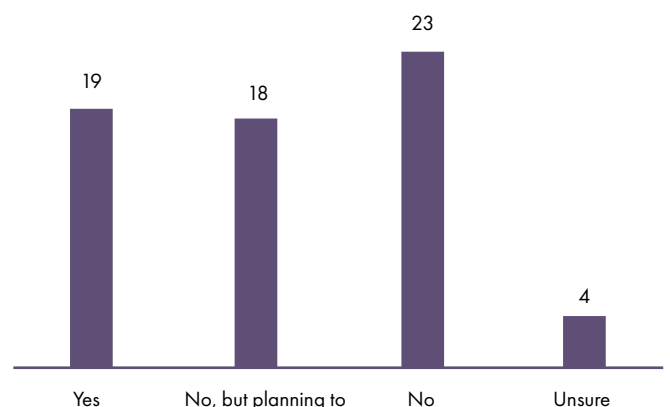
(answered by 64 councils)



[Workplace Equality and Respect \(WER\)](#) is a step-by-step process that enables workplaces to assess their organisation and identify key actions to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. In 2018/19, 19 councils were funded by the *Free from Violence (FFV) local government grants program* to implement WER. Of the 19 councils that responded ‘yes’ to this question, 14 had received a FFV grant while five had not. Two councils that stated ‘No, but planning to’ had received a FFV grant.

Implemented Workplace Equality and Respect standards

(answered by 64 councils)



SUPPORT FOR STAFF EXPERIENCING FAMILY VIOLENCE

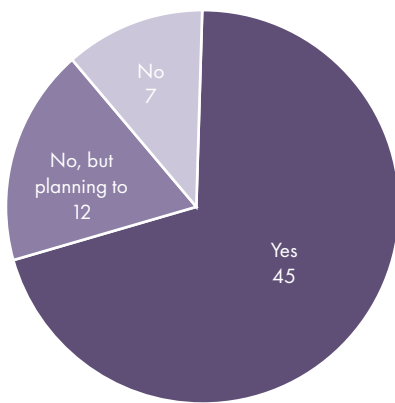
The Survey asked councils to report on how they support staff who experience family violence.

In 2010 Surf Coast Shire Council was the first employer in the world to include a family violence clause in their Enterprise Agreement.

100% of councils now have a family violence clause in their Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA).

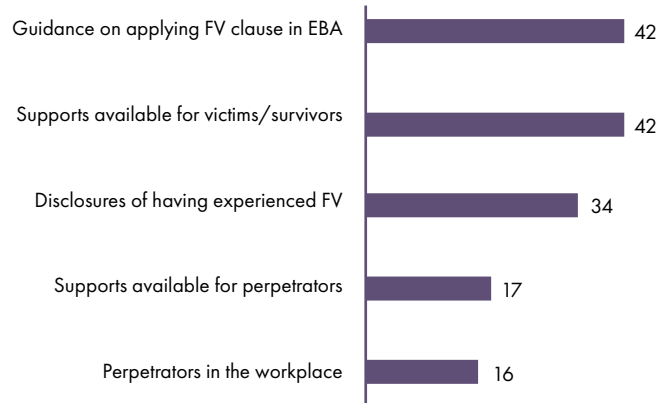
Have a family violence policy for staff

(answered by 64 councils)



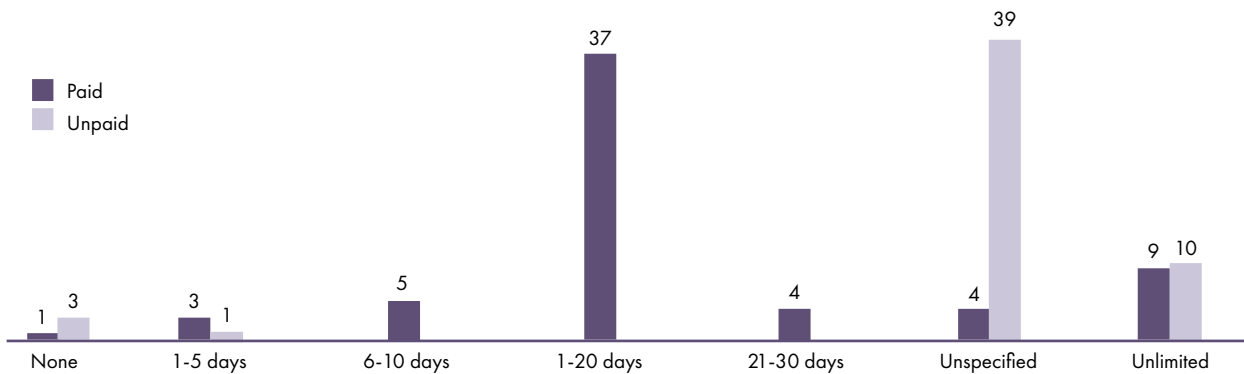
Focus of family violence policy for staff

(answered by 45 councils)



Paid and unpaid family violence leave entitlements

(answered by 63 councils)



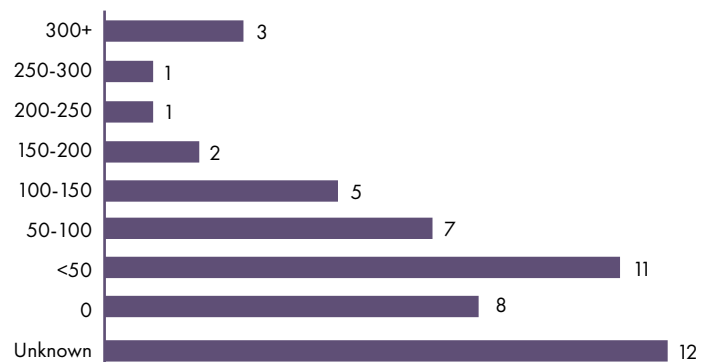
Many councils did not respond to and/or did not know how many hours of family violence leave were accessed by staff. Several commented that this data was not recorded for privacy reasons and, when it was, was often recorded as 'special leave', 'additional leave' or 'carers leave' making it difficult to distinguish.

Total hours = **3,588 hours** of paid family violence leave was able to be reported.

Median = **50.3 hours** per council

Hours of family violence leave accessed

(answered by 50 councils)



ABOUT THE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

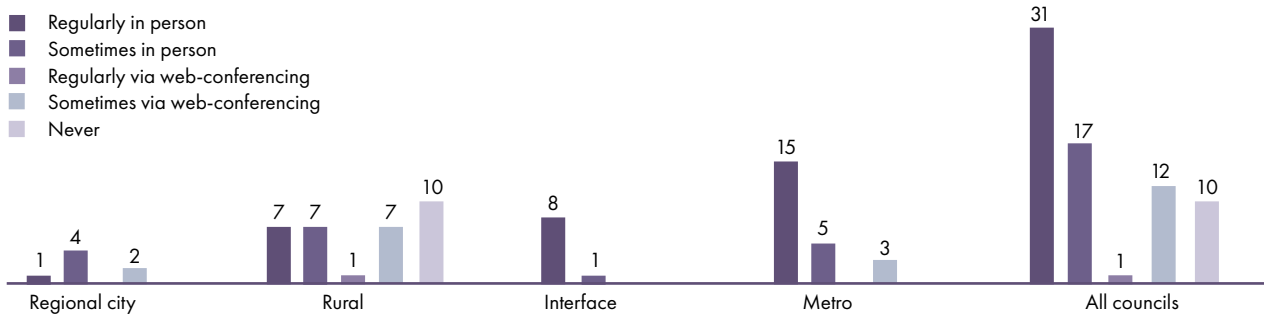
Councils were asked to report on how they engage with and the value they get from the MAV and the MAV PVAW roles.

MAV PVAW Network

The MAV PVAW Network is one of the primary ways that councils engage with the MAV to support their work in GE/PFV/PVAW. The Network has met in person since 2010 with the option to join via web-conferencing introduced in June 2018. Further information about the Network can be found on the [MAV website](#).

MAV PVAW Network council attendance

(answered by 62 councils)



“The network meetings and newsletters are extremely valuable. The meetings provide an excellent opportunity to: network, learn from others, share information, promote projects/events, feel supported by other LG colleagues and reflect on learnings, successes, and challenges with others”.

-Metro council

Value of MAV PVAW Network

(answered by 57 councils)



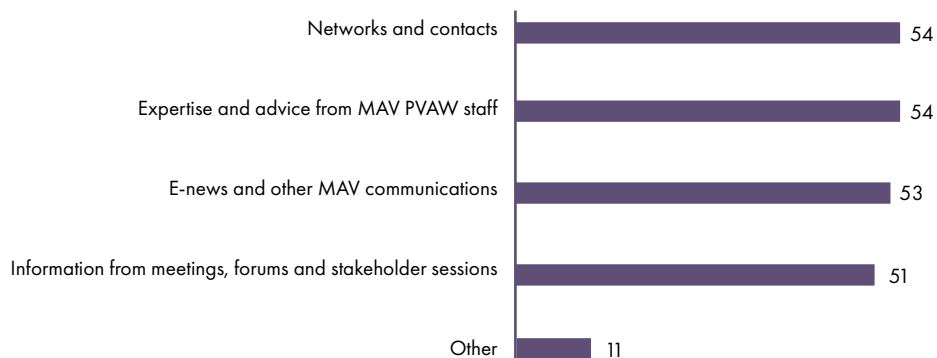
Additional benefits

Councils were asked if they found a number of additional functions of the MAV PVAW role, outside of the Network, useful.

Councils that selected “Other” identified funding opportunities, linkages with other agencies, peer support, debriefing, MAV presentations to councillors, and benchmarking and strategic planning.

Additional benefits of the MAV PVAW role

(answered by 58 councils)



MAV PVAW CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

For more information about this report and the gender equality and PVAW work at the MAV visit the [MAV gender equality webpage](#) or contact:

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