

Gender Equality Advisory Committee

Co-Chairs Communique

The Gender Equality Advisory Committee (GEAC) had its third meeting for the year and seventh overall on Thursday 21 July 2022, at the Melbourne Museum.

Discussions held during the meeting centred around understanding emerging international gender equality trends; strategies to support positive council culture and behaviour; and actions that can drive gender parity in Local Government.

Dr Elise Stephenson, Research Fellow at the Global Institute for Women's Leadership

The Global Institute for Women's Leadership is founded and chaired by the Hon. Julia Gillard AC and has a direct focus on women's leadership. Dr Stephenson reflected on international gender equality trends, and highlighted that local government can better reflect principles of gender equality by analysing the impacts of intersectionality, organisational segregation, and providing support for system level change.

Claire Bickell, Director of Financial Frameworks, Department of Treasury and Finance

Ms Bickell provided her insights on how Gender Responsive Budgeting was employed in the 2022-23 Victorian State Budget. The *Gender Equality Act 2020* was embedded into the budget making process, highlighting how Gender Impact Assessments can be used to support financial policy.

Lucy Dalton, Director of Policy and Strategy, Local Government Victoria

Ms Dalton facilitated a discussion on the Local Government Culture Project Insights Report. The Report reflects the feedback received during the project and outlines issues that influence council culture and conduct. GEAC members from the local government peak bodies provided their perspectives on what the report's findings mean for the sector as a whole, and reflected that many of the insights overlap with the aims of the GEAC.

Eveline Kane, Program Manager, Local Government Victoria

Ms Kane gave an update on the Advancing Women's Leadership Summit that is scheduled to be held later this year. The Summit emerged out of a recommendation from the GEAC and will focus on establishing strategies and actions to increase the number of women councillors and mayors by 2025.

Adele Stowe-Lindner, General Manager, Institute of Community Directors Australia

Ms Stowe-Lindner provided an update on the *Women Leading Locally* program. The program supports women interested in standing for council at the 2024 elections with a focus on those councils that have the lowest representation of women councillors. The 2022 program commences in August 2022. Applications for the 2023 program will open in March 2023.

The GEAC will next meet on 9 September 2022 to focus on forward planning and themes for 2023.

For further information on the GEAC, please go to <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/gender-equity>

GEAC Co-Chairs

Kat Theophanous MP and Juliana Addison MP