



## SCOPE

This assessment tool is to be used when preparing any new Council Policy or amending/updating an existing policy. It also applies to any new or updated CEO Directive.

## WHY DO WE NEED AN ASSESSMENT TOOL?

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Gender Equity Act 2020 both require Council to consider the impacts on rights and responsibilities when making decisions, preparing or updating a new local law, when making changes to council services and when preparing/updating new policies and procedures. Council is also required to consider climate change mitigation and planning in its decisions under section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020. This same act also outlines strategic principles that must be considered when developing or updating policies and directives.

This tool is to guide you through how to complete such an assessment to ensure that Council is meeting its legislative obligations, as well as ensuring there is no unconscious bias or inadvertent adverse implications for peoples' rights when preparing policies and CEO Directives.

## HOW DO I USE THIS TOOL?

You must use this tool whenever updating or preparing a new Council Policy or CEO Directive. This assessment will form part of the documentation provide to ELT and Council to inform their consideration of the proposed policy or directive.

All sections of the tool need to be completed – if there are no apparent implications, then please write something along the lines of '*It is considered there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.*' For the Local Government Act 2020 principles, you may include the text '*Not applicable*' if it is irrelevant to the policy or directive.

**CONSIDERATION OF PRINCIPLES OUTLINED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020**

Principle	Comment
<b>Governance and Strategic Principles (section 9)</b>	
Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law	The Media Policy assists Council in communicating how its actions are in accordance with relevant law.
Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations	The Media Policy and media are key tools in communicating with our community. They help drive participation in engagement activities that work to ensure better decisions for our community.
The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted	The Media Policy states: Council will maximise the use of electronic and online communication to reduce printed material where practicable and appropriate.
The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making	The Media Policy and media are key tools in communicating with our community. They help drive participation in engagement activities that work to ensure better decisions for our community.
Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued	Effective engagement with the media enables Council to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate transparent, open and accountable government</li> <li>• explain Council decisions and the impact of those decisions</li> <li>• increase awareness of Council services, events, facilities and opportunities for involvement and participation</li> <li>• advocate for the needs of the community</li> <li>• encourage and support behaviour change for social and environmental benefit</li> <li>• promote local tourism and the local economy.</li> </ul>
Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought	Wherever possible.
The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured	The Media Policy can ensure information on financial viability, Budget, etc can be shared openly with the community. It is a way of reaching many people, with limited spend.
Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making	The Media Policy is a way of communicating this

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The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured	Effective engagement with the media facilitates transparent, open and accountable government. It ensures the community is aware of Council decisions and the impact of those decision.
<b>Community Engagement Principles (section 56)</b>	
A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope	Effective engagement with the media increases awareness about Council's community engagement projects and process.
Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation	As above
Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement	As above
Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement;	As above
<b>Principle</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making	As above
<b>Public Transparency Principles (section 58)</b>	
Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act	Effective engagement with the media ensures transparency in Council's decision making, along with projects, policies and direction.
Council information must be publicly available unless— (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest	Media Policy is a key way of achieving this.
Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community	This policy ensures clear, consistent and reliable information is provided to the media in a timely manner.
Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated	This policy ensures Council issues regular media releases and statements.
<b>Strategic Planning Principles (section 89)</b>	
A Council must undertake the preparation of its Council Plan and other strategic plans in accordance with the strategic planning principles	

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An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted	Media Policy is a key way of informing community about how Council is achieving this.
Strategic planning must address the Community Vision	As above
Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation	The C&E Team is appropriately resourced to deliver this policy.
Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation	The Media Policy ensures good working relationships with media organisations. It outlines roles and responsibilities for Councillors and staff if they are approached by the media.
Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.	This policy will be review biannually

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Principle	Comment
<b>Financial Management Principles (section 101)</b>	
revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans	Media Policy is a key way of informing community about how Council is achieving this.
Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances For the purposes of the financial management principles, financial risk includes any risk relating to the following— (a) the financial viability of the Council (b) the management of current and future liabilities of the Council (c) the beneficial enterprises of the Council	As above
Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community	As above
Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept	As above
<b>Service Performance Principles (section 106)</b>	
Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community	Engagement with the media ensures communication about Council's plans and projects are accessible by a large audience.
Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended	As above
Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community	Council's Media Management is delivered in house, stopping the need for more expensive outsourcing of this important communication tool.
A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring	The C&E Team has media experience ensuring the releases and responses developed are strongly used by relevant media organisations.
Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision	All complaints will be responded to by the Exec Manager and/or CEO.

**CONSIDERATION OF CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 IMPACTS**

Council can limit human rights when those limitations can be justified. This means that Council can continue to make decisions on behalf of the community about how best to balance rights, ensure community safety, and use limited funding for competing public interest challenges.

Are there any human rights implications arising from this policy or directive in relation to the 20 substantive rights? Note: some rights have been excluded that do not apply to local government (eg deprivation of liberty)	Analysis
Recognition and equality before the law (section 8)	Effective engagement with the media allows Council to share information about the work it is doing.
Right to life (section 9)	Not applicable
Protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (section 10)	Effective engagement with the media allows for diversity of opinion to be shared.
Freedom from forced work (section 11)	Not applicable
Freedom of movement (section 12)	Not applicable
Privacy and reputation (section 13)	The Media Policy ensures Council is Initiating, developing and implementing positive media strategies that inform the community about Council activities and services, and enhance the reputation and image of the Strathbogie Shire Council.
Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (section 14)	The Media Policy ensures Council is Initiating, developing and implementing positive media strategies that inform the community about Council activities and services.
Freedom of expression (section 15)	The Media Policy outlines media spokespeople, but also outlines how Councillors can share personal statements.
Peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 16)	Effective engagement with the media – and the pick up of media releases - allows Council to share information about the work it is doing.
Protection of families and children (section 17)	Effective engagement with the media – and the pick up of media releases - allows Council to share information about the work it is doing.
Right to take part in public life (section 18)	The Media Policy outlines media spokespeople, but also outlines how Councillors can share personal statements.
Cultural rights (section 19)	Effective engagement with the media – and the pick up of media releases - allows Council to share information about the work it is doing.
Property rights (section 20)	Not applicable
Liberty and security of person (section 21)	Effective engagement with the media allows Council to share information about the work it is doing.

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Fair hearing (section 24)	Council expects fair and balanced reporting, with an opportunity to represent Council's position on issues.
Rights in criminal proceedings (section 25)	This will be in line with Media law.
Overall, does the policy, local law or decision raise human rights issues?	Effective engagement with the media allows Council to share information about the work it is doing.
<b>Are there any human rights implications arising from this policy or directive in relation to the 20 substantive rights? Note: some rights have been excluded that do not apply to local government (eg deprivation of liberty)</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Overall, does the policy, local law or directive restrict or interfere with the scope of the human right/s identified?  If yes, are the limitations or restrictions reasonably and demonstrably justified under Section 7 of the Human Rights Charter?	No
Are there any less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose that the limitation seeks to achieve?	The Media Policy helps inform the community about ways it can participate in Council decision making.

## GENDER EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender impact assessments (GIAs) are designed to help organisations think critically about how policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people. The purpose GIAs is to create better and fairer outcomes, and make sure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Your gender can affect your needs and experiences. This means that policies, programs and services can affect people of different genders in different ways. If we don't think about how their work affects different people, they might unintentionally reinforce inequalities.

A gender impact assessment must:

- assess the effects that the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders
- explain how the policy, program or service will be changed to better support Victorians of all genders and promote gender equality
- where practical, apply an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality can be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of other factors such as age, disability or ethnicity.

Step 1 – Defining the issues and challenge your assumptions	
What is the issue the policy or directive is aiming to address (think about why it is needed)?	This policy ensures effective communication with the media and municipal communities.
Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy or directive included in the decision-making?	This policy ensures effective media relations, that help drive participation in Council decision making.
Do you think that people of different genders access this policy or directive at the same rate?	Media strategies can ensure information is shared targeting different genders and ages. Diversity in approach to topics, helps reach a more diverse audience. It also ensures media on different platforms – eg print, radio, television and online.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	Diversity in approach to topics, helps reach a more diverse audience. The policy also ensures media on different platforms – eg print, radio, television and online.
Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy or directive has the same needs from it?	No – this is why Media packages often include images, video etc.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	Yes – but diversity in approach helps reach a diverse audience.
What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?	This is improved by the use of different platforms eg print, radio, television, online.



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Step 2 – Understanding the policy context	
What information is available to understand who is likely to be affected by the policy or directive?	This policy directly effects Councillors and Council staff. More broadly media can effect all in our municipality
Do you already have this information?	Yes <span style="margin-left: 150px;">No</span>
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	Survey tool through Share Strathbogie. Annual community satisfaction survey
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Annual community satisfaction survey points to the need for good information and good relationships with local media.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	Formal consultation with Councillors and informal meetings with media.
What information is available to understand the lived experiences of the diverse groups who will be affected?	Different media platforms ensure diversity of information reach.
Do you already have this information?	Yes <span style="margin-left: 150px;">No</span>
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	Ongoing consultation and annual community satisfaction survey
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Traditional media continues to be a strong tool in informing the community.
Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?	Yes and as above.
How is this policy or directive likely to have different impacts for different people?	Media ensures a broad reach of information sharing
Do you already have this information?	Yes <span style="margin-left: 150px;">No</span>
How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.	Ongoing consultation and annual community satisfaction survey
What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence	Media provides a strong community tool in informing the community and driving participation.

<p>Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect? State if it was formal or informal consultation. What were the key issues/outcomes/views?</p>	<p>Community satisfaction survey. Share Strathbogie surveys.</p>
<p><b>Step 3 – Options analysis</b></p>	
<p>What are the policy options? For each option describe the proposed policy solution. Provide a brief description of the proposed strategies, activities or service design elements and how they will meet the needs and create benefit for the target audience.</p>	<p>This policy encourages pick up through diverse media outlets and provides for diverse information sharing.</p>
<p>What are the potential policy options and what gendered impact might they have?</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>What are the gendered costs and risks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is likely to be negatively impacted by this? How are the most vulnerable groups likely to be impacted?</li> <li>• Will this reduce a certain group's access to economic resources or opportunities? If so, are they already disadvantaged?</li> <li>• Does it reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, for example, further promoting men in a male dominated industry?</li> </ul>	<p>As above</p>
<p>What are the gendered benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will some people benefit more because they have greater access, or does this policy, program or service do everything it can to ensure resources are distributed and used equally?</li> <li>• Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way? Eg will it contribute to a more balanced distribution of unpaid care labour and family responsibilities between women and men?</li> <li>• Will it make women and children safer in public or private spaces?</li> </ul>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Will some people benefit more because they have greater access, or does this policy, program or service do everything it can to make sure resources are distributed and used equally?</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way?</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Does your policy, program or service potentially have negative unintended consequences for certain groups of people?</p>	<p>As above</p>

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Overall, do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa?	Yes
<b>Step 4 Recommendations</b>	
Provide the rationale for the proposed recommendation and include any mitigation strategies that could be used to avoid any harmful unintended outcome.	This policy outlines best practice media management
Include here the rationale for your recommendation as well as any mitigation strategies needed. In line with the Gender Equality Act, explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how your recommendation meets the needs of persons of different genders</li><li>• how it addresses gender inequality</li><li>• how it promotes gender equality.</li></ul>	This policy encourages pick up through diverse media outlets and provides for diverse information sharing.

### HANDY HINTS

The above questions have been derived from the Gender impact assessment toolkit produced by the Commission for Gender Equality in the public sector. To access the gender equity impact assessment toolkit for more information, please use this link [Gender impact assessment toolkit | Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector \(genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.genderequalitycommission.vic.gov.au/gender-impact-assessment-toolkit).

For Open Source gender data and research, please use the following resource – the final page is where you will find links to data and resources. [DPC 2011 CGEPS GIA-Templates & Resources FA-Web 0.pdf](#)

For Step 3 the following will assist in identifying whether an impact is a cost or a benefit for gender equity:

#### Negative or neutral gender impact

- Perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles and relations.
- Privileges men over women and gender diverse people (or vice versa).
- Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for people of different genders.
- Does not take into account issues of intersectionality.

#### Positive gender impact

- Considers gender norms, roles and relations for people of different genders and how they affect access to and control over resources.
- Promotes the elimination of existing gender gaps, or at least a significant reduction of them.
- Addresses the causes of gender-based health inequities, including the prevention of violence against women, girls and gender diverse people.
- Includes ways to transform harmful gender norms, roles and relations.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION/MITIGATION AND SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Local Government Act 2020 requires council to consider climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in all its key decision making, which includes policy development.

Council is also in the process of finalising a Climate Change Action Plan after declaring a Climate Emergency in 2021.

The Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2020 sets out Council's responsibilities under the Act [Victorias-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Plan-2017-2020.pdf \(climatechange.vic.gov.au\)](#). The following factors should inform your analysis statement:

- Provide leadership and good governance, represent the needs and values of local communities, and foster community cohesion
- Manage climate change risks to council community services and assets, with support from the State Government
- Identify the needs and priorities of the municipality and communicate these to State Government where needed
- Develop and deliver locally-appropriate adaptation responses
- Build the resilience of local assets and services
- Plan for emergency management at the municipal level, provide relief and recovery services, and support emergency response operations
- Help the State Government understand localised impacts and responses
- Work with the community to help people understand and get involved in climate change adaptation
- Help connect the State Government with the community.

**Sustainable Strathbogie 2030 Strategy (to be updated to the Climate Change Action Plan once adopted)**

<b>Chapter 6 Climate Resilient Shire</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Increasing heat	The Media Policy ensures positive media strategies are developed to share information with the community. It can inform the community about Council strategy including the Climate Change Action Plan and Council's progress on this plan.
Changing rainfall patterns, drought conditions, and extreme meteorological conditions	As above
Increased bushfire conditions and declining volunteer numbers	As above
Increased social impacts	As above
<b>Chapter 7 A low carbon shire</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Net Zero by 2025	As above
Energy Efficiency	As above
Energy Storage	As above
Renewable Energy	As above
Community Renewable Energy	As above
<b>Chapter 8 A water sensitive shire</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Conserving valuable potable water	As above
Stormwater management	As above
Adaptive and recycled water resources	As above
Keeping our shire green, cool and resilient	As above
<b>Chapter 9 A zero waste shire</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Environmental impacts of landfill	As above
Limited landfill capacity	As above

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Increased illegal dumping	As above
Economic benefits from resource recovery	As above
Chapter 10 An ecologically rich shire	Comment
Deforestation	As above
Rural green infrastructure	As above
Increasing our urban canopy	As above
Rural roadsides	As above
Rivers & Wetlands	As above
Benefitting from our native forests	As above
Chapter 11 An active and connected shire	Comment
Security of fuel supply	As above
Transition to new fuel economy	As above
Enabling access to the outdoors	As above