



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
Governance and Strategic Principles (section 9)	
Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law	Rates Payment and Collection Policy is prepared with relevant consideration into Local Government Act 2020 and Local Government Act 1989 and other relevant legislations.
Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations	This policy aims to achieve sustainable financial outcome for the council. Consideration has been given to municipal residents with several options for debt payments.
The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted	Policy has several options for financially disadvantaged or people are in financial hardships. Some of the options include interest waiver and rate deferral.
The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued	Considerations like hardship application process through email, rates payment options with multiple payment methods are considered in this policy.
Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought	Collaboration with other councils is done through Revenue Managers Association (RMA) Victoria.
The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured	This policy aims to collect more rate revenue by offering more flexible options for people with financial hardships. Collection rate of rates is a primary consideration for long term financial viability of the council.
Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured	This policy provides more reporting options to the council. Aim of this is to provide more transparency of the application of the policy.
Community Engagement Principles (section 56)	
A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope	It is considered there are no implications at the time of preparing this document. However community consultation is part of rates levying as part of the budget process.

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Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation	Not applicable
Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement	Not Applicable
Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement;	Not applicable
Principle	Comment
Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making	Not applicable
Public Transparency Principles (section 58)	
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	All of the provisions in this policy have transparent decision making process defined.
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	This policy is complied with this provision.
Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community	This policy is complied with this provision.
Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated	This policy is complied with this provision.
Strategic Planning Principles (section 89)	
A Council must undertake the preparation of its Council Plan and other strategic plans in accordance with the strategic planning principles	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Strategic planning must address the Community Vision	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.

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Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.

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Principle	Comment
Financial Management Principles (section 101)	
revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans	This policy is complied with financial policies and strategic plans objectives.
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	This is considered in this policy.
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	This is considered in this policy.
Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept	Any financial record arise from this policy will be kept as per record keeping requirements.
Service Performance Principles (section 106)	
Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community	This is considered and applied in this policy within the provision of the Act.
Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended	This service is intended to all rate payers in the municipality and some provisions apply only to rate payers with principal place of living.
Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community	This is considered in this policy.
A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring	This is considered in this policy.
Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision	Fair and effective process is provided within this policy.

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)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Right to life (section 9)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (section 10)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Freedom from forced work (section 11)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Freedom of movement (section 12)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Privacy and reputation (section 13)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (section 14)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Freedom of expression (section 15)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Peaceful assembly and freedom of association (section 16)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Protection of families and children (section 17)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Right to take part in public life (section 18)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Cultural rights (section 19)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.

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Property rights (section 20)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Liberty and security of person (section 21)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Fair hearing (section 24)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Rights in criminal proceedings (section 25)	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Overall, does the policy, local law or decision raise human rights issues?	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
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
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?	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document
Are there any less restrictive means reasonably available to achieve the purpose that the limitation seeks to achieve?	Not applicable.

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)?	Provide more options to minimise outstanding debts and provide strong financial sustainability to the council.
Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy or directive included in the decision-making?	This policy applies to all rate payers and they are included in the rate setting process through budget input/feedback.
Do you think that people of different genders access this policy or directive at the same rate?	No gender differences applied to this policy.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document
Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy or directive has the same needs from it?	This policy address to a wider group.
Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy or directive?	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document
What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document

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<p>How will you find the further information you need? Think about internal data, research, consultation.</p>	<p>Analysing past payment arrangements.</p>
<p>What did the research and evidence tell you? List key points and references/evidence</p>	<p>There is no specific evidence, however based on experience with managing financial hardships and payment plans suggest that anyone could be impacted by financial hardships irrespective gender or group.</p>
<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>This policy impact any rate payer having financial difficulty. This group change from time to time. However council staff are planning to have formal information sessions in the future for anyone needs this service.</p>
<p>Step 3 – Options analysis</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 is an update to current policy. There is no options for this policy, however there are more streamline processes identified in the application of the policy. Some of them includes transparent reporting to council, updated delegation.</p>
<p>What are the potential policy options and what gendered impact might they have?</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>What are the gendered costs and risks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is likely to be negatively impacted by this? How are the most vulnerable groups likely to be impacted? • Will this reduce a certain group's access to economic resources or opportunities? If so, are they already disadvantaged? • Does it reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, for example, further promoting men in a male dominated industry? 	<p>There are no identified gendered groups in this policy. This policy equally applies to all impacted by financial hardships.</p>
<p>What are the gendered benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? • 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? • Will it make women and children safer in public or private spaces? 	<p>Not applicable</p>

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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?	Policy itself not designed to look at group or people. Anyone who has rateable property within the municipality will be benefitted from this policy.
Will it contribute to transforming gender norms in a positive way?	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Does your policy, program or service potentially have negative unintended consequences for certain groups of people?	It is considered and there are no implications at the time of preparing this document.
Overall, do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa?	No.
Step 4 Recommendations	
Provide the rationale for the proposed recommendation and include any mitigation strategies that could be used to avoid any harmful unintended outcome.	Not applicable
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"> • how your recommendation meets the needs of persons of different genders • how it addresses gender inequality • how it promotes gender equality. 	Not applicable

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).

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- 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 has finalised its Climate Change Action Plan after declaring a Climate Emergency in 2021. This Action Plan has 5 key actions areas:

- Protecting our natural environment
- Reducing our emissions
- Our climate resilient community
- Moving sustainability: transport
- Advocating for change

Strathbogie Shire Council Climate Change Action Plan 2022 – 2027 [Climate Action - Strathbogie Shire](#)

Our Climate Resilient Community	Comment
Increasing heat	Not applicable
Changing rainfall patterns, drought conditions, and extreme meteorological conditions	Not applicable
Increased bushfire conditions and declining volunteer numbers	Not applicable
Increased social impacts	Not applicable
Reducing our emissions	Comment

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Net Zero by 2025	Not applicable
Energy Efficiency	Not applicable
Energy Storage	Not applicable
Renewable Energy	Not applicable
Community Renewable Energy	Not applicable
Conserving valuable potable water	Not applicable
Stormwater management	Not applicable
Adaptive and recycled water resources	Not applicable
Keeping our shire green, cool and resilient	Not applicable
Advocating for Change	Comment
Are we increasing resilience?	Not applicable
What is the impact?	Not applicable
Economic benefits	Not applicable
Protecting our natural environment	Comment
Deforestation	Not applicable
Rural green infrastructure	Not applicable
Increasing our urban canopy	Not applicable
Rural roadsides	Not applicable
Rivers & Wetlands	Not applicable
Benefitting from our native forests	Not applicable
Moving sustainably: Transport	Comment

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Security of fuel supply	Not applicable
Transition to new fuel economy	Not applicable
Enabling access to the outdoors	Not applicable
Alternative fuel sources	Not applicable