Gender impact assessment toolkit

THE EQUALITY INSTITUTE

COMMISSION FOR **GENDER EQUALITY** IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

This toolkit was developed by **The Equality Institute** (EQI) in close consultation with the **Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector**. A previous iteration of the toolkit was developed by EQI and PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting (Australia) Pty Ltd (PwC) and piloted in seven areas across the Victorian Public Service, seven public entities, ten local councils, and a university.

The use of inclusive language in this document

When this document refers to 'woman/women' or 'man/men' it refers to female or male identifying people; this includes transgender people, cisgender people, and others who identify themselves within the spectrum of the gender identity of woman or man. This document also uses the term 'gender diverse people', who may identify as non-binary, trans, agender, qenderqueer, genderfluid or with any other term.

For more information see the Victorian Government Inclusive Language Guide.

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SECTION 1
How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is for:

- Defined entities under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- Any organisation in Victoria wanting to apply a gender lens to their work

This toolkit:

- Provides a step by step guide to conducting a best-practice gender impact assessment
- Is flexible so that you can choose the information that best meets your needs
- Recognises that the size and experience of your organisation as well as the impact of the policy, program, or service you are assessing will affect the time you spend on each step
- Contains tailored guidance for different types of organisations
- Includes useful resources, practical tips and templates

Figure 1: Guide to the toolkit sections

SECTION 2

Introducing gender impact assessments

This section explains gender impact assessments and the related obligations under the Gender Equality Act.

SECTION 3

How do I conduct a gender impact assessment

This section takes you through the four steps to conduct a gender impact assessment.

Page 16 contains an overview of these steps so you can decide where you should focus.

This toolkit should be used in conjunction with **Templates and resources to support gender impact assessments.** This contains templates to support your work in Section 3. Using these templates provides a useful record for reporting and can assist with demonstrating your compliance with the Gender Equality Act.

Using the icons

There are a number of icons to help you navigate through the toolkit sections and the gender impact assessment process.

Indicates suggestions and useful information to assist with applying a gender lens.

Indicates information to support you to apply an intersectional approach to your gender analysis.

Signposts resources which provide additional information and further reading.

If you are experienced in gender analysis, this icon contains suggestions on the ways you can extend your gender impact assessment to go the extra mile.

Provides tailored questions and suggestions for defined entities including local councils, universities, and public entities.

There are a number of templates to support Section 3. This icon indicates points at which you may wish to use the template provided.

SECTION 2
Introducing gender impact assessments

2.1 What are gender impact assessments?

Gender impact assessments are a way of critically thinking about how policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people.

In many circumstances, women and gender diverse individuals may not have the same access to decision-making processes, resources, economic or social opportunities. This means that policies, programs and services are likely to be experienced differently, and have different outcomes for people of different genders.

The aim of gender impact assessments is to create better and fairer outcomes and ensure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Figure 2: Gender impact assessments ask:

Does this policy, program or service:

- Do everything it can to ensure resources are distributed and used equally?
- Consider the different needs of people of all genders?
- Benefit some people more than others because they have greater access?
- Have the potential to influence broader social norms and gender roles in society?

Taking an intersectional approach

'Intersectionality' refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. These aspects can include gender, Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation. This amplifies barriers to services, increases the risk of social isolation, and exacerbates social and economic disadvantage, including housing insecurity.

The Gender Equality Act says that, if practicable, you should take into account intersectionality when undertaking a gender impact assessment (see below).

Throughout this toolkit you will see information to support applying an intersectional approach to developing and implementing policies, services and programs. Look for this icon.

Local Councils
have you considered?

How your obligations under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Section 24) and the *Local Government Act 2020* (Sections 28, 46, 48) interact with the gender impact assessment process.

Other policies that might be relevant for the gender impact assessment process such as your Community Engagement Policy or a dedicated strategy to support gender equality in your Council Plan.

Whether your Council has endorsed and taken any relevant actions in support of the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter.

Universities
have you considered?

How gender impact assessments might interact with your obligations under the Commonwealth *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* and the data previously provided to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

2.2 What does the Gender Equality Act say about gender impact assessments?

Part 3 of the Gender Equality Act requires organisations to undertake gender impact assessments when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service which has a direct and significant impact on the public.

Under the Gender Equality Act, a gender impact assessment must:

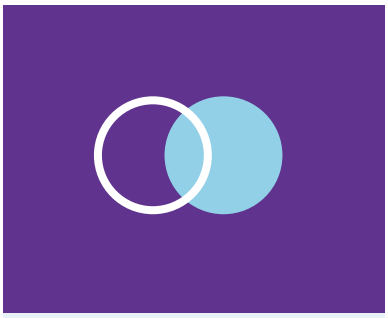
1 Assess

How will the policy, program or service affect people of different genders?

2 Explain

How will you design or change the policy, program or service to better meet the needs of people of different genders?

How will it address gender inequality and promote gender equality?



3 Apply an intersectional approach

Consider how the end user's experience of gender inequality may be shaped by other aspects of their identity including: Aboriginality; age; disability; ethnicity; gender identity; race; religion; sexual orientation.

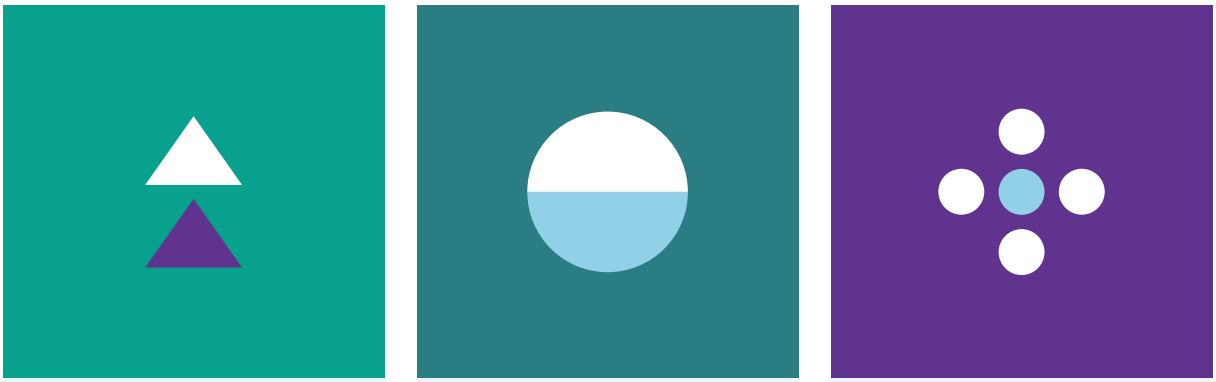
Tip

The Gender Equality Act requires you to undertake a gender impact assessment when you are developing a policy, program or service which has a **direct and significant impact on the public.**

However, given the benefits of gender impact assessments, it is a good idea to consider the impacts of any decision; no matter how small. This could be as simple as including the questions in Figure 2 as a routine part of any decision-making process.

2.3 What are the benefits of gender impact assessments?

Figure 3: The benefits of gender impact assessments



Improved policy making & service delivery

- More responsive policies, programs and services.
- Recognising and addressing unintended consequences of policies, services or projects on women, gender diverse people and gender equality.
- Greater public awareness of and access to policies, programs and services.

Achieving gender equality

- Providing data and evidence of what works to improve gender equality and to improve outcomes for all members of the Victorian community.
- Helping to prevent unintended negative consequences where a policy, program or service might inadvertently reinforce or contribute to inequality.
- Challenging the harmful gender attitudes and social norms that underpin drivers of violence against women, girls and gender diverse people.

Better use of resources

- More tailored services, based on gender and sex-disaggregated data, research and direct insights from community members.
- Better collaboration with stakeholders and Victorian community members to build an understanding of the problem, context and solution.

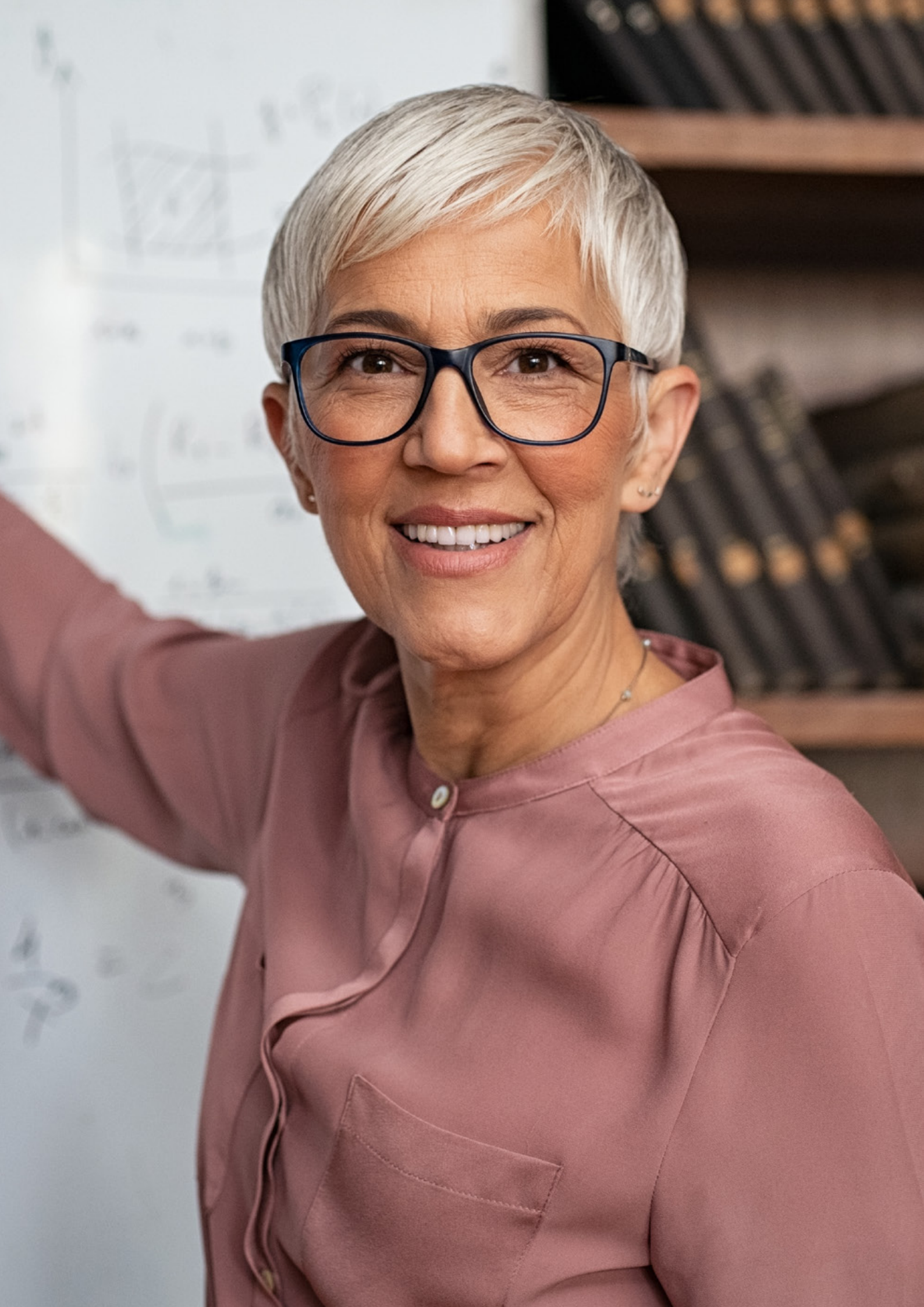
Tip

Consider how to foster and share ownership of the gender impact assessment process across the organisation through staff briefings, training, goal setting and performance reviews.

Table 1: Gender disparities in Victoria and Australia: Some Key Facts

Violence Against Women	▶ 1 in 3 Australian women have experienced some form of violence. ▶ Violence is most likely perpetrated by a male intimate partner, in the home, over a prolonged period. ▶ Gender diverse people are also more likely to experience acts of physical violence.
Public Spaces	▶ Nearly two-thirds (61%) of Victorian women feel unsafe while walking alone at night in their neighbourhoods, compared to about a quarter (26%) of men. ▶ According to Victoria Police statistics, one in 11 women has reported being sexually harassed while on public transport. ▶ Women from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, and gender diverse people are more likely to encounter acts of verbal or physical assault in public places.
Accessing Health Services	▶ Women are more likely to avoid or defer using a health service because of the costs involved, while men are more likely to defer using health care services because of gender norms that discourage seeking help.
Employment	▶ The full-time gender pay gap in Victoria is 9.6%. ▶ Women constitute 37.6% of all full-time employees and 67.9% of all part-time employees in Australia. ▶ The national workforce participation rate is 59.9% for women and 69.6% for men. ▶ Median superannuation balances for women at retirement are 21.6% lower than those for men.
Unpaid Care	▶ On average, Victorian women do 13 additional hours per week of unpaid work and care than men (a difference of 85 working days per year).
Natural Disasters/ Crises	▶ Family violence increases during and after a crisis or natural disaster. ▶ The frequency and severity of family violence has increased dramatically during the COVID-19 outbreak with a 75% increase in Google searches for family violence support.

Sources: Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2020. "Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics 2020", Factsheet series, February 2020 [accessed 21 Sept. 2020], Workplace Gender Equality Agency. 2020. "Gender workplace statistics at a glance 2020," August 2020, [accessed 21 Sept. 2020], Deloitte. 2018. 'Modelling the value of unpaid work and care,' July 2019. [accessed 21 Sept 2020], University of Melbourne. 2020. Domestic Violence, Isolation and COVID-19, [accessed 6 Aug 2020]. Our Watch. 2020. 'Quick Facts,' [accessed 21 Sept 2020]. Australian Government Department of Social Services. 2018. HILDA Survey, [accessed 21 Sept 2020].



SECTION 3
How do I conduct a gender impact assessment?

Overview of the gender impact assessment process

This section:

- Provides general guidance on the four steps involved in conducting gender impact assessments.
- Is designed to be used by diverse organisations and adapted as needed to different contexts.
- Includes questions and resources which provide more tailored guidance for defined entities.
- Provides guidance on where you can find further information and resources to support you.

On the next page you will find a diagram summarising the four steps of a gender impact assessment. This will help you to consider where you need to spend your time.

For more information

You can contact the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector for assistance and guidance on conducting a gender impact assessment.

Tip

Section 3 should be used alongside the templates in **Templates and resources to support gender impact assessments**. These templates provide a way for you to record your analysis and aim to support your reporting requirements and obligations under the Gender Equality Act.

This icon indicates when you should use the templates.

Practical Example

Throughout Section 3 a hypothetical example is included to demonstrate the four steps and use of the templates. You will find this at the end of each step.

In this hypothetical situation, a main road, connecting a residential area with the business district in a town, is increasingly congested during peak times. A team has been tasked with assessing use of the road and developing solutions to meet the needs of users including decreasing congestion.

Figure 4: Overview of the four steps for conducting a gender impact assessment

The steps are designed to make the process simple and comprehensive. But it doesn't have to be linear - you might find you want to revisit an earlier step as you build your understanding.

Step 1
Define the issues and challenge assumptions

Define the problem your policy, service or program is trying to address and make sure this definition considers how gender shapes the issue(s).

- Identify the issue(s) your policy, program or service is aiming to address.
- Using key questions, think about how gender and other factors might shape the policy issue, program or service you are working on.

Template 1 supports this step. This step works best when incorporated early in the process of developing a new policy, process or service.

What else do you need to focus on to consider the different ways women, men and gender non-binary people access and experience this issue?

- Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy, program or service has the same needs from it?
- Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy, program or service?

Step 2
Understand your context

Collect evidence to understand how gender shapes the context.

- Consider the information you already have.
- Think about how to use internal data, desktop research and stakeholder engagement to investigate further.

Template 2 supports this step. If you are short on resources or time, thinking about the best way to get the evidence you need is crucial.

What can we find out from data, research and stakeholder engagement?

- Who is likely to be affected?
- What are the lived experiences of diverse groups?
- What different impacts may be likely for different people?

Step 3
Options analysis

Develop an option or options for your policy, program or service and weigh up the gendered impact.

- Use the information you have gathered in Steps 1 and 2 to develop an option or options for your proposed policy, program or service.
- Consider the gendered benefits and costs and overall gender impact of the option(s).

Template 1 supports this step. This step works best when incorporated early in the process of developing a new policy, process or service.

What are the potential policy options and what gendered impact might they have?

- 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?
- Does your policy, program or service potentially have negative unintended consequences for certain groups of people that will outweigh any benefits?

Step 4
Make recommendations

Make a final recommendation based on the evidence collected and analysis conducted.

- Document what evidence has been used to inform your final recommendation.
- Draft a recommendation and provide a rationale for the solution proposed.
- Consider any mitigation strategies that may be needed.

Template 4 supports this step. This step also contains a checklist to ensure you have completed all the necessary steps.

Based on the evidence, what is the recommended approach?

- How does this approach meet the needs of people of different genders; address gender inequality; and promote gender equality?

Step 1
Define the issues and challenge assumptions

In this step you will:

- Identify the issues that your policy, service or program is aiming to address.
- Think about how gender, and other inequalities, might shape the policy issue, program or service you are working on.

This step works best if you work collectively with your team members.

Team members from different backgrounds with a broad range of personal and professional experiences will bring a diversity of expertise and perspectives to this process.

Tip

If you have already thought about the potential gendered implications of the issue your policy, program or service is trying to address, or your policy, program or service is small with only a minor impact, you may not need to spend long on this step.

Public entities
have you considered?

The grants that you administer – what might gender impact assessment reveal about these programs?

Universities
have you considered?

Developing a map of policies and functions across your institution and departments? This would allow you to allocate and embed responsibilities for undertaking gender impact assessments across all areas of your business.

Part A: What issue(s) are you aiming to address?

Consider the issue(s) that your policy, service or program is aiming to address. Be as specific as you can.

Another way of thinking about this is to ask why is this policy, service or program needed?

Record the issue(s) your policy, service or program is aiming to address in **Template 1.**

Part B: How does gender shape the policy issue, service or program you are working on?

We often make assumptions about how an issue or action will affect certain groups of women, men and gender diverse people based on gendered stereotypes. Gender-based assumptions and expectations can affect our understanding of who may benefit from a policy, program or service.

This step is designed to provide space to challenge gender-based assumptions and to think about how gender might shape the policy issue, program or service you are working on.

Tip

You may not have all the answers at this stage. Note down any questions where you think you need to undertake further research to better understand how gender shapes the context of your work. Step 2 will assist with gathering the further information you need.

Thinking about the issue(s) you identified in Part A, discuss the following key questions with your team members:

- Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy, program or service included in the decision-making?
- Do you think that people of different genders access this policy, program or service at the same rate?
- Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy, program or service has the same needs from it? *Think through in a practical sense how people of different genders might benefit from this.*
- Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy, program or service?
- What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?

Reflect on your discussion. **What else do you need to focus on to take into account the different ways women, men and gender diverse people access and experience this issue?**

Public entities have you considered?

Collaborating with other departments or agencies and reviewing similar policies could help you identify relevant equality issues.

Local Councils have you considered?

The demographic profile and variety of community groups in your municipality. Which communities might need more focus? How will you engage with local women's organisations and service providers?

Use **Template 1** to record your discussion and identify where further information is needed. Note down any additional factors you will focus on to consider how gender shapes the issue you are working on.

Practical Example – Step 1

WITHOUT USING A GENDER LENS, THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM IS DEFINED AS:

Congestion on a major road connecting a residential area with the business district is impacting on travel times to access employment and other services.

USING STEP 1 TO APPLY A GENDER LENS THE ISSUE IS BROADENED TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Gendered differences in how people currently access and use the road.
- How gendered roles and responsibilities related to care-giving will influence use of the road and pedestrian areas.
- How other intersecting factors, such as socio-economic status or age might influence access to and use of the road and pedestrian areas.
- Gaps in stakeholder engagement from different communities on potential solutions for road congestion and pedestrian needs.

Step 2
Understand the policy context

In this step you will:

- Identify the issues that your policy, service or program is aiming to address.
- Think about how gender, and other inequalities, might shape the policy issue, program or service you are working on.

Tip

If you have already undertaken research and data collection on the gender implications of your policy, program or service then you may not need to spend as much time on this step.

But even if you have undertaken extensive desktop research, it is important to build your understanding through meaningful stakeholder engagement. Part C can support this.

Part A: What information might you need?

There are three areas where it may be helpful to gather information to better understand how gender shapes the context for your policy, program, or service:

1	**Who is likely to be affected?**
2	**What are the lived experiences of diverse groups?**
3	**What different impacts may be likely for different people?**

Table 2 contains a checklist of questions which can help you to collect this information. It is a good idea to work in teams or with a colleague to consider these questions.

Tip

If the policy, program or service you are assessing is small and discrete you may not need in-depth information in all areas.

For each area consider:

- Do you already have this information?
- If not, where could you find this information? Parts B and C of this section provide guidance on using internal data, desktop research and conducting meaningful stakeholder consultations.

Public entities
have you considered?

Who is accessing the services you provide? Are there groups who are not represented as much as you would expect?

What does the data say about how women, men and gender diverse people experience your organisation's focus area(s) such as healthcare, sport, the arts, transport?

Universities
have you considered?

Taking a collaborative approach to the assessment process? The unit responsible for equality and diversity, the relevant policy / program owner, the human resources department or student services may all have a role to play.

Using **Template 2**, consider each of the guiding questions in turn to determine whether information is already available or whether more information is needed.

Table 2: Guiding questions: Information to understand the policy context

1 Who is likely to be affected?

- Think about the target population for this policy, program or service and other diverse groups who are also likely to be affected. How many, and what proportions of the affected population are likely to be:
  - women;
  - men;
  - of various gender identities;
  - of various cultural backgrounds;
  - living with disabilities;
  - in different age brackets;
  - from different socio-economic backgrounds?
- Are there gaps in your knowledge on who is likely to be impacted? How can these be filled to build a better understanding of the context of this proposed policy, program or service?

2 What are the lived experiences of diverse groups?

- Do women, men, gender diverse people and diverse communities who will be affected by this policy attain the same rates of:
  - employment;
  - wages;
  - assets;
  - education;
  - access to decision-making;
  - health care?
- Are there different social expectations and responsibilities for different genders in the community that you are working with?
- Are there gaps in your knowledge of the social factors, social expectations and perspectives from different groups such as people of various ages, cultural and social or socio-economic backgrounds?

3 What different impacts may be likely for different people?

- How are diverse communities likely to be impacted? Think about how gendered roles, expectations or responsibilities may shape how, when and why they access or use this service.
- What barriers might inhibit different genders or diverse community groups from accessing and using a service?

Tip

Has your project, branch or department area done any previous work to gather perspectives from different genders and population groups that could be used to build an understanding of the context? This might include previous research projects, consultations and submissions, enquiries and complaints logs, census findings, survey data or project evaluations.

You may not need to collect new data but can simply use existing data sets if they contain the information you need.

Part B: How can you use data and research to get the information you need?

In Part A you will have thought about the information you already have as well as further information you might need.

This part is designed to support you to think about how you can use other data and research sources to build your understanding of how gender shapes the context you are working in.

Look back at Template 2 and where you have identified you need more information. At the end of this part you should be able to fill in the data and research sources you think will help you to fill these gaps.

Tip

If you are a smaller organisation, consider if you could pool resources with other organisations to develop a shared database of evidence, such as research reports or population data.

You can build your understanding of how gender shapes the context of a policy, program or service by:

- Using and collecting disaggregated data.
- Seeking out gender-specific research related to the policy, program or service area you are working on.

This toolkit looks at three main sources of information:

Internal data

Desktop research

Meaningful stakeholder engagement

After reading the guidance below, use **Template 2** to indicate where you think you will find the information you need and to keep track of any useful sources you locate.

Using internal data

In scoping, researching and designing new policies, programs and services, it can be useful to consider what internal sex- or gender-disaggregated data is available to, or collected by, your organisation.

This could be available in the form of:

- previous commissioned research and policy reports;
- project and program evaluation reports;
- complaints handling data;
- customer and end-user data including social media data;
- consultation and policy submissions.

Could the design of your policy, program or service area benefit from more disaggregated data to better understand how gender intersects with issues of race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and socio-economic factors? If no disaggregated data is available, consider if you can use other methods such as stakeholder engagement to understand the potential impacts by gender and other intersectional issues.

Take the next step

Advocate for disaggregated data

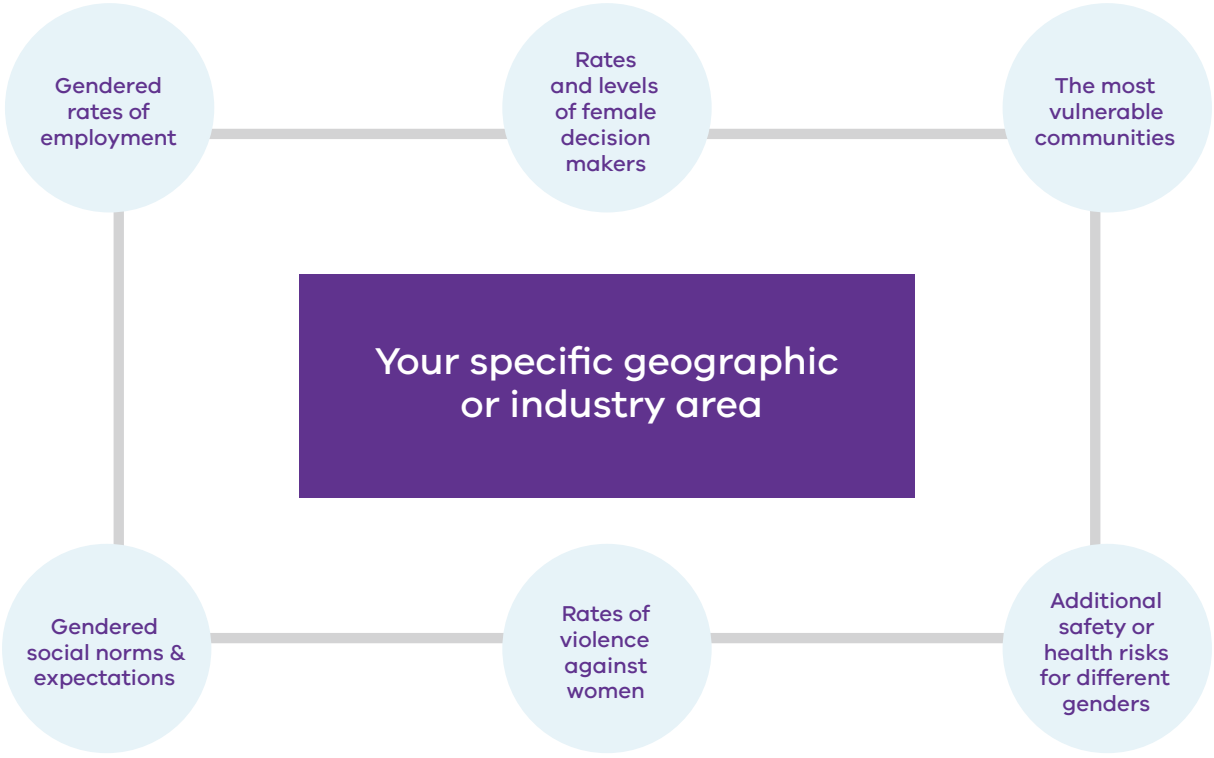
Data that shows impacts broken down by gender and other attributes is still limited. The new obligations under the Gender Equality Act could provide a good opportunity to advocate for the collection of disaggregated data in your organisation.

Desktop research

Desktop research is a review of existing research for information relevant to a project's needs.

In **Templates and resources to support gender impact assessments** you will find a list of open-source Victorian and Australian research and data on gender, by different indicators, including workforce participation, education, health, and violence against women. This should be a helpful starting point. Figure 5 below also provides some ideas on ways you could focus your research.

Figure 5: Potential research focus areas



For more information

To read more about desktop research see the Victorian Government website: www.vic.gov.au/desktop-research

You can also find a useful step-by-step guide to conducting desktop research here: www.thisisservicedesigndoing.com/methods/secondary-research

You may also have access to the Victorian Government Library Service to access academic journals and previous government evaluations and reports on issues related to gender.

Victoria's Gender Equality Baseline Report 2019 provides an overview of the current status of gender equality in Victoria and is a useful reference.

Local Government Victoria has produced a Gender Equity in Local Government Research Companion which contains useful data and resources.

Tip

Are there avenues to gather perspectives directly from women and diverse communities to build your understanding of the context, such as research made by and for community groups?

Has any research been conducted to specifically analyse intersectional perspectives on the policy, program or service you are investigating?

For example, is there information available to understand the different rates and types of violence experienced by different genders, and how this intersects with other forms of disadvantage and discrimination, to shape peoples' sense of safety and wellbeing?

Take the next step

Quantitative Analysis

If you have scope to extend your research even further, you could undertake your own quantitative analysis. A quantitative analysis tool has been developed to support this process including identifying indicators, estimating policy impacts and interpreting the outputs. You can find the Quantitative Analysis Tool here.

Part C: The importance of consultation and meaningful stakeholder engagement

Applying a gender lens to stakeholder engagement means taking time to actively seek out the knowledge, perspectives and experiences of women, men and gender diverse groups on all policies, programs and services, not just initiatives targeted at them. It is about creating a more empowering space for all members of the Victorian community to take part in planning and building responsive policies, programs and services.

Inclusive stakeholder engagement recognises the diversity within each community and of individuals. It also recognises that intersectionality can further exacerbate barriers to public participation and engagement and that it is crucial that everyone is given an opportunity and support to participate.

Below, you will find general resources to support stakeholder engagement such as how to undertake stakeholder mapping and how to create a stakeholder engagement plan. As part of this planning you should consider how you will apply a gender lens and ensure you are undertaking inclusive stakeholder engagement. The checklists in this Part are designed to assist with this.

Universities and TAFEs have you considered?

If your university or TAFE has any specific gender equality groups or networks that should be consulted such as Women in Engineering, Women in STEMM, or LGBTIQ+ networks.

Resources to support stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Framework and Toolkit
The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services has created a Stakeholder Engagement Framework and Toolkit. This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to developing and implementing a successful stakeholder engagement plan: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/stakeholder-engagement-and-public-participation-framework-and-toolkit

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Summary
A simple online summary of stakeholder engagement: pressbooks.bccampus.ca/technicalwriting/chapter/stakeholderengagement/

Engage Victoria
This is an online consultation tool for use by Victorian Government departments and agencies: www.vic.gov.au/set-public-consultation.

Tip

Consider establishing a women's advisory committee and/or an internal gender equality working group to advise on gender equality issues and support the consultation process.

Checklists to support meaningful and inclusive stakeholder engagement

Participation should be safe, empowering and respectful.

Who to engage with:	How to engage:
■ Have you engaged with the 'users' of your policy, program or service? ■ Have you spoken with local women's organisations or peak bodies that represent diverse groups? This may help to identify barriers and impacts you would not have thought about. ■ Do the stakeholders you are engaging represent the level of diversity seen in the population that is going to be affected? If not, you may be missing valuable insights.	■ How will you make your stakeholder engagement accessible? Consider things like the time of day, venue accessibility, and interpretation services. ■ Are there existing mechanisms already in place to seek stakeholder views that could be used for engagement? ■ How will you respect and create space for participants' own contextual understanding, knowledge and lived experiences? ■ Have you thought about how you will share the learnings, process of decision-making and outcomes with participating stakeholders?

Tip

Existing governance bodies may be useful to engage with on your policy, program or service or to assist you to identify groups or bodies that should be engaged with.

These include:

- the Commission for Children and Young People, which provides a voice for children and young people;
- the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council, which provides insight from the lived experience of family violence victim survivors into the design and implementation of family violence reforms; and
- the Victorian Multicultural Commission, as the voice of Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Practical Example – Step 2

WITHOUT APPLYING A GENDER IMPACT LENS

To develop a solution that benefits the greatest number of people, the team conducts research that includes:

- Internal data that is not disaggregated, in relation to road use.
- Research into methods to ease congestion during peak work travel hours prior to 9am and after 4.30pm such as widening the road to add an extra lane.
- Stakeholder consultation with local businesses to determine peak travel times for employees.

WITH APPLYING A GENDER IMPACT LENS

To develop a solution that benefits the greatest number of people, the team conducts research that specifically investigates gender issues. Their research includes:

- Internal disaggregated data on road use which shows that women are less likely to drive and more likely to use the road as pedestrians, particularly at school start and finish times.
- Desktop research to investigate how gendered roles influence access and use of roads. This reveals that women have less access to cars and their main concerns are as pedestrians. Their trips by road tend to be shorter, more frequent, and often during off-peak times.
- Stakeholder reference groups are organised with young mothers. These reveal the footpath beside the road is used to reach the local school and maternal health service. There are concerns about the lack of gutter ramps for prams and issues crossing the road safely with children.

After you have completed Step 2, revisit Step 1 to check if you are satisfied with the definition you developed, or whether there are any additions as a result of the further evidence you collected in Step 2.

Universities
have you considered?

If your university participates in the SAGE Project (Science in Australia Gender Equity Project), could your gender impact assessment work support an Athena SWAN Award application?

Step 3
Options analysis

In this step you will:

- Use the information you have gathered in Step 1 and 2 to develop an option or options for your proposed policy, program or service.
- Undertake options analysis to consider the gendered benefits, costs and overall gendered impact of the option(s).

This step pulls together all the analysis you have undertaken in Steps 1 and 2. You can use the information you have recorded in Template 1 and 2 for easy reference.

Tip

Record as much detail as you can in **Template 3.** You can use this template as evidence of your Gender Impact Assessment process and to meet your obligations under the Gender Equality Act.

Local Councils have you considered?

Tapping into peak bodies who can offer support and resources such as Local Government Victoria, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Australia Local Government Women's Association.

Collaborating and sharing best practice and data with other councils. The Municipal Association of Victoria hosts a promising practice portal which could be used for this purpose.

Options analysis steps

Refer to Template 3. This section will guide you through each part of the template step-by-step.

Part A: Describe your policy options

Using the data and evidence you have collected, develop options to address your policy issue.

For each option identified, describe the proposed policy solution or design of the program or service you are working on. Include a description of the overall aim and objective that you are trying to achieve, and a description of who you have identified as the target audience. 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.

Tip

If your policy, program or service is likely to have major and far reaching impacts, we recommend you **identify at least two options** and assess the gendered benefits and costs of each.

If your policy, program or service is smaller in scope and impact you may wish to focus on **just one option.**

Record the description of one or two options for your proposed policy, program or service in **Template 3.**

Part B: Describe the gendered benefits and costs

Here you will use your analysis in Steps 1 and 2 to identify the potential benefits and costs of your proposed policy, program or service.

The Gender Equality Act requires you to show how your policy, program or service will meet the needs of persons of different genders; address gender inequality; and promote gender equality. See if you can address these specific criteria when you are identifying the benefits of each option.

Below are some general guiding questions to assist you to think through the benefits and costs. However, remember that your responses should be based on the research, data, consultations and analysis relevant to your context. Be as specific as possible in terms of the change you expect to see.

Tip

Review **Templates 1** and **2** to remind you of the potential impacts you identified as part of Steps 1 and 2.

Benefits	Costs
■ 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? For example, will it contribute to a more balanced distribution of unpaid care labour and family responsibilities between women and men? ■ Will it make women and girls safer in public or private spaces?	■ 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?

Take the next step

Quantitative Analysis

You can also use the Quantitative Analysis Tool (referred to in Step 2) to help you understand how the estimated benefits and/or costs of your proposed policy, program or service options (where possible to quantify), may impact men women and gender diverse people differently. For example, if you have developed an alternative option that changes the gender ratio for a particular indicator, you can re-enter your policy impact into a new version of the tool, and understand how it affects people of different genders relative to your original option.

Record the benefits and costs identified for your proposed policy, program or service in **Template 3**. Remember you will need to repeat this for each option.

Part C: Overall gender impact

Consider your cost and benefit analysis. Do the benefits outweigh the costs or does your policy, program or service potentially have negative unintended consequences for certain groups of people that will outweigh any benefits? Figure 6 provides some examples of negative and positive outcomes. Consider whether any of these apply.

Figure 6: Negative and Positive Gender Impacts

On the next page you will find an example of a costs and benefits analysis of two options. One of these options was assessed as having an overall negative gender impact and the other option was assessed as having an overall positive gender impact.

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.

Using the example as a guide, record your assessment of the overall gender outcome in **Template 3.** Repeat this for each option.

Practical Example – Step 3

Option 1

PROPOSED OPTION

Widen the main road to include an extra lane in both directions and remove one set of pedestrian traffic lights to ease congestion during peak times.

BENEFITS

The proposed road widening will decrease traffic congestion to the business district, shortening the travel time of employees and those accessing services in the business district.

COSTS AND RISKS

Widening the road will decrease the space available for pedestrians and will entirely remove pedestrian access on one side of the road. This may lead to risk of pedestrian injury and will decrease access for pedestrians particularly for wheelchair users and prams.

The pedestrian lights to be removed provide access to the maternal health centre. Users will need to walk for an extra ten minutes to cross the road safely to access this service.

OVERALL GENDER IMPACT / RESPONSE

The overall gender impact is considered **negative**. This option:

- Is constructed based on the principle of being "fair" by treating everyone the same.
- Perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles and relations.
- Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for women and men and gender diverse people.
- Does not take into account issues of intersectionality.

Option 2

PROPOSED OPTION

Based on the evidence gathered through the gender impact assessment, it is proposed that:

A campaign is launched with employers in the business district to encourage car-pooling, staggered start times and cycling as a means of travelling to and from work.

Pedestrian access is improved alongside the main road with "drop kerbs" for pedestrian, pram and disabled road crossing.

Pedestrian traffic lights are removed at the maternal health service location, and a new pedestrian ramped bridge installed.

BENEFITS

The transport campaign with employers should decrease road congestion during peak times and have environmental benefits with decreased car use.

Strategies to improve pedestrian access will improve useability and safety for young families with children and for people with disabilities.

Strategies will be included to collect more gender-disaggregated data or build evidence and research to better understand the needs and experiences of gender diverse residents.

COSTS AND RISKS

There is the risk that the transport campaign will not result in behaviour change by road users.

OVERALL GENDER IMPACT / RESPONSE

The overall gender impact of this policy is **positive** in that it:

- considers gender norms, roles and relations for women, men and gender diverse people and how they affect access to and control over resources.
- considers the specific needs of women, men, gender diverse people and how their needs are related to other areas of potential discrimination or marginalisation.

Step 4
Recommendation

The final step in the gender impact assessment process is to make a final recommendation based on your analysis.

You should explain the rationale for the recommendation you have proposed. For example, in line with the Gender Equality Act, you could explain how your recommendation meets the needs of people of different genders; addresses gender inequality; and promotes gender equality. Use your analysis in Step 3 (Template 3).

If you have identified any potential risks in relation to your proposed policy, service or program (see Template 3), it is a good idea to include mitigation strategies that could be used to avoid any harmful unintended outcomes.

Record your recommendation in **Template 4.** Having a formal record of your recommendation and the rationale for your decision is important. This can be used in reporting and to demonstrate compliance with your obligations under the Gender Equality Act.

The recommendation in relation to the example that has been used throughout this toolkit is below. This provides an idea of the type of rationale and mitigation strategies that could be included.

Practical Example – Step 4

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that action is taken to address the current congestion during peak times on the main road. Additionally, based on the findings from the gender impact assessment, it is also recommended that action is taken to address the needs of pedestrians, predominantly women, using the walkway alongside the road.

Specifically, it is recommended that:

- Rather than increasing the number of lanes for car traffic, the pedestrian walkway is improved alongside the main road with "drop kerbs" for pedestrian, pram and disabled road crossing, a cycle way created and a pedestrian bridge installed to enable pedestrian access to the maternal health service. Given the majority of pedestrians are women, particularly young mothers, this will address the current gender inequality in the focus on road maintenance.
- A campaign is launched with employers in the business district to encourage car-pooling, staggered start times and cycling as a means of travelling to and from work. This aims to decrease congestion without impacting on pedestrian access and will also have an environmental benefit. A committee comprised of people of all genders from the residential area will support with monitoring the impact of the campaign. This will promote gender equality in local decision-making.

Final checklist

Check that you have taken all the necessary steps to apply a gender lens to your work, so you can be confident it meets the different needs of all Victorian community members and supports equal access to resources and opportunities.

Have you:

- Challenged your own assumptions and identified gaps in gender knowledge? (Step 1).
- Worked with your team to identify who is likely to be impacted by this policy, program or service and what gendered factors might influence the way different community members are impacted? (Step 1).
- Conducted desktop research and analysed gender-disaggregated statistics to investigate how issues of gender, cultural identity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or religion might shape how your policy, program or service is implemented or experienced? (Step 2).
- Undertaken collaborative approaches to consultation and engagement to understand access to, and experience of the policy, program or service and/or co-design a solution? (Step 2).
- Developed an option or options for your proposed policy, program or service that improves the gender-related benefits and costs? (Step 3).
- Made a recommendation with rationale for your approach which considers how your recommendation meets the needs of people of different genders; addresses gender inequality; and promotes gender equality? (Step 4).

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