**Email from CEO to all Council staff**

**TO**: All Council staff

**FROM**: CEO

**SUBJECT**: Taking action together to prevent work-related gendered violence through gender equity

We are all aware that incidents of violence, particularly against women, are increasing. While most of the stories in the media are about domestic and family violence, we also have reports of abuse and harassment of our female and gender-diverse staff when going about their daily work. Sadly, that is both by members of the community and within our workplace.

Violence in any form – whether it is snide remarks, threats, sexual harassment, physical or emotional abuse - is never ok.

Our Council is committed to gender equity and in saying no to violence. And so am I.

Late last year, each of the CEOs of the six LGAs across Gippsland made a commitment to *stand united in our commitment to gender equity. Together, we will lead, build strong partnerships, and promote equity, creating safe workplaces and communities. Through our collective efforts, we will work toward a future free from violence against women.*

Coordinated by Gippsland Women’s Health, all six LGAs, including our Council, have agreed to undertake a range of awareness, systems, capacity building and collaboration activities through the Our Equal Local Government initiative. Our shared goal is to raise awareness of and reduce work-related gendered violence for staff.

**Why are we involved in the Our Equal Local Government initiative?**

Put simply, because we all deserve to be safe, equal and respected at work. Everyone deserves a better go and to be given the same opportunities to succeed and thrive, irrespective of their gender.

But sadly that isn’t the case. Abuse, harassment, discrimination and threats of violence affect all of us – councillors, managers, front line employees, as well as our customer service teams.

Statistically there are more women employed in many of these roles, and the hierarchical nature of local government can lead to an increased risk of gendered violence, including sexual harassment. That’s why we are focused on gender equity.

**What does this mean for me?**

We need to continue to have conversations about violence, abuse and harassment – challenging assumptions and beliefs to help create a safer and more equitable society. Because gender inequity is the primary driver of gendered violence.

It is important we all understand the deﬁnition of work-related gendered violence and regard it as an occupational health and safety issue. We all have rights and responsibilities and it is important that we know what they are.

We will also make sure that you know how to recognise, how to report incidents and how to respond appropriately to and prevent work-related gendered violence including sexual harassment. In addition, we are also stepping up our responses where our people are harmed. There will also be a public campaign reminding the community that Councils won’t tolerate any form of violence, including verbal or physical abuse against any of our staff.

**My commitment to you**

I am personally committed to:

* Challenging anyone condoning violence against women, girls and gender diverse people.
* Promoting women's, girls and gender diverse people independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
* Building social norms that foster professional identities not constrained by rigid stereotypes.
* Supporting boys and men to develop positive and supportive male peer relationships.

Through our collective efforts, we will work toward a future free from violence against women, girls and gender diverse people. Because we all deserve Respect, Fairness and a Better Go.

Find out more [here](https://gwhealth.asn.au/our-equal-local-government/) and if you have any questions, please speak to your manager or get in touch with me directly.

Warm regards,

[Insert CEO Name]

