

Gender Equal Representation Policy

v(2)



Title	Gender Equal Representation Policy
Summary	This Policy guides Councillor appointments to committees, boards and panels to improve gender equal representation over time. It supports fair and equitable participation by ensuring gender representation principles are considered in Council decision-making, without requiring Councillors to declare their gender.
Document Type	Policy
Relevant Strategic Plan Objective	Strategic Direction 5: Progressive responsive and effective civic leadership.
Legislative Reference	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977</i> <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i>
Related Council Documents	- Model Code of Conduct - Inner West Council Code of Meeting Practice
Version Control	See last page

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1 Purpose

The Gender Equal Representation Policy provides a framework to guide Councillor appointment decisions to committees, boards and panels, with the aim of improving gender equal representation over time. This Policy supports fair and equitable participation by encouraging Councillors to consider gender representation principles when reviewing nominations and making appointment decisions. The Policy is implemented through Council's reporting processes, where the existing composition of committees, boards and panels is presented to inform decision-making. It does not require Councillors to declare their gender.

This Policy applies to Councillor representation on Council committees, external committees, boards and panels.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to Councillor appointments to Council committees, external committees, boards and panels. It applies at the point where Council considers nominations and makes appointment decisions. This Policy applies only to Councillors and does not extend to Council Officers, staff recruitment, or the appointment of external members to committees, boards or panels. This Policy does not mandate quotas or require Councillors to declare their gender. It is intended to guide decision-making within existing governance processes.

3 Definitions

In the Gender Equal Representation Policy, the following terms have the following meanings:

Act	Local Government Act 1993.
appointment decision	The point at which Council considers nominations and determines Councillor appointments to committees, boards or panels, typically through a Council report and resolution.
Board/panel	Short term tenured committees created to achieve a specific outcome. It may consist of only Councillors, a mix of Councillors and council officials and/or consultants procured on behalf of Councillors or council officials

conflict of interest

Includes either a:

- Pecuniary conflict of interest.
- Significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest.
- Non-significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest,

as defined in the Model Code of Conduct and described in section 6 of the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Councillor

Any person elected or appointed to civic office, including the mayor, and includes members and chairpersons of county councils and voting representatives of the boards of joint organisations and chairpersons of joint organisations.

Council Committee

A committee established by council comprising of councillors, that the council has delegated functions to.

Council committee member

A person other than a Councillor or Council Officer who is a member of a Council committee other than a wholly advisory committee, and a person other than a Councillor who is a member of Council's audit, risk and improvement committee.

Council Officer

Inner West Council members of staff (including full-time, part-time, casual and contracted staff).

Council Official

Councillors, Council Officers, Council committee members and delegates of Council.

Executive

General Manager, Director Corporate, Director Engineering, Director Community, Director Planning, Director

External Committee	A committee established by external organisations that Council is a member of and to discuss matters relevant to their organisation which have requested councillor representation.
Gender	Gender refers to current gender, which may be different to sex recorded at birth and may be different to what is indicated on legal documents.
Gender Equal Representation	A composition of membership that reflects a balance of genders, including women, men, and people who are transgender or gender diverse/non-binary, having regard to the total number of positions available and the practical constraints of Councillor nominations.
merit	The skills, experience, knowledge and interest relevant to the role or function of a committee, board or panel.

4 Background

On 8 December 2020, Council resolved to create a policy on Gender Equal Representation on Councillor committees, boards and panels.

This resolution recognised the importance of equitable representation in Councillor appointments, while also acknowledging the practical and governance limitations associated with mandating or monitoring gender identity disclosures. Since adoption, the Policy has been implemented through Council reporting processes, where current committee compositions are presented and Councillors are reminded of gender representation principles prior to making appointment decisions.

This approach reflects a balanced model that promotes equity outcomes while maintaining Councillor autonomy, privacy, and compliance with relevant legislation.

5 Policy Principles and Application

Council is committed to improving gender equal representation in Councillor appointments to committees, boards and panels over time.

When considering appointments, Council will have regard to the principle of maintaining a composition of membership that reflects a balance of genders, including women, men, and people who are transgender or gender diverse/non-binary.

This Policy is applied at the point of decision-making. Reports to Council will present the current composition of committees, boards and panels, and Councillors are expected to consider gender representation principles when reviewing nominations and voting on appointments.

Council will encourage nominations that contribute to improved gender representation, while also recognising that appointments are based on merit, Councillor interest, and the availability of nominees.

This Policy does not require Councillors to declare their gender, nor does it mandate specific outcomes. Where an equal gender balance is not achieved, Council will continue to have regard to this Policy in future appointment opportunities.

6 Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in an investigation of the alleged breach in line with relevant Council policies including the Model Code of Conduct.

Any alleged criminal offence or allegation of corrupt conduct will be referred to the relevant external agency.

7 Administrative Changes

From time-to-time circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made including branding, Council Officer titles or department changes and legislative name or title changes which are considered minor in nature and not required to be formally endorsed.

8 Version Control – Policy History

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years from the date of adoption or as required.

Governance use only:

Document	Gender Equal Representation Policy		Uncontrolled Copy When Printed
Custodian	Senior Manager Governance and Risk	Version #	Version 2
Adopted By	Council	ECM Document #	35192155
Next Review Date	August 2029		
Amended by	Changes made	Date Adopted	
Governance & Risk	New policy	3 August 2021	
Governance & Risk	Policy reviewed and updated to improve clarity, streamline content, and align wording with current Council practices.	25 August 2026	