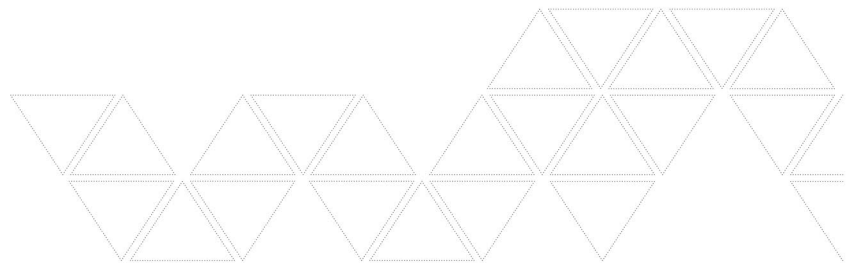
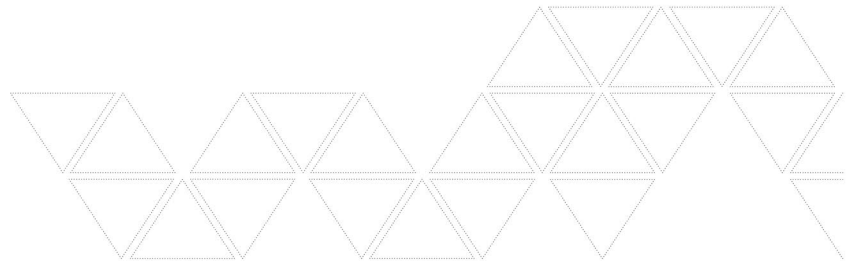


Family Violence and Gender Equality Strategic Action Plan

2022-2023



Acronyms	
C&M	Communications and Marketing Team
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
FVGE	Family Violence and Gender Equality
HR	Human Resources Team
MARAM	Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework
MLT	Management Leadership Team
OLT	Operational Leadership Team
VAP	Victims Assistance Program
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equality Agency



Family Violence and Gender Equality Strategic Action Plan

2022-2023

The Family Violence and Gender Equality (FVGE) Strategic Action Plan outlines the actions Merri Health (Merri) will take towards its strategic goal to 'create a better future for our community that is free of violence and is gender equitable, safe and respectful'.

The current Plan consolidates and builds on actions from Merri's FVGE Strategy 2020-2021, Gender Equality Strategy 2021 and LGBTIQ+ Directions and Strategic Plan 2021.

The FVGE Committee is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the Plan. The Committee's executive sponsor is the General Manager Family and Community, representing the Chief Executive Officer and Board.

Organisational principles

Our purpose

We strive to enrich diverse communities through the provision of quality health care and support services.

Our promise

We provide you with an outstanding customer experience, through genuine relationships, positive outcomes and community presence.

Our target audience

We work with everyone in our communities, especially those who want:

- to live more independently and well
- to have more choice and control over their health and wellbeing
- to connect with other people/services
- to have their diversity embraced and celebrated

Strategic goals

Merri's FVGE Strategic Action Plan 2022-2023 identifies an overarching goal to:

Create a better future for our community that is free of violence and is gender equitable, safe and respectful.

We commit to family violence and gender equality initiatives across the organisation through action in three strategic areas:

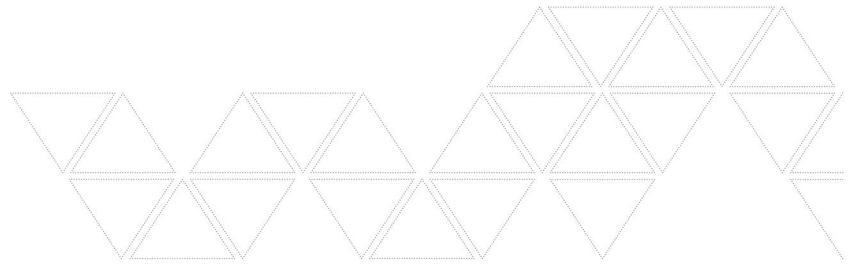
1. Leadership, workplace commitment and responsiveness
2. Community education and awareness raising
3. Workforce and organisational practice

Definitions

Family violence – "Family violence occurs when a perpetrator exercises power and control over another person. It involves coercive and abusive behaviours by the perpetrator that are designed to intimidate, humiliate, undermine and isolate; resulting in fear and insecurity.

It covers a wide spectrum of conduct that involves an escalating spiral of violence. These behaviours can include physical and sexual abuse, as well as psychological, emotional, cultural, spiritual and financial abuse". (Ending Family Violence – Victoria's 10-year Plan for Change, 2016, p.VI)

"The word family has many different meanings. Our use of the word 'families' is all-encompassing and acknowledges the variety of relationships and structures that can make up a family unit and the range of ways family violence can be experienced, including through family-like or carer relationships." (Ending Family



Violence – Victoria’s 10-year Plan for Change, 2016, p.V)

Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence is a form of family violence and describes abuse or aggression that occurs in a close relationship. ‘Intimate partner’ refers to both current and former spouses and dating partners of all genders.

Gender equality – The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender (Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy, State of Victoria, 2016).

Trans and gender diverse – “refers to people whose gender identity or experience is different from the gender that was presumed and recorded for them at birth. Within this grouping, people use a range of different terms such as trans woman, trans man, non-binary, Brotherboys and Sistergirls”. (Pride in Prevention Messaging Guide, 2021, p.5).

Elder abuse – “is any single or repeated act, occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust that results in harm to an older person. The abuse may be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and/or neglect and can be carried out by a partner, family member, friend, neighbour or carer”. (Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Toolkit, 2019, p.2).

Intersectionality – “A theoretical approach that understands the interconnected nature of social categorisations – such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, class, socioeconomic status, gender identity, ability or age – which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group.” (Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equality Statement, 2018, p.i).

Key achievements

Merri views family violence and intimate partner violence as a serious health issue and is committed to preventing, refining and

strengthening existing service responses for people experiencing family violence. Merri has had a whole of agency approach towards the elimination of family violence and in the creation of a better future.

A number of key achievements in the prevention of family violence and gender equality efforts over the past few years have been achieved by Merri inclusive of Gender Equality Citation, Rainbow Tick Accreditation, development of a Family Violence Policy and staff training, responses to various consultation and commissions and a targeted approach to community education and awareness raising. This has been supported by frontline services providing direct counselling and support to individuals experiencing the effects of family violence and intimate partner violence.

Employer of Choice for Gender Equality Citation

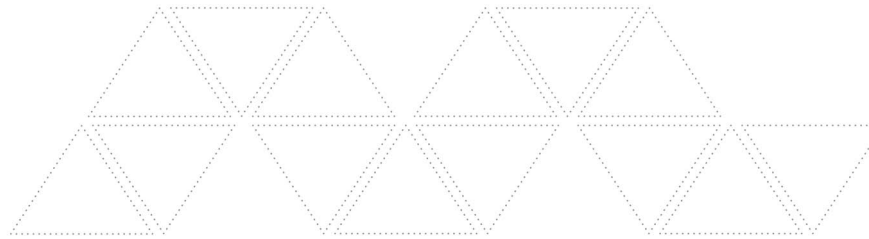
The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) identifies 17 key focus areas across which organisations can progress gender equality to achieve the citation. This Plan includes works towards the key focus areas of:

2. Leadership and accountability
3. Gender pay equity
4. Gender composition of the workforce
5. Support for caring
6. Mainstreaming flexible working
7. Preventing gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying
16. Driving change beyond the workplace

Actions within the Plan that align to the WGEA citation requirements are marked with an *.

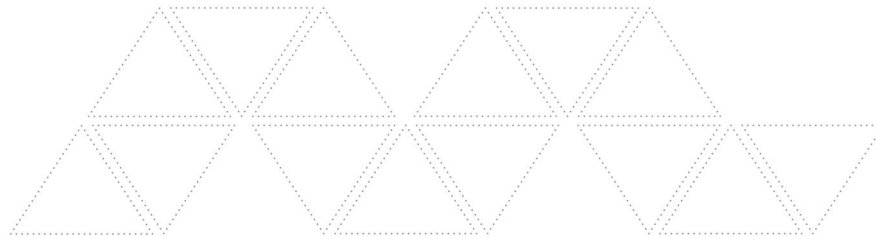
Monitoring and evaluation

The FVGE Committee is responsible for monitoring progress against the Plan. Progress will be reviewed annually. Clear targets and timelines have been developed for each action to help guide the review process.

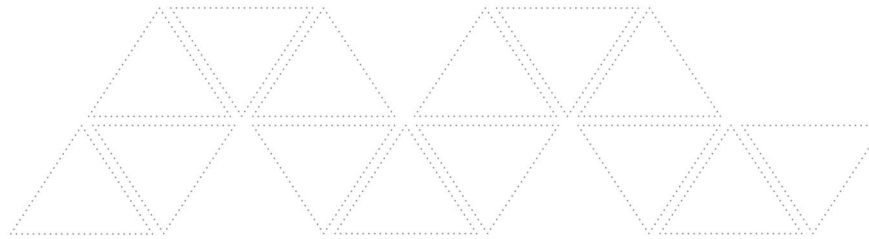


1. Leadership, Workplace Commitment and Responsiveness

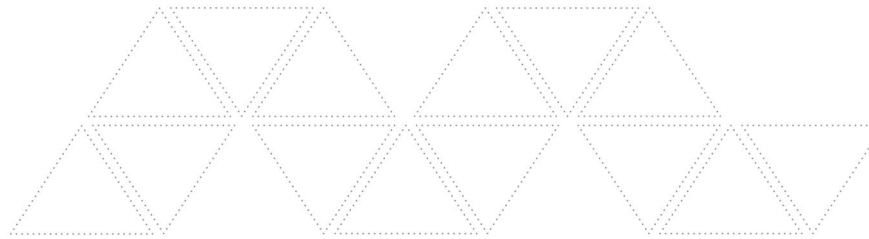
Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead responsibility	Target
<p>1.1 Position Merri as a recognised sector leader in family violence and gender equality</p> <p>✓ Coordinated and strategic approach to advocating for FVGE.</p> <p>✓ Upskilled and motivated staff who are passionate about FVGE.</p> <p>✓ Merri recognised as a leader in FVGE and therefore a trusted service provider and partner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO publicly commits to gender equality, actively engages in external events focused on gender equality and advocates for gender balance on internal/external speaking panels * 	Annual review June 2022 June 2023	CEO	At least one public statement from the CEO annually CEO is involved in at least one external event annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement an annual communications plan that amplifies the impact of the FVGE Strategic Action Plan and increases the visibility of Merri as sector leaders * 	Annual review November 2022 November 2023	Communications & Marketing (C&M) team	One revised plan in place annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate on or implement community-based initiatives around gender equality (e.g. Building a Respectful Community partnership and gender responsive procurement guidelines) * 	Annually review June 2022 June 2023	Community Wellbeing team Facilities team	At least two gender equality initiatives annually Procurement guidelines tabled for discussion at FVGE Committee before final adoption
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Merri's gender equality and family violence work at a range of industry conferences and networks 	Biannually	Manager, Counselling and Support Services Manager, Victims Assistance Program Manager, Community Wellbeing	Two presentations annually



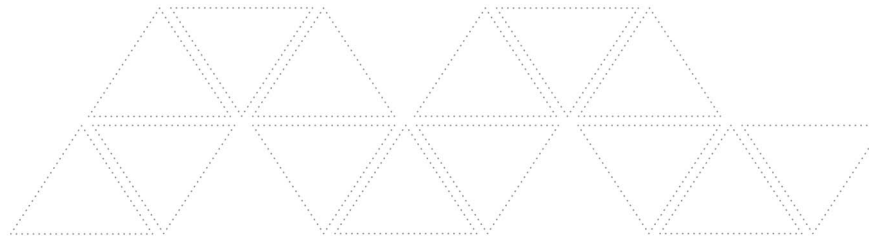
Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead responsibility	Target
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote case studies, stories or program profiles, including innovative and best practice initiatives, that demonstrate Merri's role as a sector leader (e.g. Keeping our Pets Safe; Upstander training; MARAM) 	Quarterly	C&M team	Four case studies promoted externally by the C&M team annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and promote summary of Merri's FVGE achievements and programs 	Annually July 2022 July 2023	FVGE Committee	One FVGE achievements and programs Report on Merriverse annually
1.2 Strengthen Merri as a gender equitable workplace through the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of its commitments to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) employer of choice for gender equality citation 	Citation submission due October 2023	WGEA working group	Citation in place and promoted on Merri materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review wages at all levels of the organisation by gender and support the CEO to report to the board and workforce to address pay gap concerns * 	Annual review July 2022 July 2023	HR team CEO C&M team	Maintain or decrease the gender pay gap of 1.9% between employees of different genders at all levels One annual report to the Board and all staff on gender pay gaps and any reductions/ increases
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot new approaches to improving gender ratios and apply successful approaches to the broader organisation * 	Annual review August 2022 August 2023	FVGE Committee	At least one team engaged in pilot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Merri's workplace is gender equitable, safe and inclusive ✓ Improved employee satisfaction ✓ Increased ability to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce 				



Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead responsibility	Target
				At least 18% of employees are men, intersex, gender diverse and/or non-binary by July 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase paid parental leave for secondary carers to four weeks and communicate changes to organisation * 	June 2022	HR team CEO C&M team	At least one all staff message sent out to communicate changes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the availability of paid parental leave for secondary carers including through case studies and line manager communication * 	Annual review June 2022 June 2023	OLT C&M team	Increase by 25% the usage of parental leave by secondary carers At least one case study annually At least one all staff email annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, strengthen and promote return-to-work parental policies and procedures, seeking input from staff about their experiences * 	June 2022 October 2022	HR team	Increase by 5% the number of people returning to work after parental leave
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote flexible working to people of all genders, through communication from CEO and Executive Leadership Team * 	May 2022 March 2023	CEO ELT C&M team	At least one promotion annually Increase by 8% the number of men who access flexible working

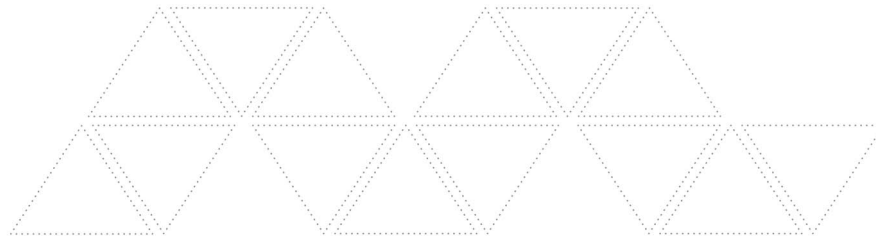


Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead responsibility	Target
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor incidents of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying and report numbers to all staff * 	Annually June 2022 June 2023	HR team C&M team	At least one incident reported annually
1.3 Maintain strategic oversight and respond to sector reforms, regional strategies and opportunities for partnership ✓ Increased capacity to attract funding for FVGE initiatives ✓ Brand recognition ✓ Sectorial advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and respond to sector reforms, government policy initiatives and sector consultations 	As required	General Manager, Family and Community	Three submissions Two reports to Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommit to the Building a Respectful Community (BRC) partnership for the next four years 	February 2022	CEO	Merri signs organisational commitment to the BRC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through collaborative advocacy with partners, demonstrate the need for a continued focus on violence prevention under <i>Community Health – Health Promotion</i> funding 	June 2022 June 2023	Community Wellbeing team	At least two advocacy submissions annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain partnerships with organisations that respond to family violence to improve referral pathways and meet service gaps 	Annual review February 2022 February 2023	General Manager Family and Community	Minimum one partnership in every area where Merri provides a service

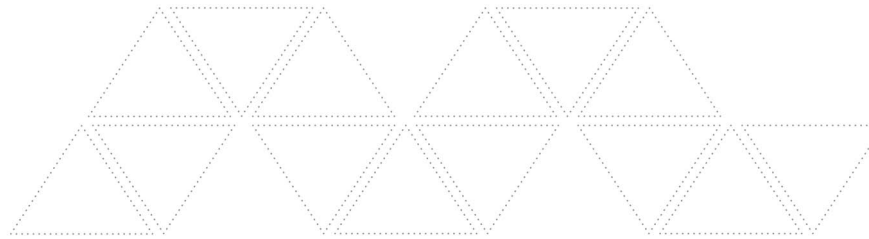


2. Community education and awareness raising

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Target
2.1 Increase community awareness of gender equality and family violence ✓ Diversity represented in marketing and communication material ✓ Greater understanding of underlying causal factors of family violence ✓ Positive changes in attitudes and behaviours of community members ✓ Increased reporting and help seeking for family violence ✓ Increased knowledge of how to reject or respond to sexism, gender-based discrimination and violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure marketing and communications materials promote gender diverse roles and challenges gender stereotypes 	Six month reviews May & Aug 2022 May & Aug 2023	C&M team	Two reviews annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in campaigns to promote gender equality and the elimination of gender based violence (e.g. Week Without Violence, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, 16 Days) 	Annual review May 2022 May 2023	VAP community engagement C&M team	Minimum two campaign engagements annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Keeping our Pets Safe Project, including Vets Training Project 	Six monthly reports	VAP community engagement	Four training sessions completed by June 2022. Targets as per funding guidelines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Be Upstanding! initiative, building capacity to reject and respond to sexism, gender-based discrimination and violence 	November 2022	Community Wellbeing team	Minimum one training session delivered

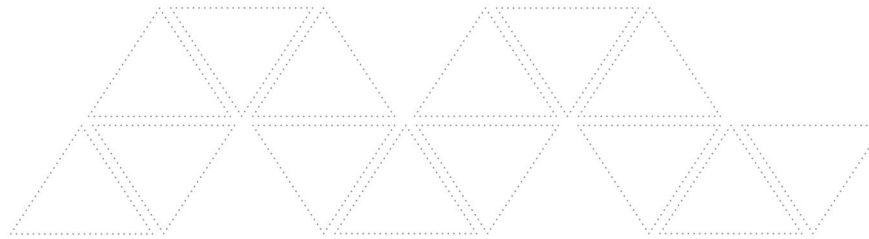


Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Target
2.2 Increase the awareness and response to Elder Abuse as a form of Family Violence across the sector and our community ✓ Increased awareness among diverse community groups that Elder Abuse is a form of Family Violence ✓ Raised community awareness of what constitutes elder abuse and increased take up of information and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver requirements under the Elder Abuse Prevention Network funding across Northern and Western regions 	November 2022	Team Leader, Healthy Ageing	Distribution and reach of information on Elder Abuse
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and implement the Elder Abuse Primary Prevention Framework 	November 2022	Team Leader, Healthy Ageing	Evidence of distribution and implementation of Framework
2.3 Build capacity of staff to undertake community education and awareness raising ✓ More responsive and agile workforce to tackle family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include FVGE advocacy in annual program area work plans including involvement in campaigns 	February 2022 November 2022	MLT	20 program areas demonstrate FVGE advocacy activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff have access to key resources to support their FVGE advocacy 	May 2022 May 2023	FVGE Committee delegate	One one-pager with links to key FVGE resources

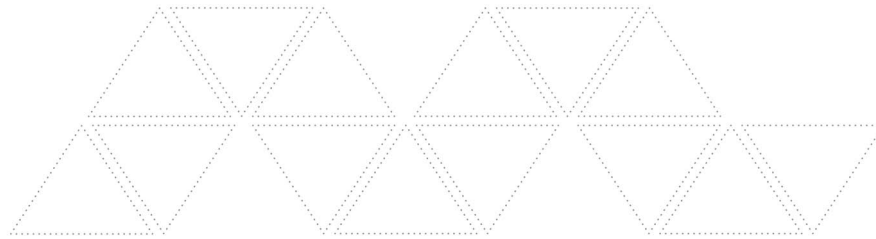


3. Workforce and Organisational Practice

Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead responsibility	Target
3.1 Resource and support our workforce appropriately respond to family violence and gender inequality ✓ Staff are confident and innovative with practice relating to FVGE ✓ Improved employee satisfaction ✓ Quality, effective and efficient service delivery to identify and respond to family violence ✓ Service planning and delivery considers and promotes gender equality ✓ Adherence with legislative requirements with regards to Child and Family Violence information Sharing Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the knowledge of line managers to understand, promote and embed gender equality principles internally and externally * 	June 2022	OLT	100% of line managers complete online gender equality training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review staff induction process to ensure FVGE training draws on current practice, policy and legislative frameworks 	September 2022	HR team	Revised FVGE module on LMS 100% of new staff complete training
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a plan to embed service practice to MARAM Framework through training, program manuals, quality audits 	May 2022	Quality team Manager, VAP	Evidence from quality audits, documentation in program manuals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Merri's learning and capabilities matrix to include FVGE training 	June 2022	HR team	Learning and capability matrix includes FVGE



Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead responsibility	Target
3.2 Comply with Child Safe Standards ✓ Merri is a child safe organisation promoting the safety and rights of children ✓ Improved client health outcomes and meeting requirements of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Child Safe Policy and Procedure to ensure organisation compliance to new standards to be introduced in July 2022 	May 2022	General Manager Family and Community Quality team	Child Safe Standards Accreditation achieved Updated Child Safe Policy and Procedure endorsed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Child Safe Standards Training 	August 2022 August 2023	HR team	200 staff trained annually 50 volunteers trained annually
3.3 Strengthen Merri as an LGBTIQ+ responsive and inclusive service provider through the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of its LGBTIQ+ Action Plan ✓ More prominent profile for Merri among LGBTIQ+ communities ✓ Improved client health outcomes ✓ Increased client base ✓ Ease of service access ✓ Increased ability to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and promote Rainbow Tick Accreditation. 	Three year review cycle - mid cycle review June 2022	Quality Team LGBTIQ+ Working group	Rainbow tick accreditation in place Rainbow tick displayed at Merri workspaces and in marketing materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop our reach into the LGBTIQ+ community through social networks, local opportunities and events, including Midsumma 	Annually (Jan/ Feb 2022 Jan/ Feb 2023)	C&M team Carer Services LGBTIQ+ Working Group	5% increase in referrals from LGBTIQ+ community as captured in DC2Vue
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct LGBTIQ+ All Staff Survey and develop an action plan to address key findings 	June 2022	LGBTIQ+ Working Group	One action plan responding to survey findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene workshop and follow up actions with FVGE and LGBTIQ+ 	May- November 2022	LGBTIQ+ Committee convenor and FVGE Committee convenor	Updated FVGE Strategic Action Plan for 2023 with additional LGBTIQ+ actions.



Strategy	Actions	Timeframe	Lead responsibility	Target
✓ Merri FVGE strategies inclusive of LGBTIQ+ experience	committees to explore FVGE from LGBTIQ+ perspective			Definition or language changes featured on Merriverse
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal processes, procedures and resources to ensure needs of our LGBTIQ+ clients are met 	Six monthly reviews (June 2022 November 2022 June 2023 November 2023)	LGBTIQ+ Working Group	Two policies reviewed annually Two procedures reviewed annually Five resources reviewed annually