

Response provided by the Chief Executive Officer, Moreland—continued

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

	<p>Moreland has a separate training course for bystander interventions, however, this is not compulsory for staff and is not specific to sexual harassment. Human Resources to consider further promotion of bystander training and updating content to include sexual harassment. Consideration for mandatory training for people leaders.</p>	<p>30 June 2021.</p>
6	<p>Communication specific to sexual harassment to come from senior members of staff as a way of role modelling respectful behaviour.</p> <p>Human Resources Unit to work with Communications Unit to consider ways of communications to staff and councillors about how and where to find sexual harassment policies outside of the mandatory training, which is conducted every two years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. standard agenda items in team / organisation wide meetings. • Communication to also come from senior members of staff on a more regular basis including before staff wide or local level functions. <p>Human Resources Unit to work with key stakeholders to develop an annual communications plan to more effectively communicate Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy and other related policies as they relate to EEO and sexual harassment.</p>	<p>31 May 2021 and ongoing annually</p>
7	<p>Regularly communicate to staff and councillors about our policies on sexual harassment and promote complaint channels.</p> <p>Provide training for managers on how to respond to complaints of sexual harassment.</p> <p>Human Resources Unit to work closely with Organisational Performance Branch to ensure people managers are trained in their ability to respond effectively to a complaint of sexual harassment relating to a staff member they supervised.</p> <p>Human Resources Unit to consider updating relevant policies i.e. dispute resolution policy to allow for anonymous complaints.</p>	<p>30 June 2021.</p> <p>All people supervisors trained between December 2020 and June 2021.</p>

Response provided by the Chief Executive Officer, Moreland—*continued*

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

8	<p>Improve record keeping of sexual harassment complaints by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeping complete records of all interactions relating to a complaint • documenting decisions to not investigate complaints or to stop investigations, including the rationale for the decision and the name and role of decision makers (see Section 4.2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources Unit to update internal central registry with specific categories to easily identify complaints of sexual harassment; in lieu of filing complaints of sexual harassment under broader labels such as 'conduct' or 'harassment' this will assist Council to identify trends in sexual harassment. • Human Resources Unit to improve processes for keeping complete records of complaints through to resolution including documenting rationale for not investigating complaints or not continuing with an investigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 January 2021 • 1 December 2020 and ongoing
9	<p>Review complaint procedures to ensure they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a requirement to inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint • guidance on how investigators can support reluctant complainants (see Section 4.2). 	<p>Human Resources Unit to update complaint procedures to ensure the complainant is provided with an outcome of the complaint and provide further guidance on how investigators can support reluctant complainants.</p>	31 May 2021
10	<p>Ensure councillors receive training on sexual harassment at least twice per council term (see Section 3.2)</p>	<p>Human Resources Unit to work with the Corporate Governance staff responsible for organising training for new councillors to ensure sexual harassment training is delivered at least twice per council term. Councillors to receive training link to update their training in sexual harassment.</p>	Nov 2020 – 31 May 2021
11	<p>Ensure councillors are informed of their internal and external options for sexual harassment support and complaints, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the council's Employee Assistance Program 	<p>Human Resources Unit to work with the Corporate Governance to ensure Councillors are informed of their internal and external options for sexual harassment support and complaints in line with the training above.</p>	Nov 2020 – 31 May 2021

Response provided by the Chief Executive Officer, Moreland—*continued*

OFFICIAL: Sensitive	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Code of Conduct dispute resolution processes• external complaint bodies (see Section 4.1).

APPENDIX B

Acronyms, abbreviations and glossary

Acronyms

AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
ALGWA	Australian Local Government Women's Association
CEO	chief executive officer
EAP	employee assistance program
HR	human resources
LGBTQIA+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual
LGV	Local Government Victoria
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
PMS	People Matter Survey
VAGO	Victorian Auditor-General's Office
VEOHRC	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
VPS	Victorian Public Service
VPSC	Victorian Public Sector Commission

Abbreviations

2019 MAV survey	<i>The Municipal Association of Victoria's Gender Equality and Preventing Violence Against Women Survey of Victorian Councils 2018/2019</i>
AHRC National Inquiry	The Australian Human Rights Commission's National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces

Abbreviations

AHRC National Survey 2018	The Australian Human Rights Commission's <i>Everyone's business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces</i>
Ararat	Ararat Rural City Council
Corangamite	Corangamite Shire Council
Frankston	Frankston City Council
Latrobe	Latrobe City Council
the model policy	<i>Sexual Harassment Model Policy</i>
Moreland	Moreland City Council
the Registrar	Principal Councillor Conduct Registrar
VEOHRC Guideline	The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's <i>Guideline: Preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment—Complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i>

APPENDIX C

Scope of this audit

Who we audited	What we assessed	What the audit cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ararat Rural City Council Corangamite Shire Council Frankston City Council Latrobe City Council Moreland City Council 	<p>We assessed whether councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have effective measures to prevent sexual harassment effectively respond to, monitor and report on complaints of sexual harassment. 	<p>The cost of this audit was \$560 000.</p>

Our methods

As part of the audit we:

- audited five councils, including reviewing their:
 - policies on sexual harassment
 - training materials and records
 - complaint procedures
 - sexual harassment complaints from the past five years.
- conducted a sector-wide survey (see Appendix E).

We selected the five councils as a representative spread of council types and sizes.

We conducted our audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* and ASAE 3500 Performance Engagements. We complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements related to assurance engagements. We also provided a copy of the report to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

APPENDIX D

Legislation, policy and guidance

FIGURE D1: **Legislative framework**

Source	Type	Requirements/guidance
<i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i>	Victorian legislation	Makes it unlawful to sexually harass anyone in an employment situation. Creates a positive duty for employers to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment in their workplaces.
<i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i>	Commonwealth legislation	Makes it unlawful to sexually harass anyone in an employment situation.
<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>	Victorian legislation	Outlines that sexual harassment by a councillor can constitute misconduct, serious misconduct or gross misconduct. Makes it compulsory for Councillor Codes of Conduct to prohibit sexual harassment (from 2020 elections onwards).
<i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i>	Victorian legislation	Obliges employers to provide a safe workplace for employees and anyone attending their workplaces.
<i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010, Preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment (2020)</i>	Better practice guide	Outlines six minimum standards for employers to comply with their positive duty. Employers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand their obligations under the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i> • have a prevention plan • build organisational capacity • manage risks • respond to sexual harassment reports consistently and confidentially, holding harassers to account and centring victims • regularly review, evaluate and improve outcomes and strategies.
<i>Model Policy for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (2018)</i>	Better practice guide	VPSC published a model policy on sexual harassment to drive better practice and consistency across the public sector. Sets out key features of a good sexual harassment policy.

Source: VAGO.

APPENDIX E

Survey methodology

We conducted a survey about sexual harassment in local government. Our survey asked about:

- individual experiences of sexual harassment
- why respondents did or did not complain
- sexual harassment policies and training
- views on council communication and prevention.

To help participating councils address sexual harassment, we shared their de-identified results with their mayor and CEO.

Interpreting data in this report

Although survey data is the best source we have for understanding the prevalence of sexual harassment, it is limited by response rates. It may not capture all staff who experience sexual harassment. It may also over-represent the prevalence of sexual harassment, as those who have experienced it may be more likely to complete an optional survey on the topic.

Unless specified otherwise, the data in this report has a margin of error of less than plus or minus 5 per cent at a confidence level of 95 per cent. The margin of error on the overall prevalence of sexual harassment was less than 1 per cent.

Employees without email addresses

Across the participating councils, approximately 8 500 employees did not have council email addresses, equalling approximately 17 per cent of the total workforce. These employees were primarily casual staff or outdoor workers such as crossing supervisors.

We could not directly email the survey to these employees, so we provided councils with an open survey link to distribute to them. However, we received too few responses from these employees from each council to use in our analysis.

A **margin of error** shows how far away results could be from the true value.

A **confidence level** shows how confident you are that the true value sits within the margin of error.

Response rate

The survey was open to staff at 75 of 79 Victorian councils. Four councils did not participate:

- Greater Geelong City Council
- Maribymong City Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council.

The survey was open to councillors from all 79 councils. We sent the survey directly to participants, except at two councils that opted to distribute the survey themselves.

The survey was open for four weeks in June 2020 and received 10 344 responses. We removed responses from employees without email addresses, bringing our response total to 9 939. Our overall response rate was 24 per cent, but at individual councils this ranged from 8 per cent to 64 per cent.

FIGURE E1: Council participation and response rate by council category

Council category	Participating councils	Number of responses	Response rate (%)
Metropolitan	21/22	3 969	20
Interface	9/9	2 269	25
Regional cities	10/11	1 357	24
Large rural shire	18/19	1 561	28
Small rural shire	17/18	783	38
All	75/79	9 939	24

Note: Response rates do not include staff without council email addresses. The survey was open to all councillors, even at the four councils that did not open the survey to their staff. We received two responses from councillors at non-participating councils.

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

Survey design

Our survey did not directly ask participants if they had experienced sexual harassment. Instead we measured the prevalence of sexual harassment by:

- providing respondents with a list of unwelcome behaviours that are likely to constitute sexual harassment (see Section 2.2, Figure 2E)
- asking them how often they had experienced these behaviours in the past 12 months (to June 2020).

Respondents may be unsure if their experiences count as sexual harassment. By specifying behaviours, we did not rely on respondents understanding the legal definition of sexual harassment.

This approach is in line with the AHRC National Survey 2018 and the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Personal Safety Survey*, which it conducts every five years.

Other surveys on sexual harassment

The surveys we used to compare to ours also measured prevalence by listing behaviours, rather than directly asking respondents if they experienced sexual harassment. Figure E2 outlines the methodology and response rates for these surveys.

FIGURE E2: **Survey methodologies of related workforce surveys**

Survey	Prevalence of sexual harassment (%)	Methodology and response rate
VPSC's 2019 PMS	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response rate of 56 per cent of workforce (in departments). Survey is broader than sexual harassment, asking questions about employees' views and experiences on a range of workplace issues. As a result, there is less risk that this survey over-represents sexual harassment, as can occur with optional surveys.
VAGO's survey of Victorian public sector employees 2019	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response rate of between 10 and 26 per cent of each department, except for the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions and the Department of Transport, whose responses were excluded due to low response rates. Optional survey on sexual harassment with 4 729 responses.
AHRC National Survey 2018	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional online and telephone survey on sexual harassment. Sample size of 10 272 employees from across Australia. Survey specific to experiences of sexual harassment.

Note: AHRC survey results cover a five-year period.

Source: VAGO.

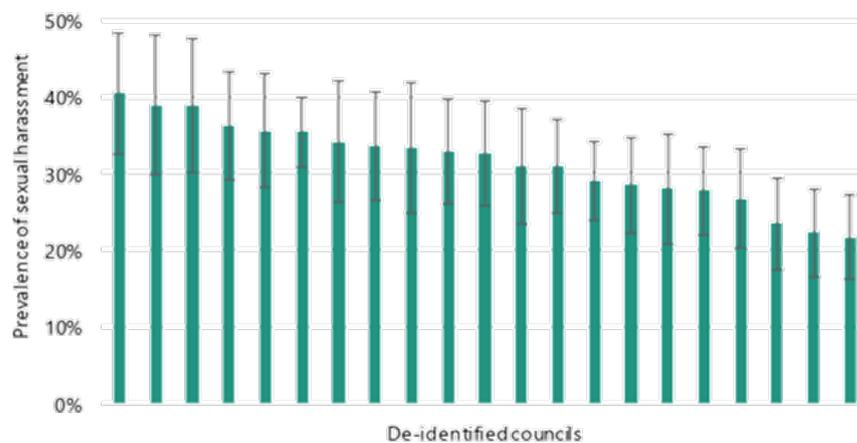
APPENDIX F

Survey data

This appendix contains detailed data from our survey. You can also view this on our data dashboard on our website at www.audit.vic.gov.au.

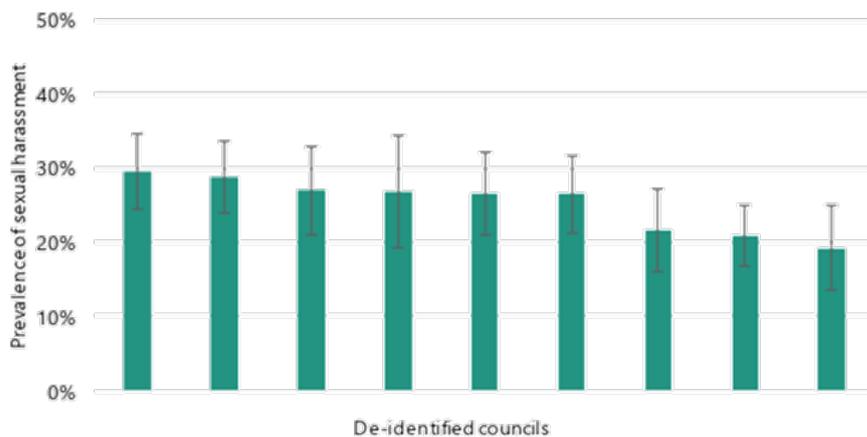
Prevalence of sexual harassment

FIGURE F1: Metropolitan council prevalence of sexual harassment



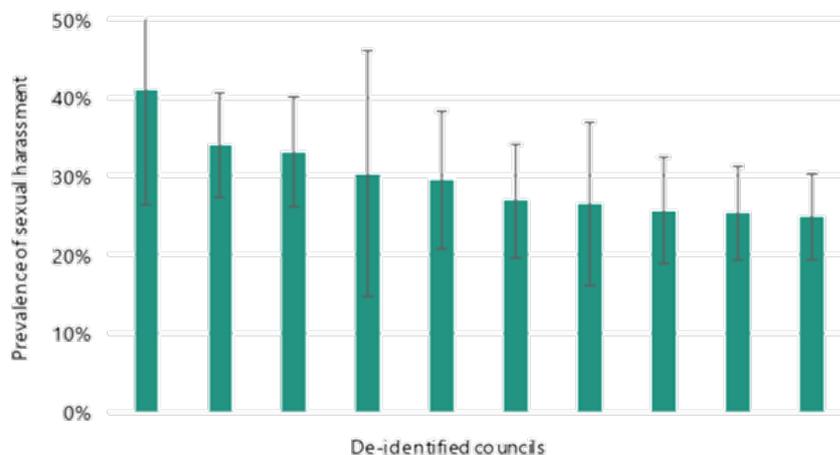
Note: Error bars represent the margin of error.
 Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F2: Interface council prevalence of sexual harassment



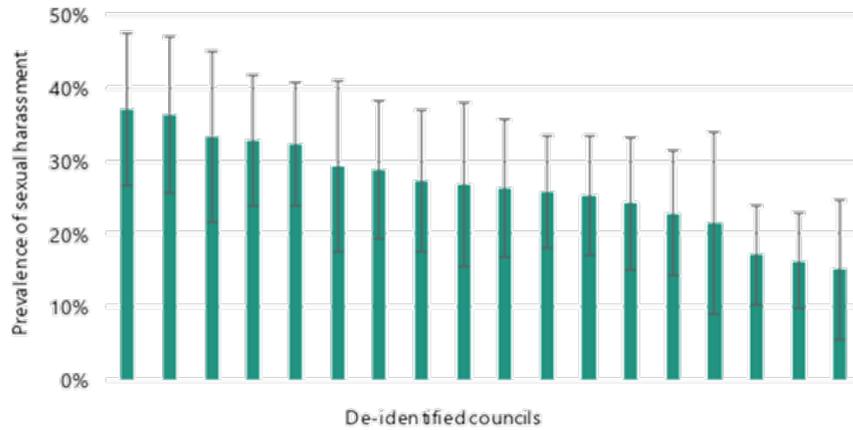
Note: Error bars represent the margin of error.
 Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F3: Regional city council prevalence of sexual harassment



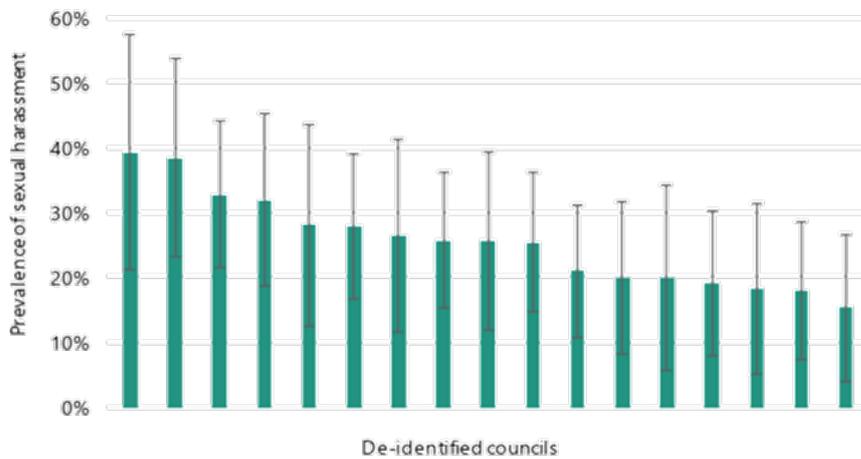
Note: Error bars represent the margin of error.
 Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F4: Large shire council prevalence of sexual harassment



Note: Error bars represent the margin of error.
 Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F5: Small shire council prevalence of sexual harassment



Note: Error bars represent the margin of error.
 Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F6: Prevalence by role type

Role	Number who experienced sexual harassment	Percentage who experienced sexual harassment (%)
Councillor	41	30
Customer-facing	653	28
Outdoors/depot	291	28
Offices/administration	1 746	28
All respondents	2 807	28

Note: 237 respondents did not give their role type.
Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

Experiences

FIGURE F7: Sexual harassment behaviours experienced by role type

Type of sexual harassment	All respondents	Councillor	Customer-facing	Offices and administration	Outdoor or depot
Intrusive questions about personal life/appearance	1 793	26	456	1069	185
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes	1 647	26	369	1023	184
Staring or leering	674	12	181	394	63
Inappropriate physical contact	525	10	147	301	47
Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing	522	11	144	302	46
Other unwelcome conduct	319	8	87	179	29
Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of body	207	3	62	103	35
Repeated/inappropriate date invitations	187	6	56	94	23
Advances on email/social media	136	2	29	84	15
Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts	115	2	25	50	29
Sexually explicit posts or messages on social media	108	6	20	48	26
Sexually explicit email/text	83	2	16	43	20
Request or pressure for sex	40	2	9	16	11

Note: Respondents could select more than one type of harassment.
Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F8: **Workplace setting of sexual harassment by role type**

Setting	All respondents	Councillor	Customer-facing	Offices or administration	Outdoors or depot
Day-to-day work	2 531	28	600	1573	259
Social event	243	9	40	166	21
Online	110	3	25	68	12
Other	94	3	19	56	13
Conference, retreat or off-site	86	6	15	54	8
Council meeting	66	15	11	35	3

Note: Respondents could select more than one setting.

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F9: **Relationship between harasser and the victim by role type**

Relationship to the harasser	All respondents	Councillor	Customer-facing role	Offices or administration	Outdoors or depot
Same level co-worker	1 161	0	227	778	124
Senior co-worker	925	3	156	655	82
Member of the public	632	14	292	227	78
Junior co-worker	503	1	89	322	80
Direct manager	340	2	74	214	37
Councillor	165	29	20	107	5
Contractor/consultant	152	0	32	93	21

Note: Respondents could select more than one relationship.

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

Impact

FIGURE F10: Impacts of sexual harassment for men and women

Impact	All respondents	Female	Male
No impact	1 547	994	530
Impact on mental health	706	534	150
Lowered self-esteem and confidence	584	441	126
Other	396	320	66
Impact on employment	100	55	40
Deterioration of relationships	58	42	16
Financial loss	30	20	8

Note: Respondents could select more than one impact. We received too few responses from respondents with a self-described gender identity to report on levels of harassment for that cohort.

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

Complaints

FIGURE F11: Responses to sexual harassment by role type

Response	All respondents	Councillor	Customer-facing	Offices or administration	Outdoors or depot
Pretended it didn't bother me	1 204	19	280	770	108
Tried to laugh it off or forget about it	1 047	11	245	676	89
Avoided the person(s)	762	12	202	457	68
Told the person the behaviour was not OK	685	13	174	382	89
Told a co-worker	529	2	144	322	45
Told a friend or family member	351	6	98	199	39
Told my manager	291	1	93	165	23
Avoided places behaviour might occur	261	4	74	151	21
Other, please specify here	213	10	42	132	23
Took time off work	62	2	15	34	6
Made formal complaint to council	54	1	18	18	14
Asked for transfer (e.g. role, location, roster)	30	0	14	15	0
Made formal external complaint	20	2	6	7	4

Note: Respondents could select more than one response.

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F12: Barriers to making a formal complaint by role type

Reason for not making complaint	All respondents	Councillor	Customer-facing	Offices or administration	Outdoors or depot
Didn't think it was serious enough	1 651	15	382	1086	134
Didn't think it would make a difference	677	10	174	405	66
Believed there would be negative consequences for me	661	12	147	398	74
Harassment stopped	393	5	108	238	34
Thought complaint process would be embarrassing or difficult	367	8	94	218	34
Other	358	6	75	230	37
Didn't want negative consequences for harasser	260	1	61	169	23
No longer had contact with the person(s)	171	4	62	84	16
Didn't know how	80	0	23	42	12
Told not to by co-worker	30	1	9	16	1
Told not to by family or friends	12	1	3	6	1

Note: Respondents could select more than one barrier.

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F13: Knowledge about reporting sexual harassment and accessing support by role type

Know how to ...	All respondents (%)	Councillor (%)	Customer-facing (%)	Offices or administration (%)	Outdoors or depot (%)
make a formal complaint of sexual harassment	84	88	83	84	89
access employee assistance program	93	70	93	95	86
get help if I or a co-worker experienced sexual harassment	92	89	92	92	94

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

Training

FIGURE F14: Training rates and manager confidence by role type

Role type	Respondents that completed training at induction (%)	Managers confident in handling sexual harassment complaints (%)
All respondents	40	89
Councillor	21	Not applicable
Customer-facing	38	88
Offices/administration	40	89
Outdoors/depot	45	92

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F15: Training rates and manager confidence by employment type

Employment type	Percentage of respondents that completed training at induction (%)	Percentage of managers confident in handling sexual harassment complaints (%)
Casual	34	85
Full-time (contract)	50	94
Full-time (ongoing)	41	89
Part-time (contract)	41	88
Part-time (ongoing)	31	83

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

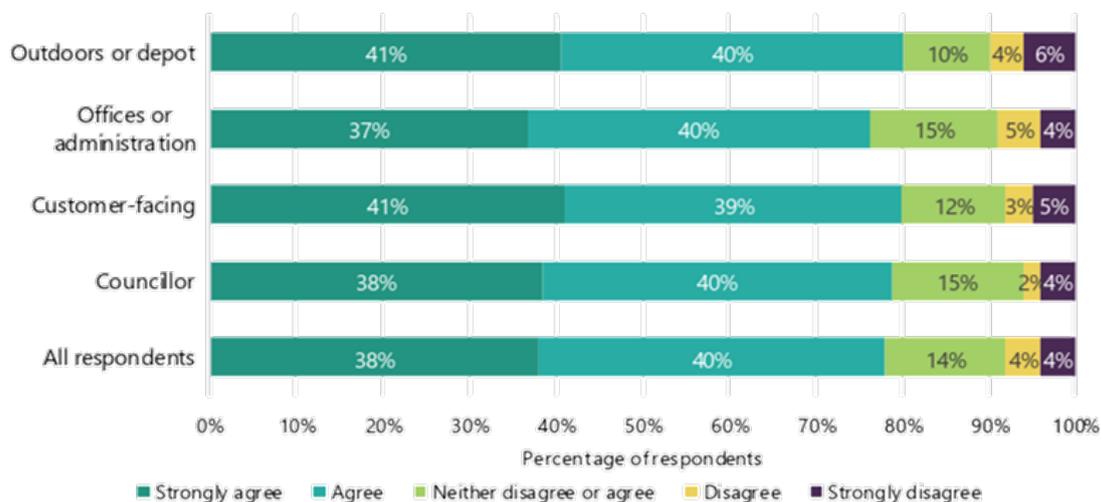
FIGURE F16: Induction training rates and manager confidence by length of employment

Length of employment	Respondents that completed training at induction (%)	Managers confident in handling sexual harassment complaints (%)
Less than a year	53	91
1–2 years	51	88
3–5 years	42	88
6–10 years	39	89
11–20 years	31	90
Over 20 years	19	89

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

Leadership and communication

FIGURE F17: Does your council communicate annually about how it is addressing sexual harassment?



Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

FIGURE F18: Views on council performance by role type

Role type	Do you believe that sexual harassment is not a problem at your council? (%)	Do you believe that your council is taking sexual harassment seriously? (%)
All respondents	61	77
Councillor	68	84
Customer-facing	55	76
Offices/administration	64	78
Outdoors/depot	63	81

Source: VAGO LG Survey 2020.

Auditor-General's reports tabled during 2020–21

Report title

Rehabilitating Mines (2020–21: 1)	August 2020
Management of the Student Resource Package (2020–21: 2)	August 2020
Victoria's Homelessness Response (2020–21: 3)	September 2020
Reducing Bushfire Risks (2020–21: 4)	October 2020
Follow up of Managing the Level Crossing Removal Project (2020–21: 5)	October 2020
Early Years Management in Victorian Sessional Kindergartens (2020–21: 6)	October 2020
Accessibility of Tram Services (2020–21: 7)	October 2020
Accessing Emergency Funding to Meet Urgent Claims (2020–21: 8)	November 2020
Auditor-General's Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria: 2019–20 (2020–21: 9)	November 2020
Sexual Harassment in Local Government (2020–21: 10)	December 2020
Systems and Support for Principal Performance (2020–21: 11)	December 2020

All reports are available for download in PDF and HTML format on our website www.audit.vic.gov.au

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Survey results for Golden Plains

December 2020



Introduction

About

As part of the performance audit *Sexual harassment in local government*, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) conducted a sector-wide survey. A total of 75 of 79 Victorian local councils participated. The survey asked respondents about:

- individual experiences of sexual harassment
- complaints handling
- training and policies
- views on council communication and prevention measures.

This report outlines the survey results for your council. We recommend sharing this report with staff and councillors to ensure transparency and accountability. When doing so, please remind staff and councillors of support and reporting options available at your council.

Method

We sent the survey directly to participants via email, except:

- at two councils who opted to distribute the survey themselves
- to employees without council email addresses.

Across the participating councils, approximately 8 100 employees did not have council email addresses, making up 17 per cent of the total workforce. These employees were primarily casual staff or outdoor workers such as crossing supervisors. We could not directly email the survey to these employees. We instead provided councils with an open survey link to distribute to them. However, we received too few responses from these employees to use in our analysis. The data in this report does not include employees without a council email address (unless your council provided alternative email addresses for these staff).

Response rate

We received a total of 9 939 responses, with an overall response rate of 24 per cent. Response rates of individual councils range from 8 per cent to 70 per cent.

Interpreting data in this report

You should read your council's results in the context of our sector-wide results and our performance audit report *Sexual harassment in local government*. You can find these on our website: www.audit.vic.gov.au.

Although survey data is the best source we have for understanding the prevalence of sexual harassment, it is limited by response rates. Our survey may not capture all staff who experience sexual harassment. Alternatively, it may over-represent the prevalence of sexual harassment, as those who have experienced it may be more likely to complete an optional survey on the topic.

Results for some councils are based on smaller sample sizes due to the size of the council and/or a lower response rate. This means that the margin of error for these results are broader and the result may be less representative of the council. We have displayed raw figures in place of percentages where appropriate to account for this. All results should be interpreted with consideration of your council's sample size.

Privacy and confidentiality

This report does not include data on experiences of sexual harassment specific to demographic or work groups. This is to protect the identity of individual survey respondents.

Support options

Sexual harassment can take many forms and result in physical and emotional harm. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment or assault, or feels distressed, there are support options available.

1800RESPECT - National sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service

1800RESPECT provides information, referral and counselling services to people experiencing or at risk of experiencing sexual assault, domestic or family violence. It is also available to friends, family and professionals. 1800RESPECT provides a confidential service 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Phone: 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732)
Website: www.1800respect.org.au

Employee assistance programs

Local government employees may have access to employee assistance programs that provide free and confidential short-term counselling for workplace and personal issues. Staff can obtain details of the relevant employee assistance program from their council's human resources team.

Centres Against Sexual Assault

Centres Against Sexual Assault are non-profit, government-funded organisations that provide support, counselling and crisis care to child and adult victims of sexual assault and their family.

You can find your local centre by visiting www.casa.org.au.

Lifeline

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Phone: 13 11 14
Website: www.lifeline.org.au

Response rates

63

employees and councillors completed the survey at your council.

We recommend caution when comparing your council's results with the sector. Results should be understood in the context of your survey response rate. At Golden Plains the response rate was 30.0%.

Response rates

Golden Plains

235

Total staff and councillors

25

Staff without emails (excluded)

210

Total potential respondents

63

Respondents

30.00%

Response rate

All councils

49,991

Total staff and councillors

8,130

Staff without emails (excluded)

41,861

Total potential respondents

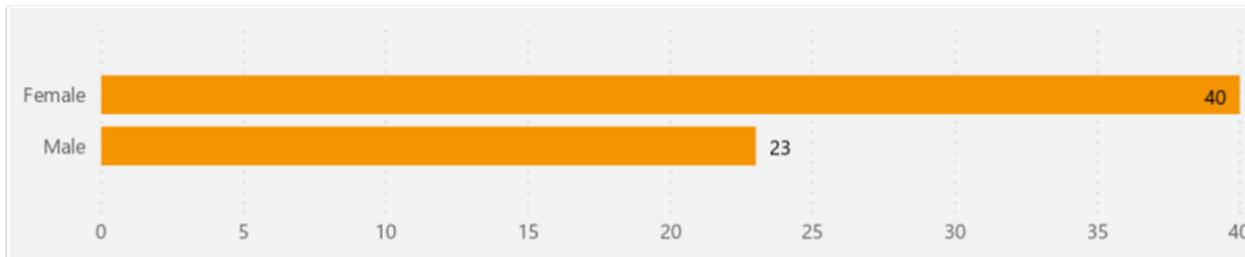
9,939

Respondents

23.74%

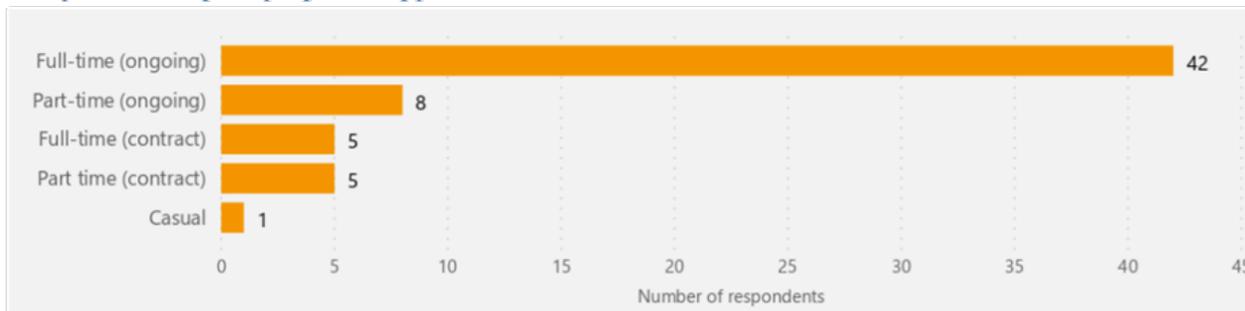
Response rate

Respondents by gender



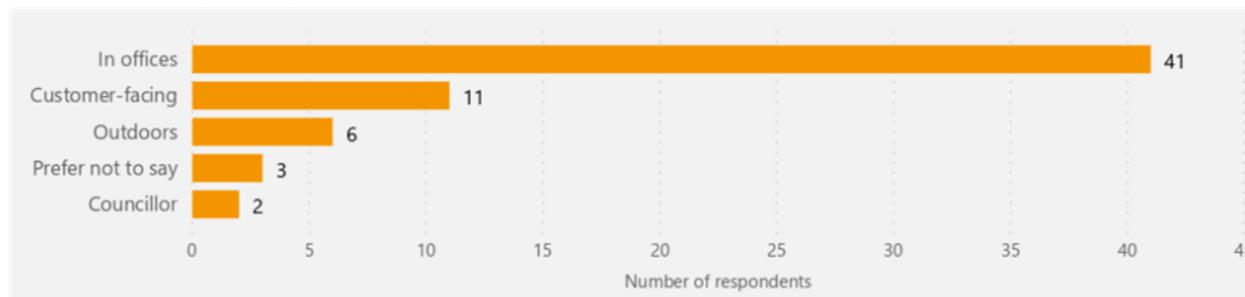
Note: Due to low number, excludes respondents who did not provide gender or had a self-described gender identity.

Respondents by employment type



Note: Excludes councillors

Respondents by role type



Sexual harassment in local government (MAGG 2020) - Survey results for Golden Plains

Page 8 of

Prevalence of sexual harassment

33%

of respondents at your council experienced sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. Sexual harassment can be physical, verbal or written.

Prevalence rates

Golden Plains

63

Respondents

21

Number who experienced sexual harassment

33.33%

Prevalence of sexual harassment

9.76%

Margin of error (plus or minus)

All councils

9,939

Respondents

2,807

Number who experienced sexual harassment

28.24%

Prevalence of sexual harassment

0.77%

Margin of error (plus or minus)

We provided respondents with a list of unwelcome behaviours that are likely to constitute sexual harassment. We asked them how often they had experienced these behaviours in the past 12 months at their current council. Respondents could select **more than one** behaviour.

How often did you experience the following behaviour/s in the last 12 months?

Behaviour	once	2-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10 times	Total
Intrusive questions	7	5	1	1	14
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes	7	4			11
Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing	2	2			4
Inappropriate physical contact	1	2			3
Sexually explicit posts or messages on social media	1			1	2
Staring or leering	1	1			2
Advances on e-mail or advances on social media	1				1
Repeated/ inappropriate date invitations	1				1

Sexual harassment in local government (MAGC 2020): Survey results for Golden Plains

Page 4 of

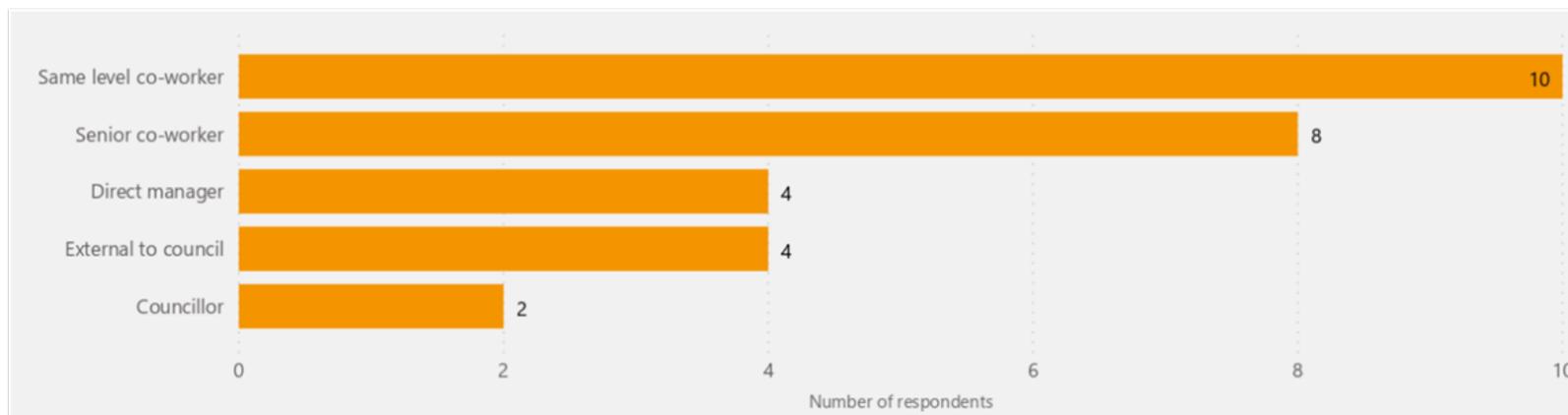
Workplace settings of harassment

90%

of respondents who experienced sexual harassment experienced it during day-to-day work.

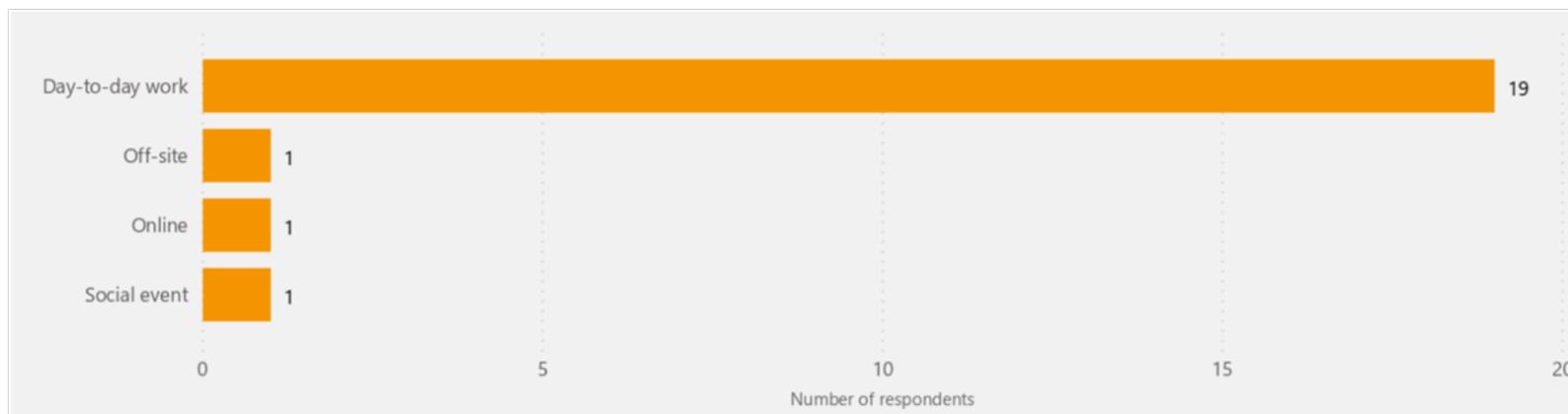
Note that respondents could select more than one option, to reflect all experiences of sexual harassment in the past 12 months.

What best describes the person(s) who behaved that way?



Note: Respondents could select more than one option. There were 21 respondents who experienced sexual harassment at your council.

When/where did it occur?



Note: Respondents could select more than one option. There were 21 respondents who experienced sexual harassment at your council.

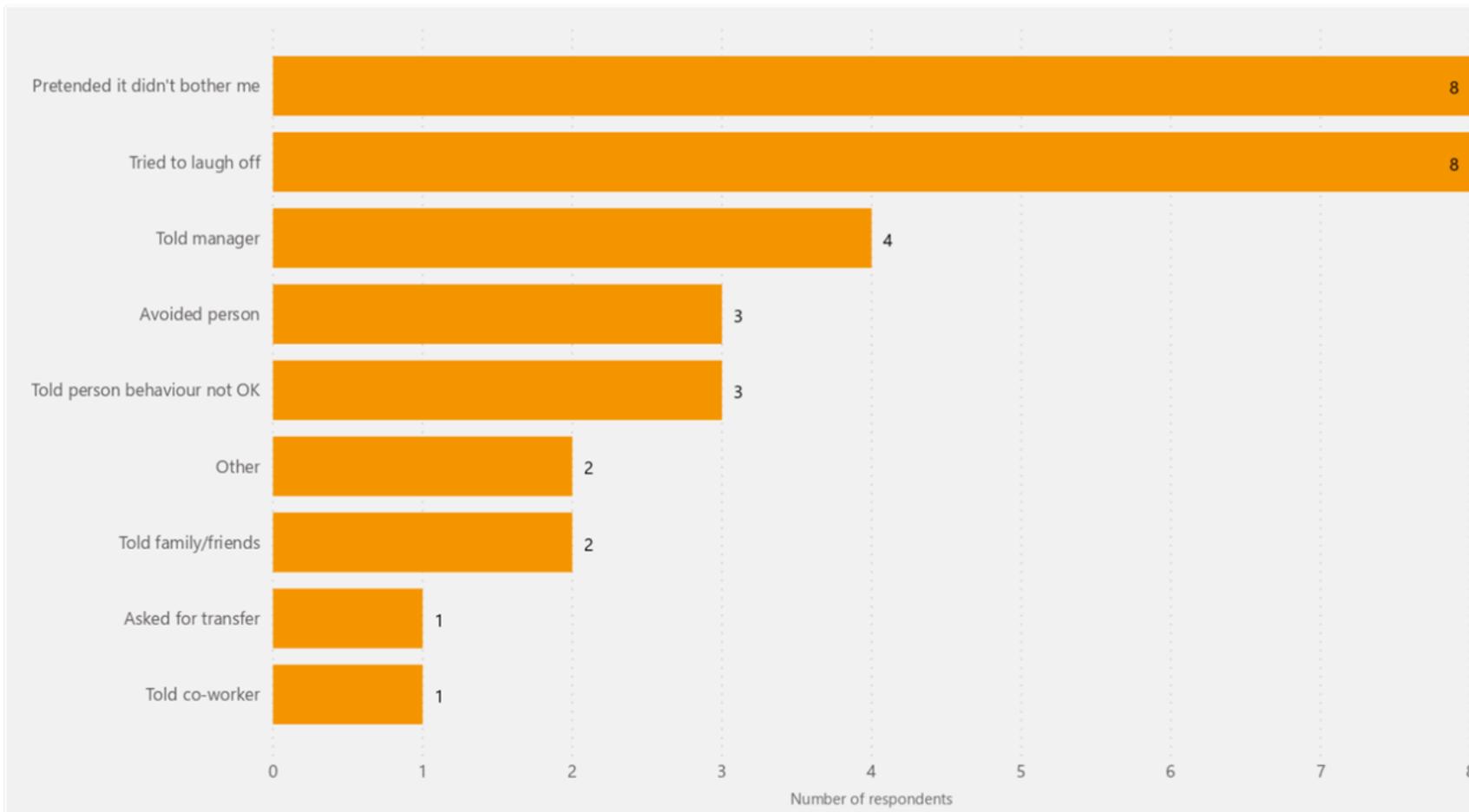
Responses to sexual harassment

0

respondent(s) made a formal complaint to council.

At Golden Plains, of the 21 people who experienced sexual harassment, 4 reported it to a manager and none made a formal complaint to council. This page outlines how respondents reacted to experiences of sexual harassment.

When it happened, what did you do?



Note: Respondents could select more than one option. There were 21 respondents who experienced sexual harassment at your council.

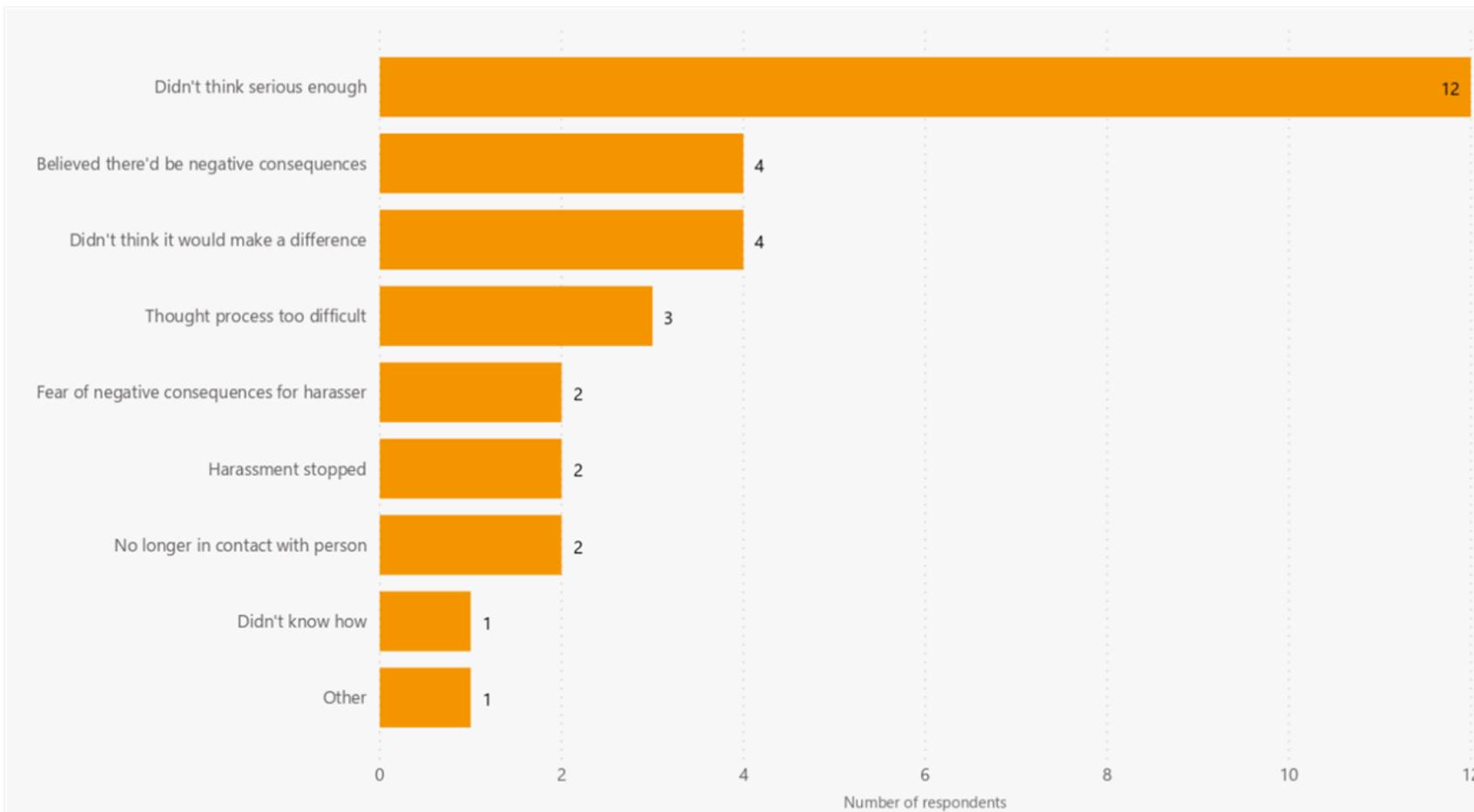
Barriers to reporting

57%

of respondents who did not make a complaint said they didn't think behaviour was serious enough.

At Golden Plains, none of the respondents who experienced sexual harassment made a formal complaint. This page outlines the reasons why.

Why did you not make a formal complaint?



Note: Respondents could select more than one option. There were 21 respondents who experienced sexual harassment at your council and did not make a formal complaint.

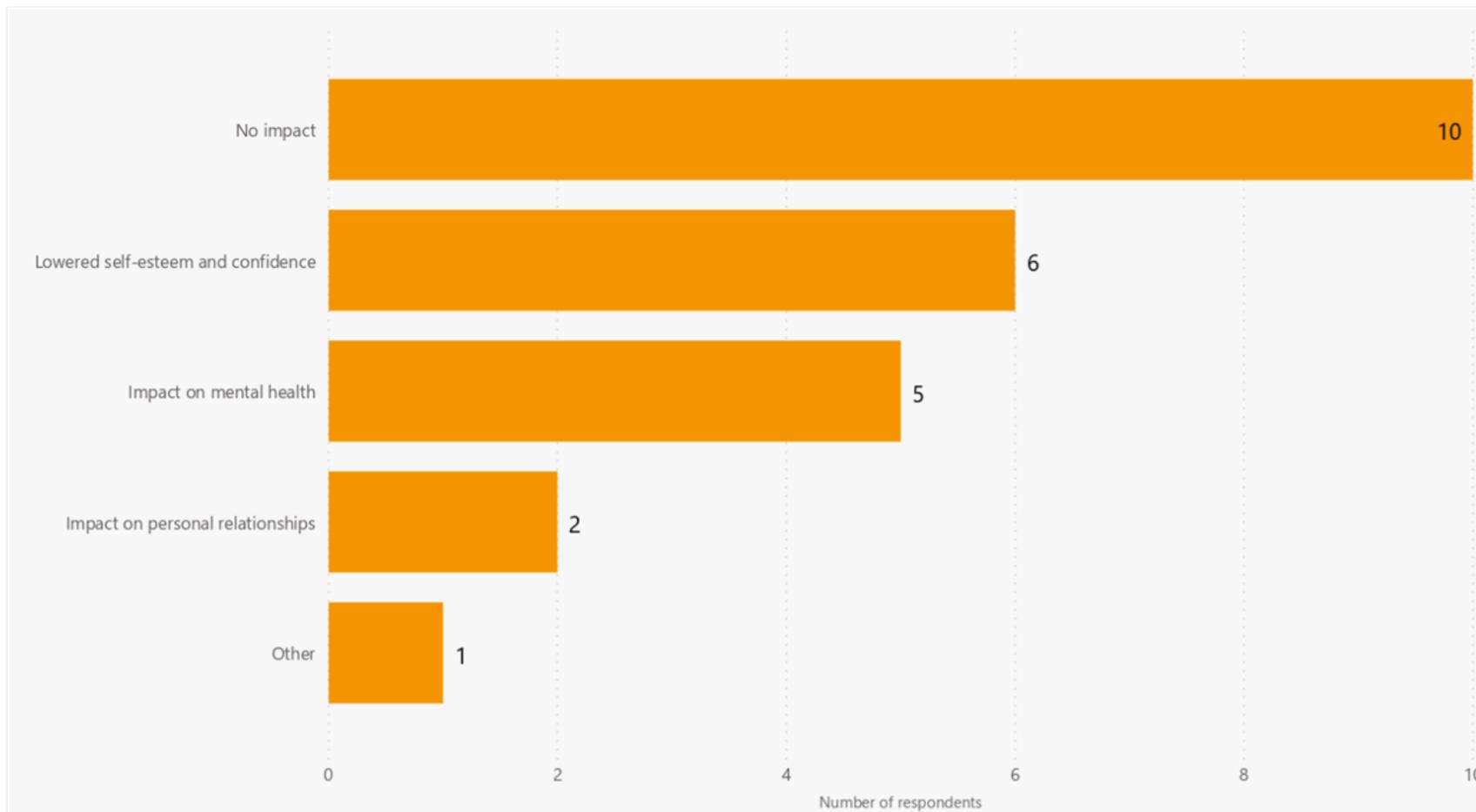
Impacts of sexual harassment

52%

of respondents who experienced sexual harassment said it had a negative impact on them.

Experiences of sexual harassment can impact mental health, personal life and employment.

What were the impacts of your experience?



Note: Respondents could select more than one option. There were 21 respondents who experienced sexual harassment at your council.

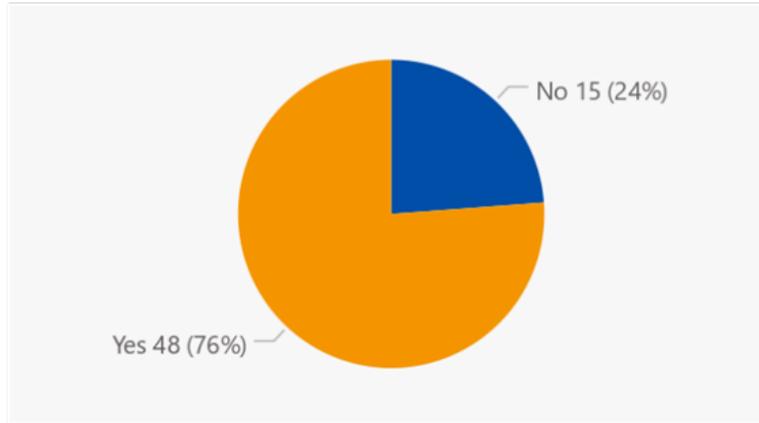
Policies and procedures

86%

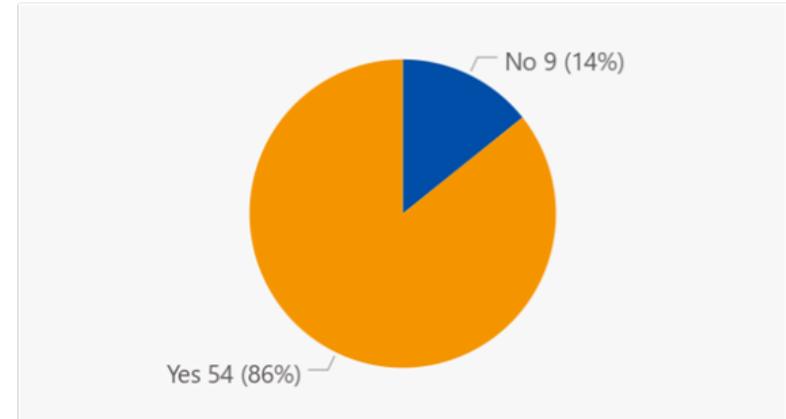
of respondents know how to get help if they or a coworker experienced sexual harassment.

Policies and procedures addressing sexual harassment for staff and councillors need to be clear, accessible and effectively communicated.

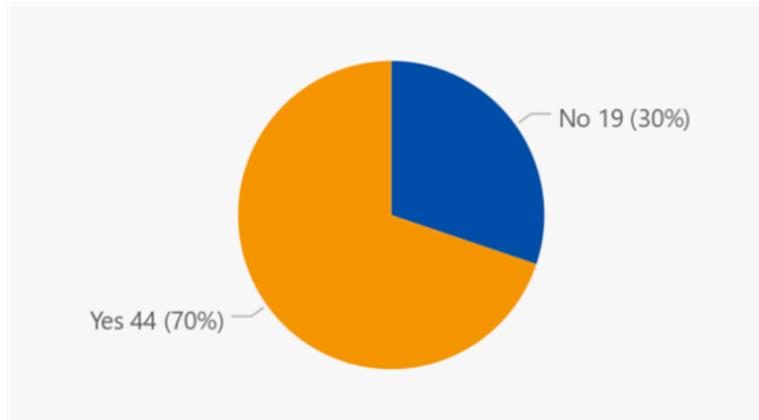
Do you know where to find your council's policy on sexual harassment?



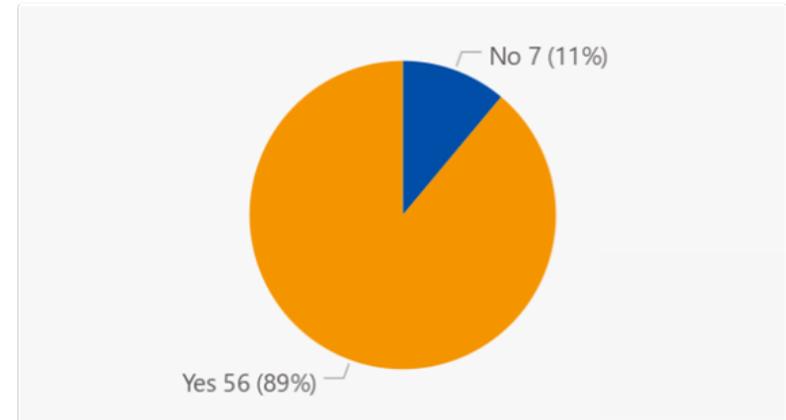
Do you know where to get help if you or your co-worker experienced sexual harassment?



Do you know how to make a formal complaint of sexual harassment at your council?



Do you know how to access your employee assistance program?



Training frequency

63%

of respondents have received training on appropriate behaviour.

Regular training helps staff and councillors to reinforce their knowledge around appropriate behaviour and relevant council policies.

Have you received appropriate behaviour training at your current council?

63%

of respondents received training on appropriate behaviour

17%

of respondents received training at induction

If you have received training, when was the last time you received it?

within the last 12 months

25

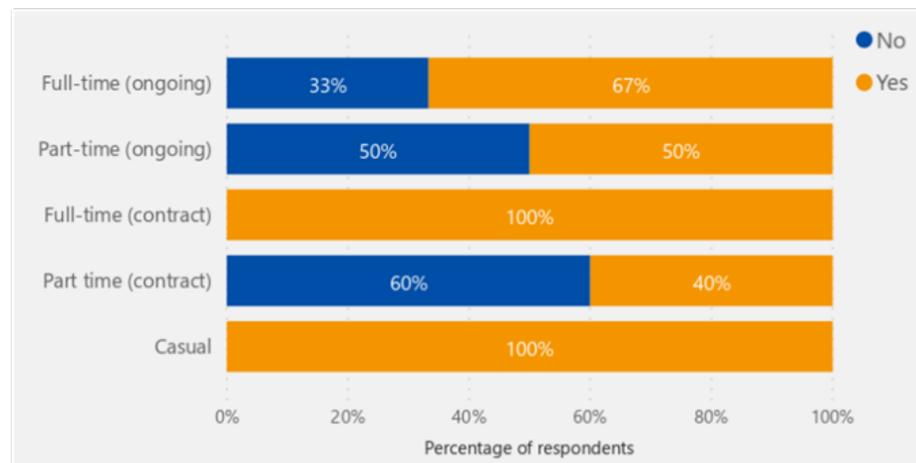
more than a year ago, but not more than two years ago

11

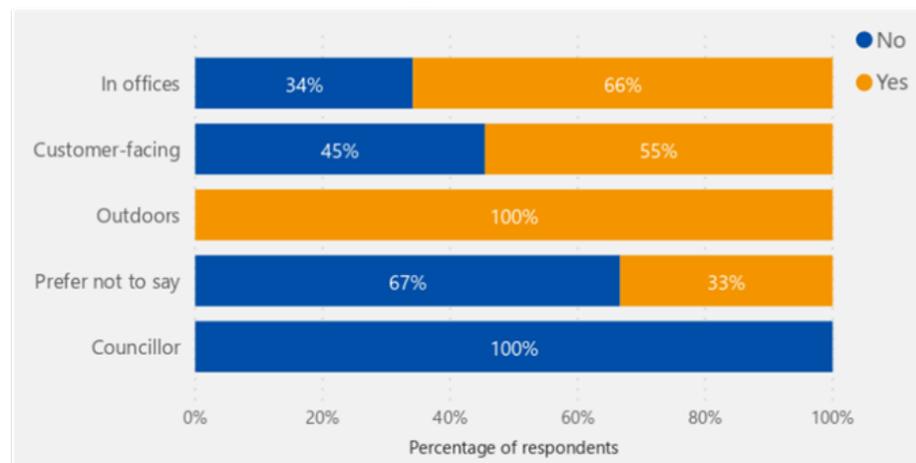
more than two years ago

4

Employment type vs. received training in the last 12 months



Council role vs. received training in the last 12 months



Training content

95%

of respondents who received training said it covered standards of behaviour.

Training is important to help staff understand what sexual harassment is and where they can look for help if they or another colleague experiences sexual harassment.

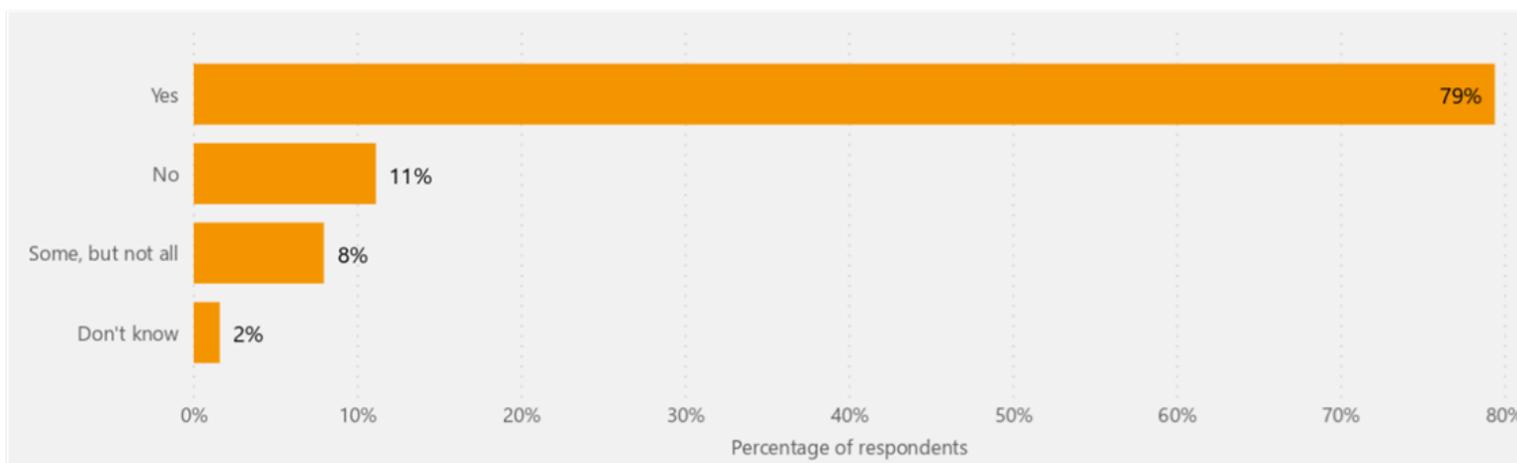
What did your sexual harassment training cover?

Training materials	Yes	No	Don't know
Where to seek help for myself and others	83%	3%	15%
What to do if I witness sexual harassment	90%	3%	8%
My council's policy and procedures	75%	10%	15%
Internal and external reporting options	75%	5%	20%
Acceptable standards of behaviour	95%		5%

Note: Results shown as percentage of respondents who received training.

Do you consider the listed behaviours to be sexual harassment?

The behaviours listed on Page 3 are examples of unwelcome behaviour likely to constitute sexual harassment. We asked respondents if they considered them to be sexual harassment.



Sexual harassment in local government (VAGO 2020): Survey results for Golden Plains

Page 11 of

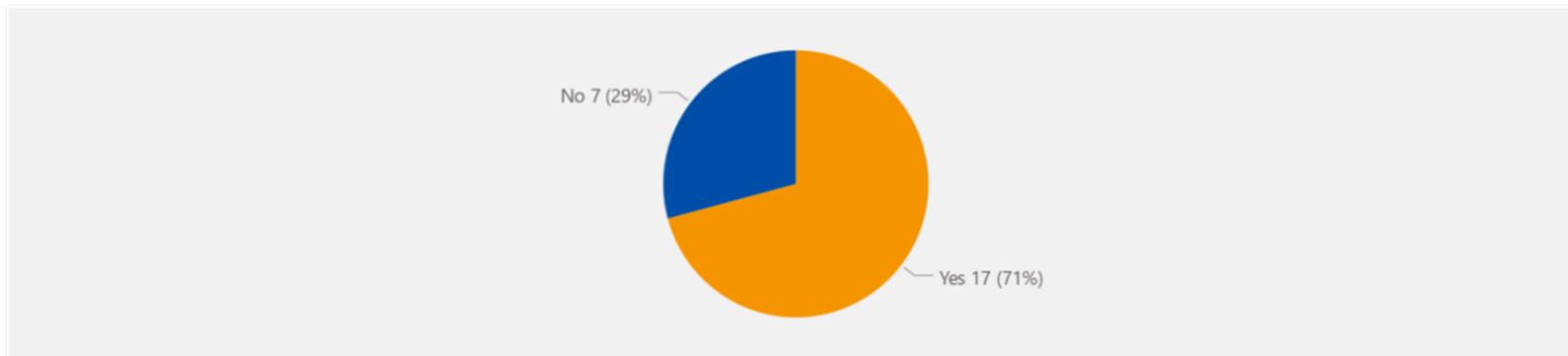
Manager training

88%

of managers are confident in their ability to respond to a complaint.

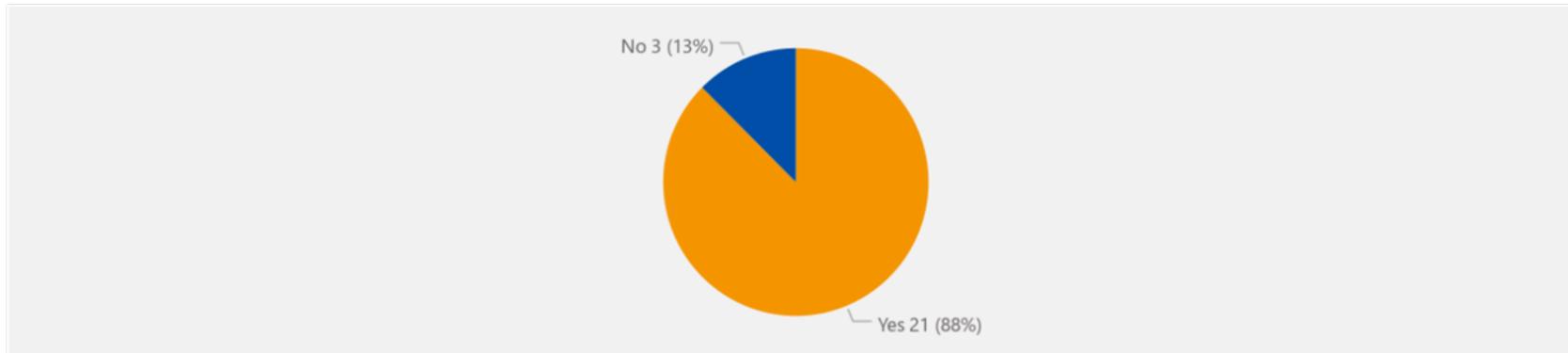
Managers need to be equipped with appropriate skills and knowledge to respond to sexual harassment complaints that they receive from their staff.

Have you received sexual harassment and/or appropriate behaviour training (managers/supervisors)?



Note: Results shown as percentage of managers. There were 24 respondents who said they managed or supervised staff at your council.

Are you confident in your ability to respond effectively to a sexual harassment complaint relating to a staff member you supervise?



Note: Results shown as percentage of managers. There were 24 respondents who said they managed or supervised staff at your council.

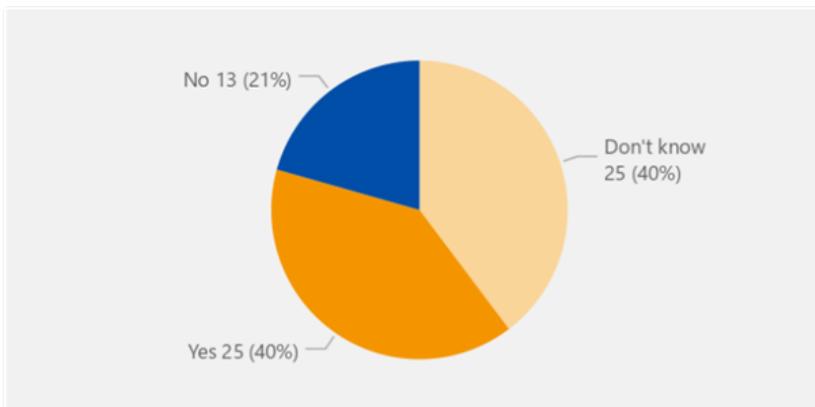
Leadership and communication

11%

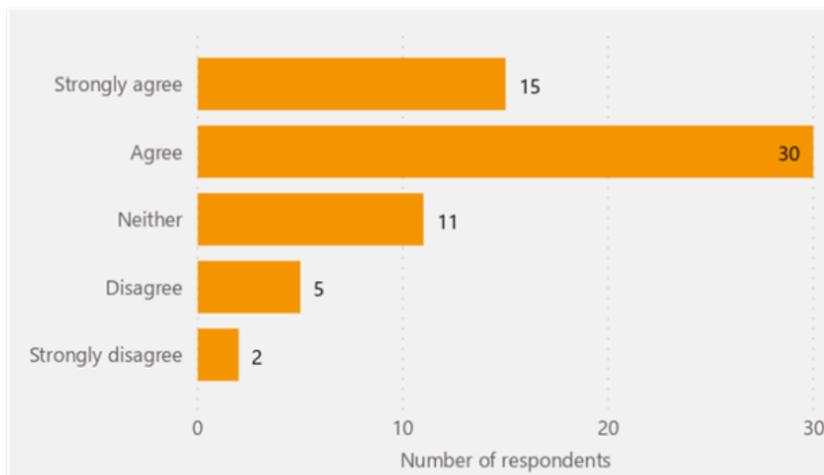
of respondents don't agree council communicates zero tolerance.

Regular communication from senior leadership that the council does not tolerate sexual harassment can encourage reporting and raise awareness of policies and complaint channels.

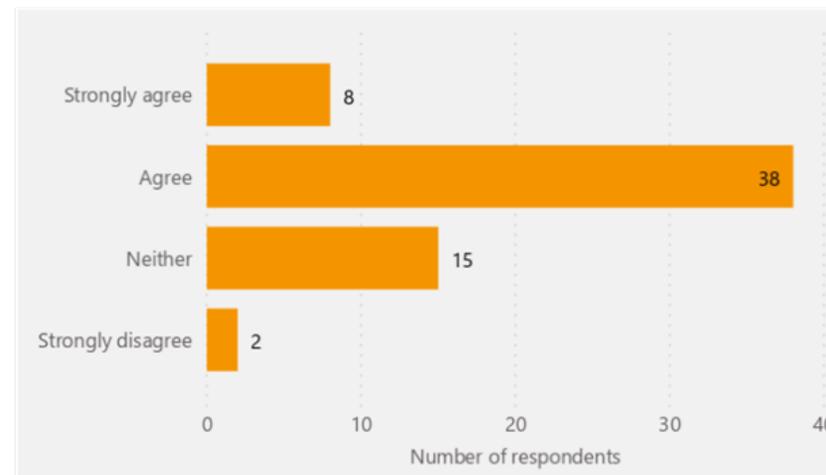
Does your council send communications about how it is addressing or preventing sexual harassment at least once a year?



My council communicates a zero-tolerance attitude to sexual harassment.



My council has initiatives in place to address sexual harassment.



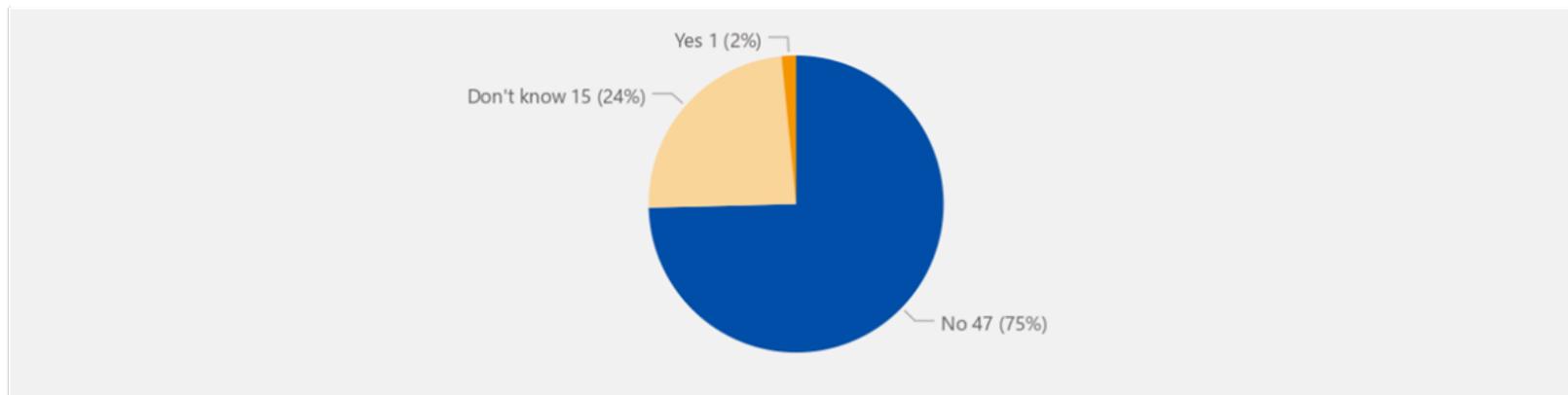
Views on council performance

83%

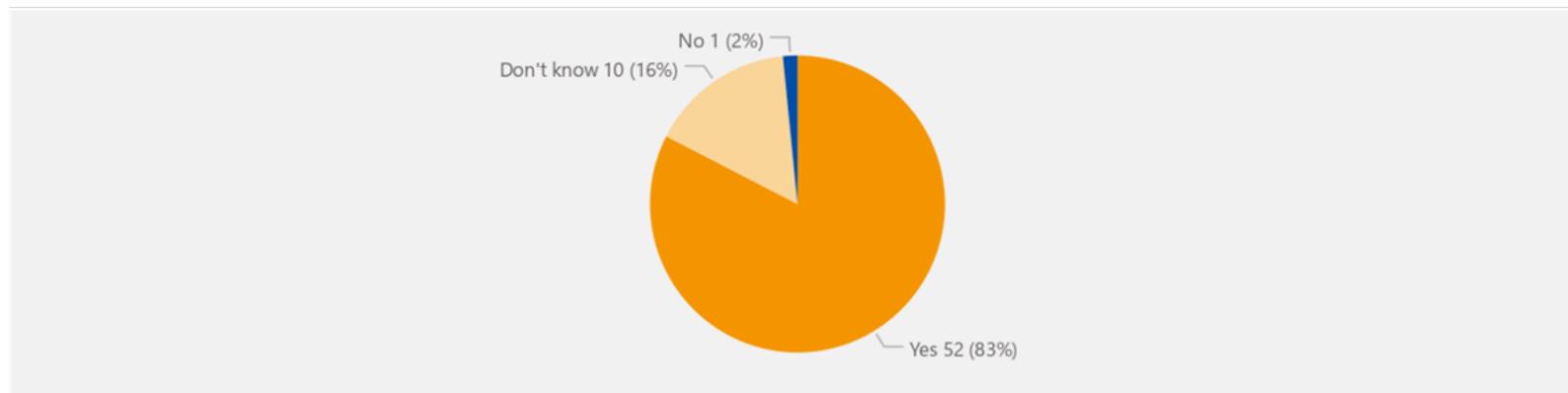
of respondents believe council takes sexual harassment seriously.

Collecting staff views can help councils understand whether policies, training and communication about sexual harassment are effective.

Do you believe that sexual harassment is a problem at your council?



Do you believe your council takes sexual harassment seriously?



VAGO Recommendations for all Victorian Councils.

This audit report provided eleven recommendations to Victorian local councils and one to the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions in relation to identifying and acting on risk factors, regularly collecting data on the prevalence of sexual harassment and the development of regular data collection methodology. All recommendations we made were accepted.

The full VAGO report can be found here <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/sexual-harassment-local-government?section=>

Recommendations about the prevalence of sexual harassment

1. use findings from the Victorian Auditor-General's 2020 *Sexual Harassment in Local Government* survey to identify and act on risk factors for council employees and workplaces (see Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3)
2. collect information about the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment at least once every two years by:
 - conducting workplace surveys
 - reviewing complaints information (see Section 2.6)
3. address the risk of sexual harassment by members of the public by:
 - ensuring sexual harassment policies, procedures and training explicitly cover sexual harassment from the public
 - regularly communicating to customers and staff that the council does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment from the public (see Section 2.4).

Recommendations about preventing sexual harassment

5. introduce a standalone sexual harassment policy that:
 - aligns with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's Guideline: Preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment—Complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Model Policy for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
 - includes clear links to relevant council policies and procedures
 - covers the applicability of council policies to different roles and workplace settings, including councillors, customer-facing staff and members of the public
 - is searchable on council intranet sites or cloud software, and available in hard copy to all staff (see Section 3.1)
6. introduce mandatory training on sexual harassment, or improve existing training, so that at a minimum it:
 - includes face-to-face or live online sessions for all staff and councillors at least once every two years (in addition to online modules)
 - covers safe strategies for bystander interventions
 - is tailored to the council's policies, procedures and workplace risk factors (see Section 3.2)
7. communicate a culture of respect in the council by ensuring leaders model respectful behaviour at all times and communicate to all staff at least annually that the council does not tolerate sexual harassment (see Section 3.3).

Recommendations about responding to sexual harassment

8. encourage reporting of inappropriate behaviour by:
 - promoting formal and informal complaint channels
 - allowing for anonymous complaints (see Section 4.1)
9. improve record keeping of sexual harassment complaints by:

- keeping complete records of all interactions relating to a complaint
 - documenting decisions to not investigate complaints or to stop investigations, including the rationale for the decision and the name and role of decision makers (see Section 4.3)
10. review complaint procedures to ensure they include:
- a requirement to inform the complainant of the outcome of the complaint
 - guidance on how investigators can support reluctant complainants (see Section 4.2).

Recommendations about councillors

11. ensure councillors receive training on sexual harassment at least twice per council term (see Section 3.2)
12. ensure councillors are informed of their internal and external options for sexual harassment support and complaints, including:
- the council's employee assistance program
 - Councillor Code of Conduct dispute resolution processes
 - external complaint bodies (see Section 4.1).