

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Diversity Policy is a commitment by Wollongong City Council to create a workplace that is fair and inclusive, and builds a workforce which better reflects the diversity of our community. It is underpinned by the broad principles of Human Rights, Social Justice and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), and ensures that all decisions made within Council are based on merit and sound management practices. In particular, it relates to the areas of recruitment, selection, training, skills development, promotions, workforce planning, terms and conditions of employment and separation.

OBJECTIVE

The main objectives of this policy are –

1 Attract and recruit a diverse workforce:

- Apply fair and inclusive recruitment and selection practices to ensure all employees and prospective employees are treated equitably.
- Build strong partnerships with our community and external organisations to maximise the employment outcomes for groups who are under-represented in our workforce.
- Provide improved employment and career development opportunities for people who are under-represented in our workforce through specific programs and initiatives.

2 Develop and retain a diverse workforce:

- Develop a diverse and skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of our community.
- Foster a work environment that values and utilises the contributions of all employees considering diversity of skills, backgrounds, experiences and educational levels.
- Identify and address inequalities in employment, training, development and promotion within Council.

3 Workforce diversity as part of everyday business:

- Promote workforce diversity as a source of strength. This is not only about increasing visible differences in the workforce, but also about the strategic advantage that comes from incorporating a wide variety of capabilities, ideas and insights in our decision making, problem solving, policy development and service delivery.
- Implement a Workforce Diversity Plan and specific EEO management plans that provide direction and objectives and strategies to foster for Council.
- Create a workplace culture that fosters fair and inclusive practices and behaviours.
- Increase employee awareness of their rights and responsibilities with regards to equity, integrity and respect for all aspects of diversity.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy recognises that specific groups of people in our community, have in the past experienced, and may continue to experience, inequitable treatment in gaining employment or within their workplace. The aim of workforce diversity is to create a culture that fosters fair and inclusive behaviours and removes any discriminatory practices that may exist and to redress the past exclusion and marginalisation of these groups.

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

1 Commitment

- 1.1 Council embraces workforce diversity as a source of strength. It recognises that our employees are our greatest asset and aims to attract and retain people with diverse skills, experience and background to deliver high quality services to our community. A workforce that reflects the diversity of our community will be better able to understand the needs of our customers.
- 1.2 Council also recognises that workforce diversity is not only about increasing visible differences in the workforce, but the strategic advantage that comes from incorporating a wide variety of capabilities, ideas and insights in our decision making, problem solving, policy development and service delivery.
- 1.3 Council respects people as individuals and values their differences. It is committed to creating a working environment that is fair and flexible, promotes professional growth and benefits from the capabilities of its diverse workforce.
- 1.4 The Workforce Diversity Policy guides the development and implementation of the Workforce Diversity Plan and all other strategies and programs that promote workforce diversity. This policy succeeds the previous Employment, Equity and Diversity (EED) Policy.

2 Principles

2.1 *Human Rights*

The universal rights of all people to be treated with respect, equality and dignity.

2.2 *Social Justice*

Embraces the rights of all communities to fair and equitable access to services and resources, equal rights and opportunities to participate in all aspects of community life and decision making.

2.3 *Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO):*

Aims to recruit and select employees for positions (including promotions) on merit; provide equitable access to employment, professional development and workplace participation for people who are under-represented in our workforce; and ensure that workplaces are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 Diversity in the context of Council primarily refers to the EEO groups that are under-represented in our workforce. These groups include: women; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people living with a disability; people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and young people under 25 years.
- 3.2 Other dimensions of diversity include people:
 - from different age groups;
 - with caring and family responsibilities;
 - of different faiths;
 - with different sexual orientation; and
 - with varying socio-economic backgrounds.

Workforce Diversity Responsibilities

4 Employee Responsibilities

- 4.1 Support and respect equity, workplace diversity, ethical practices, workplace safety and to help prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment or bullying in the workplace.
- 4.2 Participate in workforce diversity training and awareness sessions as requested.
- 4.2 Treat all employees, customers and members of the community in a fair and equitable manner in accordance with Council's values and workforce diversity principles.

5 Management/Supervisor Responsibilities

All Managers and supervisors are required to implement workforce diversity principles in the workplace on a day-to-day basis. In practice this includes but is not limited to:

- 5.1 Taking active steps to prevent and eliminate discrimination and harassment.
- 5.2 Dealing fairly and equitably with complaints or grievances.
- 5.3 Managing employees fairly, including consulting employees about decisions affecting them.
- 5.4 Providing all employees with equitable access to training and development opportunities to achieve career goals.
- 5.5 Fostering a work environment that values and utilises the contributions of all employees considering diversity of skills, backgrounds, experiences and educational levels.
- 5.6 Conducting recruitment and selection processes fairly and inclusively to ensure all employees and prospective employees are treated equitably.
- 5.7 Ensure all employees have access to organisational information through an induction process and other information and peer networks.

6 Human Resources Responsibilities

- 6.1 Implement a Workforce Diversity Plan and specific EEO management plans for people who are under-represented in our workforce: women; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people living with a disability; people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds; young people under 25 years.
- 6.2 Within the Workforce Diversity Plan and EEO management plans, establish goals and strategies so that our workforce better reflects our community.
- 6.3 In partnership with divisions, implement specific programs and initiatives to provide improved employment and career development opportunities for people who are under-represented in our workforce.
- 6.4 Apply fair and inclusive recruitment and selection practices to ensure all employees and prospective employees are treated equitably.
- 6.5 Build strong partnerships with our community and external organisations to maximise the employment outcomes for groups of people who are under-represented in our workforce.
- 6.6 Provide appropriate training and development in workforce diversity matters.
- 6.7 Collect, record and report appropriate workforce diversity information and key performance indicators.

7 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

- 7.1 Manager Human Resources will monitor the scope and currency of this policy.
- 7.2 The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated every three (3) years and measured by workforce data.

8 Related Policies

- Wollongong 2022
- Employment Policies and Procedures
- Positive Working Relationships Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Wollongong City Council Enterprise Agreement 2015-2018

9 Relevant Legislative Provisions

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 NSW*
- *Local Government Act 1993 NSW*

SUMMARY SHEET

Responsible Division	Human Resources
Date adopted by Council	14 December 2015
Date of previous adoptions	20 August 2007 (Reviewed by Human Resources in June 2012 and submitted to EMC on 13 August 2012 – no updates necessary) December 2015
Date of next review	February 2019
Prepared by	Human Resources Officer
Authorised by	Manager Human Resources