



**COOTAMUNDRA -
GUNDAGAI REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

EEO Management Plan 2019-2023

Version Control

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0.1	17-09-2019	Endorsed by the Consultative Committee.	N/A
1.0	24-09-2019	Adopted by Council.	318/2019

INTRODUCTION

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) recognises its responsibilities under relevant legislation to provide a workplace environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, bullying and vilification and provides equal employment opportunities for current and prospective employees. Council views equal employment opportunity (EEO) as good management practice which promotes a harmonious and productive workplace, and enhances Council's efficiency and service delivery.

As an organisation, Council is committed to the following EEO principles as outlined in the *Local Government Act 1993* (Section 344):

- To eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital or domestic status and disability in council; and
- To promote equal employment opportunity for women, members of racial minorities and persons with disabilities in councils.

The *Local Government Act 1993* specifies that councils must have an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan (Section 355) which outlines the:

- a) Devising of policies and programs by which the above mentioned principles are to be achieved;
- b) Communication of those policies and programs to persons within the staff of the Council;
- c) Collection and recording of appropriate information;
- d) Review of personnel practices within the Council (including recruitment techniques, selection criteria, training and staff development programs, promotion and transfer policies and patterns, and conditions of service) with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices;
- e) Setting of goals or targets where these may reasonably be determined, against which the success of the plan in achieving the objects of this Part may be assessed;
- f) Means, other than those referred to in paragraph (e), of evaluating the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (a);
- g) Revision and amendment of the plan; and appointment of persons within the Council to implement the provisions referred to in paragraphs (a) – (g).

CGRC's EEO Management Plan outlines Council's firm commitment to EEO and defines strategies for actions to address the above, as well as working towards eliminating discrimination in the workplace and removing barriers which exclude people from equal employment opportunity.

This Management Plan will ensure that all staff and job applicants are treated equitably by setting out actions that will drive Council's human resource management practices, from recruitment through to learning and development, to operate under EEO principles and actively promote

merit based decisions. There are a number of objectives within this Plan that Council wishes to achieve to ensure it is acting consistently with EEO principles. Each objective has a benchmark against which to measure whether the objective has been achieved.

Treating people fairly and equitably and recognising that each person can contribute something valuable to Council will assist employees to realise their full potential whilst also enhancing Council's effectiveness, efficiency and service to the community. Having a diverse workforce enhances the quality of decision making and service delivery by drawing upon a diverse range of skills, expertise and perspectives.

Everyone working at CGRC has a responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Anti-Discrimination Act (1977) and this Management Plan.

AIMS

Council has a legal and moral obligation to ensure its workforce is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and vilification. All employees are expected to treat each other with consideration and respect at all times.

The aims of Council's EEO Management Plan are to:

- Eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination, harassment, bullying and vilification in employment, including when applying for positions and career advancement
- Promote equal employment opportunity for all
- Create a skilled, harmonious workforce, and a positive, equitable environment in which all staff can work effectively without fear of discrimination, harassment, bullying and vilification.

DEFINITIONS

Equal employment Opportunity (EEO) means all employment and promotion decisions are made based on merit – the skills and abilities of the candidate as measured against the inherent requirements of the position, regardless of personal characteristics. The Plan sets out strategies for recruiting selecting, promoting and training to ensure decisions are made based on merit.

Discrimination occurs when a person or a group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics.

Discrimination laws protect people from discrimination on the basis of:

- A disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury
- Parental status or status as a carer, for example, because a person is responsible for caring for children or other family members
- Race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background
- Age, whether young or old or because of age in general

- Sex
- Industrial activity, including being a member of an industrial organisation like a trade union or taking part in industrial activity, or deciding not to join a union
- Religion
- Pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer or heterosexual
- Marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship or same sex relationship
- Political opinion
- Social origin
- Medical record.

Discrimination can be direct when a person or group is treated differently than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law. For example, a worker is harassed and humiliated because of their race or a worker is refused training or promotion because they are “too old”. Indirect discrimination can occur when policies, rules and practices which appear neutral or impartial adversely affect a group or individual, thus reducing opportunities. For example, if an employer has a policy that refuses to allow staff to work part-time, people with children or family responsibilities may be disadvantaged.

Harassment is any unwanted, unsolicited and unreciprocated behaviour, act or statement that offends, humiliates or intimidates the recipient and which creates a distressing, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassment is usually ongoing or a series of events, however from a legal perspective, harassment does not need to happen more than once for it to be against the law. Behaviour that neither party finds offensive is not harassment as defined under legislation.

Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety. It includes both physical and psychological risks and abuse.

Repeated behaviour refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can refer to a range or pattern of behaviours over a period of time (for example, verbal abuse, unreasonable criticism, isolation and subsequently being denied opportunities – ie a pattern being established from a series of events).

Target Groups are groups identified as experiencing high levels of discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace and for whom EEO strategies are developed to address these disadvantages.

Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten another person.

Vilification is any public act that could incite or encourage hatred, serious contempt or severe ridicule against people because of their race, homosexuality or transgender status or because they have HIV/AIDS. Public acts could include remarks in the media or on the internet or social media, graffiti, posters, verbal abuse, speeches, badges and clothing with slogans on them. The vilification law does not cover acts that are not public, for example abuse that takes place in private where no-one else can hear.

COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA) STATISTICS

Council's aim is to have its workforce reflective of the community and will monitor its workforce diversity to try to represent those in the broader community.

The following statistics provide a basic profile of the population of the LGA compared with Council's employees, where available. All community data were extracted from *The Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Statistics by LGA 2016, Gundagai A13510, Publication No. 1379.0.55.001*. (These data were collected prior to the change of name from Gundagai Council to Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council.)

CGRC Local Government Area							CGRC Employees*					
Age	Males	%	Females	%	Persons	%	Males	%	Females	%	Persons	%
15 -24	565	13	532	11	1,089	12	14	11	8	13	22	12
25 -34	463	10	505	11	972	10	14	11	8	13	22	12
35 -44	554	12	612	13	1,174	13	18	15	9	15	27	14
45 -54	691	16	681	15	1,377	15	38	30	24	39	62	33
55 - 64	826	19	815	17	1,636	18	35	28	9	15	44	24
65 &over	1,344	30	1,544	33	2,874	32	6	5	3	5	9	5
Totals	4,433	100	4,689	100	9,122	100	125	100	61	100	186	100

*Council statistics extracted from Payroll data at 25 July, 2019

At the time of writing, CGRC does not collect EEO statistics related to indigenous employees, nor information related to the country of birth of employees. This data is presented here as a means of identifying the make-up of the community so that realistic objectives can be set and Council's progress monitored once this data becomes available.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Persons in CGRC Local Government Area						
	Males	%	Females	%	Persons	%
Aboriginal	247	95	242	96	489	95
Torres Strait Islander	10	4	8	3	18	4
Both Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	3	1	3	1	6	1
Total	260	100	253	100	513	100

Overseas Born Population – Proportion of Total Population	
Description	%
Born in Oceania and Antarctica (excluding Australia)	0.6
Born in North-West Europe	2.6
Born in southern and Eastern Europe	0.3
Born in North Africa and the Middle East	0.1
Born in south-East Asia	0.4
Born in North-East Asia	0.2
Born in Southern and Central Asia	0.12
Born in Americas	0.2
Born in Sub-Saharan Africa	0.2
Total Born overseas	5.5

ABS Census Data 2016

TARGET GROUPS

Council believes that a diverse network of employees which truly reflect the community it serves and represents, is better equipped to understand and meet the needs of our customers. The *Local Government Act 1993* (Section 344) identifies women, members of racial minorities and persons with disabilities as groups for which equal employment opportunity should be addressed through the EEO Management Plan.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CGRC EEO MANAGEMENT PLAN

Cootamundra-Gundagai's EEO Management Plan comprises four key strategies for an effective approach to EEO, including:

1. Communication and Awareness

Council will raise awareness through effectively communicating the principles of EEO, the rights and responsibilities of all Council employees, reporting to all employees on the progress of the EEO Management Plan and actively demonstrating Council's commitment to achieving the objectives of the Plan.

2. Policies, Procedures, Evaluation and Reporting

Council will ensure that all policies, procedures and workplace practices support the application of equity and diversity principles. Council will continuously evaluate, review and report on the progress in implementing the EEO Management Plan.

3. Improved access for members of EEO Target Groups

Council will develop and implement strategies to improve access to and participation in the workplace for targeted groups within the boundaries of merit based recruitment and through the principles of equity and diversity.

4. Recruitment, Appointment, Promotion and Transfer Processes.

Council will review current recruitment, appointment, promotion and transfer processes to ensure they are based on merit, and comply with EEO principles.

EEO ACTION PLAN

Objective 1 - Communication and Awareness

Council will raise awareness through effectively communicating the principles of EEO, the rights and responsibilities of all Council employees, reporting to all employees on the progress of the EEO Management Plan and actively demonstrating Council's commitment to achieving its objectives.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET DATE
Communicate the EEO Management Plan and to all employees	Senior Staff, Human Resources	EEO Management Plan is available on the Intranet and hard copies distributed as required.	October 2019
Overview of EEO Management Plan is included in all Inductions.	Human Resources	Workplace equity and diversity rights and obligations and EEO Management Plan objectives are included in all inductions.	December 2019
Conduct training for all managers and supervisory staff on EEO principles and their extra responsibilities as managers and	Human Resources initially, then; Managers	All managers and supervisory staff trained. Managers updated when changes occur to legislation.	December 2019 As required.

supervisors in relation to the appropriate legislation.		Managers conduct retraining sessions for their supervisors when changes occur to legislation.	As required.
Conduct training for all non-supervisory staff on EEO principles and their responsibilities under the relevant legislation.	Human Resources initially, then; Managers and supervisors	All non-supervisory staff are trained Refresher training provided by Managers and Supervisors	December 2019 Annually in July

Objective 2 - Policies, Procedures, Evaluation and Reporting

Council will ensure that all policies, procedures and workplace practices support the application of equity and diversity principles. Council will continuously evaluate, review and report on the progress in implementing the EEO Management Plan.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET DATE
Promote the need to collect EEO Statistics of employees to enable comparison with LGA statistics and reporting to Management.	Human Resources/ Payroll; Consultative Committee	Information on EEO statistics available in Payroll system	June 2020
Invite comment and input during the development of CGRC’s EEO Management Plan from employees via the Consultative Committee.	Human Resources	Feedback from Consultative Committee is incorporated into plan	September 2019
Monitor exit interviews to ensure there are no negative EEO issues impacting on staff	Human Resources	Number of issues identified and correctional steps taken to remedy situations.	December 2019
Regularly review Human Resource policies and procedures to ensure they are non-discriminatory, are supportive to all employment groups equally and promote a friendly work atmosphere that is free from bullying and harassment.	Human Resources	Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Staff involved in substantiated incidents provided counselling or disciplinary action undertaken.	Commenced and ongoing.
Job evaluation and performance appraisal	Human Resources	Annual Performance Review survey generates	Commenced and ongoing

policies, procedure and practices ensure employees are paid fairly and equitably		positive results regarding satisfaction with pay equity	
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Objective 3 - Improved access for members of EEO Target Groups

Council will develop and implement strategies to improve access to and participation in the workplace for targeted groups and increase the level of diversity in Council’s workforce through the principles of equity and diversity.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET DATE
Provide opportunities for unpaid work experience placements to enhance employment opportunities	Managers and Human Resources	Number of work experience placements from disadvantaged groups	June 2019, then annual
As positions become available, ascertain if they are suitable for redesign for part-time employment, to suit employees who require increased workplace flexibility.	Managers and Human Resources	Number of positions that are redesigned for part-time employment.	Ongoing. Each position to be assessed as it becomes vacant.
Conduct awareness-raising sessions for managers and supervisors regarding EEO target groups	Managers and Human Resources	Number of sessions conducted. Number of eligible staff attending sessions. Feedback regarding training.	March 2020
Using information gained in awareness-raising sessions, develop strategies to attract members of target groups to Council.	Managers, supervisors, Human Resources	Changes in statistics relating to target groups employed in Council.	December 2020

Objective 4 - Recruitment, Appointment, Promotion and Transfer Processes

Council will review current recruitment, appointment, promotion and transfer processes to ensure they are based on merit, and comply with EEO principles.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGET DATE
Ensure that EEO principles are included in interview skills training for panel convenors and members.	Managers and Human Resources	EEO principles are included in the Interview Skills training course.	December 2019
Ensure interviews for managers and supervisors include questions relating to EEO responsibilities	Interview Panel Convenors; Human Resources	EEO Questions are included in interview questions for supervisory/management positions. No applicants are appointed to supervisory positions unless they demonstrate knowledge and/or understanding of EEO principles. Those who are lacking in this area are identified as requiring training within 6 months of commencement.	December 2019 December 2019
Ensure the recruitment and selection process is regularly reviewed to ensure CGRC models best practice	Human Resources	Regular review and updating of process and policy. Monitoring shortlisting and appointments to ensure that EEO principles are applied.	Commenced and ongoing
Monitor appointments, promotions and transfers to ensure the process is non discriminatory	Managers and Human Resources	Number of substantiated complaints re non-compliance with EEO principles for appointments, promotions and transfers. Position descriptions reflect clearly the qualifications, skills, and experience required for the job and do not include artificial barriers to recruitment of people in the EEO target group. Proportion of appointments from EEO target groups is monitored.	Annually in March, commencing 2020