

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace Policy

Human Rights Act 2019



1. Policy Statement

Townsville City Council (Council) recognises the importance of diversity, inclusion and fair treatment in the workplace. Council is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture to:

- create a safe workplace for Councillors and workers that reflects the local community it serves;
- encourage the continued growth of the City of Townsville by implementing appropriate strategies to maintain longevity of Council's workforce;
- attract and retain a diverse mix of skills and experience within its workforce; and,
- enhance its ability to serve the community and deliver its strategic objectives effectively, efficiently and free from bias.

2. Principles

This policy sets out Council's approach to fostering diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within the workplace and across all Council-related services and activities. Council is committed to providing a work environment that:

- promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of its Councillors and workforce;
- cultivates an inclusive team culture based on value and respect within the Townsville community; and,
- encourages workforce retention through active recognition of individual strengths and contributions to Council operations and service to the community.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors and workers and is applicable to all Council workplaces, activities and services.

4. Responsibility

Role	Responsibility
Councillors and Workers	All Councillors and workers are responsible for ensuring that they understand and adhere to this policy. It is the responsibility of Councillors and workers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• positively and actively participate in inclusion initiatives; and• model respectful and fair behaviour in accordance with their relevant Code of Conduct and the ethics principles under the <i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> to prohibit any inappropriate behaviours towards any community members or worker.
Managers	Managers must take reasonable action to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all workers are aware of their role in supporting DEI within the workplace;• this policy is adhered to within the workplace;• all workers are treated equitably and are not subject to unacceptable conduct; and,• people who raise concerns, make complaints or are witnesses to potential misconduct are not victimised in any way.
People and Culture Section	It is the responsibility of the People and Culture Section to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure that regular and appropriate training is provided to Councillors, workers and managers regarding Council's approach to DEI and their responsibilities in accordance with their respective Code of Conduct and the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>;• investigate alleged or suspected breaches of this policy;• keep the General Manager or Director informed of the investigations and the actions to be taken; and,• ensure the complainant and subject officer (respondent) are regularly communicated with throughout the investigation.

5. Definitions

Corporate Guidance Documents - includes Council policies, administrative directives and associated procedures.

Councillor - an elected person of a local government, including the Mayor.

Diversity - encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognising and welcoming individual differences. These can include the dimensions of sex, age, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, immigration status, gender identity, sexuality, relationship status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, family responsibilities, parental status, impairment, religious belief or activity, political belief or activity, trade union activity, status as a legal sex worker or other characteristic protected by law.

Employee - means an employee whose salary and conditions of employment are derived from the *Queensland Local Government Industry (Steam A, B or C) Award - State 2017* and the Townsville City Council Certified Agreements 2022, and who performs work on behalf of Council.

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Employment Matters - means any matters about the employment of an employee, including the following:

- (a) advertising, recruitment and selection process for appointment or engagement of a person as an employee;
- (b) secondment, promotion and transfer of an employee;
- (c) training and development for an employee; or,
- (d) terms of service and separation of an employee.

Equality - recognises that all humans have the same value, the same rights, the same access to opportunities, and deserve the same respect.

Equity - supports everyone achieving equal outcomes, as outlined by the Human Rights Commission. Equity recognises that people are different and accounts for these differences in aiming for equality.

Ethics principles - are integrity and impartiality, promoting the public good, commitment to the system of government and accountability and transparency. See section 4 of the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*.

Inclusion - the aim of inclusion is to embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and removing discrimination and intolerance.

Manager - an individual responsible for overseeing and coordinating specific functions, departments, teams or projects within Townsville City Council.

Under-Represented Groups - as outlined by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) include the following:

- First Nations people of Australia;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- LGBTQIA+;
- people with disabilities;
- lower socio-economic backgrounds;
- gender; and,
- mature age employees.

Workers - includes employees, contractors, volunteers and all others who perform work on behalf of Council.

Workplace - is a place where work is carried out for the Townsville City Council and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. A 'place' includes:

- (a) a vehicle, vessel, aircraft or other mobile structure; and
- (b) any waters and any installation on land, on the bed of any waters or floating on any waters.

6. Policy

6.1. Council's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Objectives

Council is committed to building a working environment that enables the full and active participation of everyone in its workforce.

Council will:

- aim to create an inclusive team culture characterised by its corporate values, where its workforce feels respected, valued and supported in a way that encourages organisational efficiency and productivity through the selection and employment of the best and most talented people;
- embrace and encourage diversity of thought and experience to maximise service delivery outcomes;
- enable managers to communicate and enact processes which support decision making that is transparent, objective, fair and free from prejudice;
- review and create corporate guidance documents that are objective, fair and free from bias and help to maintain a strong, representative and inclusive culture;
- monitor the broad demographic makeup of its workforce and work actively to allow everyone's voice to be heard and their contribution to be encouraged;
- commit to treating its workforce fairly and without any form of unlawful discrimination;
- act to protect all workers from discriminatory treatment that is unethical or unlawful;
- work towards achieving equity and fairness;
- increase the effectiveness of service delivery and decision-making by adopting an employee profile more accurately reflecting the Townsville community profile; and,
- investigate and respond promptly to any breaches of legislation, this policy or associated corporate guidance documents. If it is determined that a worker's conduct or action contravenes this policy, disciplinary action will be commenced.

6.2. Strategies

Council will develop, implement and promote strategies that align its culture and workforce profile to its DEI objectives outlined in section 6.1, including Council's Workforce Strategy, which details Council's approach to addressing workforce challenges, risks and opportunities. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) will measure the success of this strategy.

Council's key focus areas for fostering diversity and inclusion include:

- building a knowledge-driven culture that embraces diversity and inclusion, reflecting the richness of the community; and
- developing initiatives and programs aimed at promoting diversity and fostering inclusivity at all levels of the organisation.

6.2.1 Recruitment

Council will:

- ensure that recruitment processes are fair, equitable and free from bias;
- review recruitment processes to improve attraction of diverse job seekers into Council (for example, looking at various recruitment agencies, utilising social media, industry bodies etc.); and,

- ensure, where possible, diversity within interview panels.

6.2.2 Diversity and Inclusion in Employment

Council will achieve diversity and inclusion in employment by:

- promoting equal employment opportunity for members of under-represented groups in employment matters; and
- providing education on cultural awareness, diversity (as part of the Workforce Strategy), and inclusion.

6.2.3 Training

Council will offer regular diversity and inclusion training to all Councillors and workers. Diversity training includes raising awareness about issues surrounding diversity and developing diversity management skills and knowledge.

6.2.4 Office Environment

Council will provide a work environment:

- that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying;
- that encourages inclusive behaviours by valuing all perspectives and respecting the dignity and diversity of all workers;
- where workers feel welcome and are respected, connected, supported and valued;
- that is physically accessible for all workers including individuals with a disability; and,
- that is suitable for those with needs related to their individual observance (for example, the inclusion of separate spaces for religious reasons, workers who are new parents, workers who have faith or sensory needs etc.).

6.3. Reporting

Council will establish DEI targets that reflect the achievement of its DEI objectives. These targets will be contained within its relevant strategies.

DEI data will be collected in alignment with the WGEA specifications to ensure measures are accurate and benchmarking can occur.

Council will report on DEI measures:

- quarterly (distributed internally to Directors only); and
- annually (made publicly accessible on Townsville City Council's public website).

All reporting will be de-identified and presented in a format that considers the diversity of Council's workforce and the community. Council will ensure that confidentiality and privacy are maintained in line with relevant legislation and Council's corporate guidance documents.

7. Legal Parameters

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)

Human Rights Act 2019

Industrial Relations Act 2016 (Qld)

Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)

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Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)
Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)
Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 (Qld)
Public Sector Ethics Act 1994
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cwlth)
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwlth)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)
Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

8. Associated Documents

Code of Conduct
Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland
Human Rights Commission Employer Toolkit
Information Privacy Policy
International Labour Organisation Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
Townsville City Council Workforce Strategy
Townsville City Council Reconciliation Action Plan
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Work Health and Safety Policy
Workplace Gender Equality Agency Australia (WGEA)