



# **Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 2013-2017**







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## **Enquiries**

The City of Newcastle  
282 King Street, Newcastle NSW 2300  
PO Box 489 Newcastle NSW 2300 Australia

Phone: 02 4974 2000

Fax: 02 4974 2222

Email: [mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au)

Web: [www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

**Prepared by** City Engagement Group - Manager Human Resources

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The City of Newcastle is committed to the development of a culture that is supportive of Equal Employment Opportunity principles in the workplace.

# Introduction

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The City of Newcastle is committed to the development of a culture that is supportive of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principles in the workplace. 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 councils; and
- to promote equal employment opportunity for women, members of racial minorities and persons with disabilities in councils.

The EEO Management Plan underpins Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and, as required under the *Local Government Act 1993*, 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
- h. appointment of persons within the Council to implement the provisions referred to in paragraphs (a)-(g).

## Supporting strategies

The City of Newcastle's Workforce Management Plan and Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES) support the objectives and initiatives identified in the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan 2013-17.

# Equal Employment Opportunity Principles

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The City of Newcastle recognises the potential negative impact of harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination on all employees in the workplace. Council is dedicated to providing a working environment which is fair, safe, challenging and rewarding. This applies to all aspects of employment.

## **To ensure EEO is applied across the organisation, Council has adopted the following principles in its EEO Policy and EEO Management Plan:**

- Adhere to a transparent, merit based recruitment process that ensures fairness and equity;
- Take all reasonable steps to provide a working environment that is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination;
- Provide training and awareness to all employees about the organisation's commitment to the prevention and management of harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination in the workplace, and monitoring of performance in this area;
- Promote workplace standards where employees treat each other with respect through ethical behaviour, fairness, transparency and open communication; and
- Provide a confidential grievance process where employees are comfortable and confident to make enquiries and complaints about harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination in the workplace.

## **Council has in place the following to further support the EEO principles:**

- The organisational values: cooperation; respect; excellence; and wellbeing.
- The Code of Conduct which refers to 'respect' and the requirement to 'treat others with respect at all times. This means not using derogatory terms towards others, observing the rights of other people, treating people with courtesy and recognising the different roles others play in local government decision-making';
- An EEO policy that seeks to uphold all relevant government laws, including federal and state laws and any other applicable legislation or documents.
- Providing those who work at Council, including councillors, with a guide of what represents acceptable behaviour, and highlights what may constitute harassment, bullying, discrimination and victimisation at work.





Council is dedicated to providing a working environment which is fair, safe, challenging and rewarding.





Newcastle City Council

Attracting and retaining talent.

Investing in the capabilities of our people.

Planning for our future workforce needs.

Cooperation, respect, excellence and wellbeing.



# Objectives and Initiatives

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The EEO Management Plan 2013-17 supports the delivery of the Workforce Management Plan and ensures Council will be regarded as an employer of choice. The EEO Management Plan objectives are aligned to those of the Workforce Management Plan but are targeted to EEO outcomes.

## **The EEO objectives are to:**

- Develop recruitment, selection, development and career progression practices for EEO target groups;
- Raise awareness at all levels of EEO responsibilities and obligations;
- Enhance and grow diversity in the workplace; and
- Create a workplace that is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination.

## **The objectives are informed by staff feedback.**

More than 700 employees identified the following issues in a 2012 Culture Survey:

- Respect for members;
- Fairness in selection and placement decisions;
- Fairness of appraisals;
- Fairness of training and development opportunities;
- Employee involvement in decision that impact on them; and
- Use of disciplinary action.

More than 500 employees were surveyed on EEO in 2009 by the University of Newcastle Equity and Diversity Unit and the following recommendations were made:

- Implementing initiatives to increase female representation in the workforce, and their representation in senior management and the elected Council;
- Increasing the representation of staff who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons, disabled persons and creating a more culturally diverse workforce; and
- Developing and implementing education and awareness programs around bullying and harassment to reduce the incidence of such events in the workplace.

# Objective one





## Develop recruitment, selection, development and career progression practices for EEO target groups

Develop and implement recruitment, selection, succession planning and career progression initiatives that are consistent with the principles of equity and diversity and increase representation of EEO target groups at Council between 2013-17.

Initiative	Target Group	Responsibility	Performance Indicator(s)	Target Date
Ensure all staff involved with recruitment and selection processes are trained in merit based selection.	Staff involved in recruitment and selection processes.	HR Officer.	Training conducted for all relevant staff prior to participating on selection panels.	Panel Coordinators and line managers trained by June 2014. Process in place to ensure all staff undertake training prior to participating on selection panels by June 2014. Online training to be developed by June 2014.
Develop and maintain Manager Guidelines on the recruitment and selection process, which includes specific information on managing equity and diversity matters during recruitment.	Managers involved in recruitment and selection processes.	HR Officer supported by Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor.	Manager Guidelines in place. Guidelines incorporated into the on-boarding program for Managers. To be reviewed annually.	December 2013. December 2013. Annually in March.
Review position descriptions to ensure inclusion of EEO responsibilities for all staff and that essential and desirable criteria are non-discriminatory.	All staff.	HR Advisors.	Job descriptions updated to include EEO responsibilities and non-discriminatory criteria as each new recruitment process is initiated.	Integrated with the job role review underway across Council where like positions are moving to standardised position descriptions. To be completed by June 2015.
Develop and implement initiatives that encourage a diverse range of applicants to apply for council positions.	Potential employees.	HR Officer.	Initiatives developed and being actioned.	December 2013.
Develop and implement succession planning and career progression programs that encourage the development of staff in EEO target groups to take up more senior positions.	All staff.	L&D Manager.	Program implemented Measure and report on success rate of program on an annual basis.	Targeted positions identified by June 2014. Induction/On-boarding program and training plans for targeted positions by December 2014. Succession planning process for targeted positions to be in place by June 2015. Reporting to align with annual report timelines.

# Objective two





## Raise awareness of EEO responsibilities and obligations

Develop and implement effective workplace communication and training programs to raise awareness of EEO principles, practices, rights and obligations across Council during the 2013-2017 period.

Initiative	Target Group	Responsibility	Performance Indicator(s)	Target Date
<b>Workplace Communication</b>				
Develop a communication plan to launch the new EEO Management Plan, ensuring it is also placed on The City of Newcastle's website, intranet and make copies of the plan available to Union representatives and outdoor staff.	Community. Union representatives. All staff.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor.	All staff have been advised of the adoption of the EEO Management Plan.  EEO Management Plan is available on internet and intranet and hardcopies distributed as required.	July 2013.
<b>EEO Training Programs</b>				
High level overview of Council's EEO Policy and the EEO Management Plan are included in Council's induction/on-boarding program.	All new employees.	L&D Manager.	EEO rights and obligations and key priorities within the EEO Management Plan are included in induction and on-boarding materials.	July 2013.
EEO training is provided to all staff, elected Council and volunteers, including the options of an e-learning EEO module and face-to-face training where appropriate.	All staff. Elected Council. Volunteers.	L&D Manager.	All managers and staff have undergone EEO awareness training within the past 18 months.  Quarterly training status report to be produced and compliance monitored.	All staff and Councillors as per the policy.  Volunteers to be trained by 2015.  Part of the HR quarterly report.
Provide level 1-4 managers with training, coaching and support tools to enable them to effectively manage the EEO grievance process.	All managers.	L&D Manager. Senior HR Advisors.	Training provided to all level 1-4 managers.  Support tools in place.  Quarterly training status report to be produced and compliance monitored.	Commenced and ongoing.  September 2013.  Part of the HR quarterly report.

# Objective three





## Enhance diversity in the workplace

Develop and implement strategies and programs to improve and increase the level of diversity in Council's workforce.

Initiative	Target Group	Responsibility	Performance Indicator(s)	Target Date
Review and support the implementation of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES).	Current and potential Aboriginal employees.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor.	AES reviewed, implemented and promoted throughout Council and externally to the Aboriginal community and employment providers. Progress reported on a quarterly basis. Participation rate improves on an annual basis.	July 2013.  Quarterly. Annually.
Identify and implement programs to increase female development across Council into leadership roles.	Current and potential female employees.	L&D Manager.	Programs in place. Participation rate improves on an annual basis.	December 2014. Annually.
Identify and implement programs to increase the participation rate of employees with a disability at Council, specifically in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traineeships;</li> <li>• Apprenticeships;</li> <li>• Work Experience.</li> </ul>	Potential employees with a disability.	L&D Manager.	Programs in place. Participation rate improves on an annual basis. Recruitment and selection processes are tailored for the target group.	June 2014. Annually. As required.
Identify and implement programs to increase the participation rate of employees from culturally diverse backgrounds at Council, specifically in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traineeships;</li> <li>• Apprenticeships.</li> </ul>	Potential employees from culturally diverse backgrounds.	L&D Manager.	Programs in place. Participation rate improves on an annual basis. Recruitment and selection processes are tailored for the target group.	March 2014. Annually. As required.
Identify and implement programs to increase the participation rate of employees aged 18 to 25 at Council.	Potential employees aged 18-25.	L&D Manager.	Programs in place Participation rate improves on an annual basis. Recruitment and selection processes are tailored for the target group.	March 2014. Annually. As required.
The EEO climate is monitored via HR statistics, EAP reporting, a grievance register and exit interviews.	All staff.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor.	Grievance database established . Trends reported quarterly. Reports are reviewed and relevant programs designed and implemented if required.	December 2013. Part of the HR quarterly report. As required.

# Objective four





# Create a workplace that is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination

Develop and implement initiatives to provide a workplace that is free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination and that promptly and effectively deals with any grievances that arise.

Initiative	Target Group	Responsibility	Performance Indicator(s)	Target Date
Appoint a Workplace Contact Officer for each working area within Council and provide all contact officers with training.	All staff.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor	Workplace Contact Officer network in place and training provided.	Commenced and ongoing.
Workplace Contact Officers to meet on a quarterly basis and provide support and advice on EEO matters to employees within their work area.	Workplace Contact Officers.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor	Quarterly meetings are taking place and WCO network is actively involved in EEO decision making.	Commenced and ongoing.
Actively promote the Workplace Contact Officer network to all staff at Council and review network every two years.	All staff. Workplace Contact Officers.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor.	Workplace Contact Officer network promoted on intranet, through workplace posters and team meetings.	Commenced and ongoing. Review May 2015.
Develop a bullying and harassment awareness campaign for council employees.	All staff.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor L&D Manager	Bullying and harassment awareness campaign has been implemented.	March 2014.
Conduct a review of the Grievance Handling Policy and procedures and actively promote to all staff.	All staff.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor.	Grievance Handling Policy and procedures are updated and staff are aware of their location.	December 2013.
Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to ensure compliance with EEO legislation.	All staff.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor. HR Advisors.	HR policies and procedures are reviewed when legislation changes occur.	Commenced and ongoing.
Conduct a review of flexible work arrangements and related policies to ensure they suitably cater for employees with carers responsibilities.	Staff with carers responsibilities.	Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor.	Flexible work arrangements cater for employees with carers responsibilities.	December 2013.

## Corporate Risk Assessment

A risk assessment on the four objectives contained in this plan has been conducted using Council's Enterprise Risk Management Framework.

# Achievements

Between 2011-2012 the following progress was made towards meeting the objectives.

## Develop recruitment, selection, and career progression practices for EEO target groups

### Recruitment Policy review

The Recruitment Policy was reviewed to ensure it complied with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* in the areas of 'merit based selection' and EEO principles.

### Recruitment and selection training

Training developed on the recruitment and selection process and the 'application of merit' and 'equal employment opportunity' principles. Delivery to all line managers is underway.

### Position advertisements

All job advertisements now include a standard EEO statement and are written in plain English.

### Interview questions

A process has been put in place to ensure all interview questions are reviewed by the Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor to ensure non-discriminatory language is used.

## Raise awareness of EEO responsibilities and obligations

### Senior Aboriginal Employment and EEO Advisor

In 2012 this position was created as an identified Aboriginal position and filled on a full-time basis to oversee all Aboriginal employment and EEO related matters at Council.

### Workplace Contact Officer network

Council's Workplace Contact Officer network has been re-established and has members in various locations across Council. Specific Contact Officer training has been provided to these employees and they are one of the first points of contact for employees requiring information or advice on EEO matters.

### EEO training

A high focus has been placed on the delivery of EEO training over the past 18 months, including the recent implementation of an e-learning training module. In addition to general information on EEO rights and obligations, managers also received training in the EEO grievance management process.





## Enhance diversity in the workplace

### Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES)

The AES has been reviewed to ensure alignment with the Workforce Management Plan and the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan. The AES will focus on Aboriginal employment within Council.

### Targeted Aboriginal apprentice and trainee positions

Three of the ten places in Council's 2013 apprentice and trainee intake, were advertised and recruited as targeted Aboriginal positions.

### Annual report

EEO achievements and activities are included in the annual report.

### EEO data

This is now collected at the commencement of employment and system changes have been made to collect this data from existing employees.

## Create a workplace that is free of bullying, harassment and discrimination

### EEO Policy

Council's EEO Policy has been fully reviewed and endorsed by Council's Executive Leadership Team.

### Organisation values

During 2012, Council engaged with staff to develop and implement an updated set of values. The values are cooperation, respect, excellence and wellbeing. These values are fundamental to the EEO Management Plan.



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