



DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

2009-2010

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Introduction

What is “Diversity and Equality”?

Diversity – diverseness, variety - *oxford dictionary*

Equality – being equal - *oxford dictionary*

Equity – fairness - *oxford dictionary*

The term “diversity and equality” can mean different things to different people – indeed it is easy to become confused with the terminology which surrounds this topic, such as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), harassment, discrimination and bullying.

A generally accepted understanding of this term is that it’s about acknowledging individual differences in people that arise from a range of backgrounds and lifestyles, and recognising the value of those perspectives and ideas to enhance the quality and outcomes of our work. More specifically, it incorporates issues such as:

- » Creating workplaces where differences amongst people are respected and valued, and where harnessing the power of those differences works to the benefit of the organisation;
- » Facilitating work / family / community balance for employees;
- » Promoting Equal Employment Opportunity – which is intended to eliminate employment-related favouritism or discrimination, and encourage fairness and equity in processes such as recruitment, promotion, selection for training, etc;
- » Eliminating unacceptable workplace behaviours.

Anyone with supervisory responsibilities already manages diversity at some level, in their daily operations. Utilising the different perspectives of a diverse group of staff has the potential to increase innovation and creativity.

Why is diversity and equality important?

There are numerous studies arguing the benefits of diversity at work. Recognition of the strategic advantages of an effective, diverse workforce is increasing as our demography changes with the limited growth of Australia's working population, and the resulting increase in competition for skilled staff. Indeed, other companies have already recognised the potential for competitive advantage through embracing diversity, both in terms of business performance and attracting talented people.

While there is legislation that protects individuals from intolerance and harassment, merely 'tolerating' differences will not deliver the real gains that are possible with the effective management of diversity. Perceptions that an organisation is not "diversity-friendly" have a significant impact on productivity, as well as our ability to attract, retain and motivate people to perform at their best. At the personal level, it is commonsense that people who are uncomfortable at work because the environment is unfair, not welcoming, unfriendly, unprofessional or not supportive, will not perform to their maximum potential. They may even seek work elsewhere.

The benefits of a diverse workforce are clear – studies consistently demonstrate that diverse work groups are more creative, make better decisions, are better at identifying new markets, enjoy greater customer confidence and have less discrimination claims and lower employment-related costs.

Council is committed to the principles of diversity and equality and has linked this plan to council's corporate plan and cultural values. This management plan will be implemented through the support of the Diversity and Equality Reference Group and Human Resources.

Diversity and Equality and EEO Legislation

The following legislation and industrial instruments underpin the principles of workforce diversity and equality:

- » Local Government Act & Regulation 1994
- » Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- » Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- » Equal Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986
- » Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- » Anti Discrimination Act Queensland 1991
- » Workplace Health & Safety Act 1995
- » Workplace Relations Act 1996
- » Queensland Industrial Relations Act 1999
- » Townsville City Council Enterprise Agreement
- » Relevant industrial awards

Diversity and Equality Roles

Human Resources (HR) has overall responsibility for implementing the Diversity and Equality Management Plan within Council. HR is supported by the Diversity and Equality Reference Group, which also has consultative and monitoring responsibilities with regard to the Plan.

Supervisors at all levels are charged with managing all issues associated with diversity and equality in their work area. Contact Officers are the first point of contact for staff experiencing unacceptable workplace behaviour. Contact Officers also have responsibilities as an initial sounding board and in providing process guidance to staff with complaints.

	<p>issues within council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide a resource to give advice and assist with training and support for management to implement Diversity and Equity principles eg: Adoption of use of non discriminatory language text – example: Community Services booklet – A Way With Words from Queensland Government Disability Services » Contact officers to act as role models and mentor and champion others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Human Resources » Contact Officers 	<p>Jan 2010</p> <p>Completed - Ongoing</p>
<p>Council will include and promote equity as part of everyday business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ensure council documentation, applications and policies provide equity outcomes for all employees eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Position descriptions ○ Training applications ○ Merit based selection » Develop education program/s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide targeted education to Councillors, Council Executive Management, Managers and Supervisors about equity principles and their corresponding management responsibilities ○ Educate new staff about equity principles at induction training » Contact officers to act as role models and mentor and champion others » Design/develop a diversity & equity promotional / communication plan for whole of council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » All Departments » Human Resources » Contact Officers » Corporate Communications 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct –Nov 2009</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed – Ongoing</p> <p>Corporate Communications to advise</p>

OBJECTIVE 2:

Celebrate individual differences of people. (Corporate Plan – 4.8)

Workforce willingly participating in the celebration of individual differences.

Strategies	Actions	Section Responsible	
Council supports activities that celebrate the differences of people within the council workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identify recognised observances that will be supported internally » Provide adequate resources to deliver diversity and equity activities within council » Promote council staff participation in supporting diversity and equity activities, such as International Women’s Day , Naidoc Week , Disability Action Week, Harmony Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Diversity and Equality Reference Group » Executive Team » All Departments Diversity and Equality Reference Group 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Executive Team to advise</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Council will explore productive diversity within Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identify the benefits of a productive Diversity Policy » Identify the council department or officer to lead the development of the policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » All Departments » All Departments 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Provide opportunities for workforce participation in the celebration of diversity and equity events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Demonstrate the benefits of a diverse workforce through the communication plan » Provide mechanisms to enable employees to participate in celebration activities » Engender Executive Manager support for diversity and equity celebrations » Ensure Diversity and Equity events appear on the internal calendars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Corporate Communications » All Departments » Executive Managers » All Departments 	<p>Corporate Communications to advise</p> <p>All departments to advise</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

OBJECTIVE 3:

To build a council culture that reflects contemporary community profiles and expectations in terms of diversity and equity principles. (Corporate Plan – 4.8)

Strategies	Actions	Section Responsible	
To quantify our communities diversity profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Correlate existing data » Conduct community surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Link with other council departments for data – Community Development 	Community Development to advise
To quantify our workplace diversity profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Correlate existing data » Conduct workplace surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Link with other council departments for data – Community Development 	Community Development to advise
Council to define the desired workplace diversity profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Set benchmark » Conduct gap analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Executive Team » Human Resources 	Executive Team to advise Mar –may 2010
Council senior management and councillors to champion diversity and equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Encouraging staff participation in diversity and equity activities » Diversity and equity principles to be embedded in council operational plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Senior management and councillors » All Departments 	Ongoing Ongoing
Council to review its diversity and equity culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ongoing baseline surveys on current diversity and equity profiles » Analysis of survey to identify gaps » Introduce and implement a reporting and feedback system » To provide a quarterly report to the Executive Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Human Resources » Human Resources » Human Resources » HR, Diversity and Equality Reference 	Ongoing June 2010 June 2010 Ongoing from June 2010

		Group	
Provide equal access to flexible working arrangements or opportunities for all staff	» Identify existing services for supporting flexible working arrangements and opportunities and promote to relevant staff	» All Departments	Ongoing
	» Provide a resource to provide advice, training and support for management to implement diversity and equity principles	» Human Resources	June 2010