

# Policy



## Equal Employment Opportunity

Approved by Council: 19 April 2017

To ensure compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and to outline Council's commitment to ensuring our workplace is free of discrimination and supports a diverse workforce.

**Safety**

**Teamwork**

**Accountability**

**Respect**

### Policy statement

Rous County Council (Council) is committed to ensuring our workplace is free of discrimination and that equal employment principles are at the foundation of how we operate.

Equal opportunity in employment includes the principles of selection, training, transfer, promotion, terms of employment and dismissal in a fair, equitable, consistent manner without unlawful bias or prejudice.

Council aims to have a diverse workforce; employing workers from a wide range of backgrounds. This includes workers of different ages, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, work experience and educational background.

Council will endeavour to ensure that in the application of all Council policies, practices and procedures, no discrimination takes place, diversity is encouraged, and that all employees enjoy equal access to opportunities within the Council. All recruitment, selection and employment decisions will be based on the individual merit of applicants and employees.

A well-managed diverse workforce will equip the organisation to meet future challenges in a competent and innovative manner.

### Background

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) principle is that all employees and potential employees have the right to equality of opportunity and fair treatment in employment.

The EEO policy (EEO policy) has been developed in accordance with the *Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987*, *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* and *Local Government Act 1993*. This policy also supports the delivery of our Workforce Management Plan – through a focus on EEO outcomes.

The EEO policy facilitates the identification and removal of systemic barriers to the participation and promotion in employment of EEO groups, including:

- Women
- Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders
- People from racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups
- People whose language first spoken as a child was not English
- People with a disability
- People with a disability requiring adjustment at work, and
- Carers

This EEO policy has been designed to enable Council to build on and improve its performance in establishing and maintaining a diverse workforce which reflects the diversity of the greater community. The policy is Council's foundation for a working environment that values diversity and promotes equity and inclusion. Council also believes an inclusive workplace provides a quality working environment for employees and gives Council the competitive edge in the employment market.

Supporting the achievement of this EEO policy are Council's various policies, procedures and other documents listed in the 'Related documents'.

In addition, Council has a trained EEO Contact Officer to provide support and advice to both employees and management. The duties of this position include:

- providing a neutral contact point for workers with concerns in relation to discrimination, harassment or EEO issues in the workplace
- informing the supervisors, and the Senior Management Team of all EEO complaints, issues and potential issues in the workplace, and
- providing support and information to the complainant on the procedural options available to resolve a complaint.

### **Discrimination**

EEO principles are underpinned by practices that fulfil the requirements of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*. These include practices that ensure discrimination (of an employee or job applicant) does not occur. This means people who work for Council and/or apply for a job with Council will not be discriminated against based on attributes including: gender; parental status; race; impairment; age; sexuality political or religious belief. Council therefore does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

### **Direct discrimination**

Treating people in similar circumstances differently, because of irrelevant characteristics or attributes or because of assumptions about the individual or group. Examples of such are:

- denying a person, a job because they are over 45
- overlooking a person for management training because of their nationality.

### **Indirect discrimination**

Treating people unreasonably based on requirements, which cannot be met by most members of a particular group. Examples of such are:

- promotion by seniority thus excluding many women because they have taken time out of the workforce to care for children
- employing workers based on their height, although height is not pertinent to effective performance of the job
- anyone who engages in unacceptable conduct in breach of EEO may face disciplinary action.

## Complaints

Council takes matters relating to EEO very seriously and encourages employees and or job applicants to report potential breaches of EEO principles. In the first instance this may involve raising the matter directly with the person involved. If this is not practicable and/or does not resolve the matter, a formal written complaint can be lodged. Current employees can use the 'Complaint – feedback' form available on our intranet.

External parties can write to the General Manager. This written complaint should include:

- a detailed statement of the conduct, events, dates and times
- the name of the person/s the complaint is made against
- names of any witnesses
- any attempt to resolve the issue and the outcome of the attempt including information about the desired outcome sought

If the complaint relates to the General Manager please refer to Council's Code of Conduct (available on our website – [www.rous.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rous.nsw.gov.au)).

The complaint will be investigated and the complainant will receive written advice of the outcome of this investigation.

Where the matter can't be resolved internally, people have the right to lodge a complaint with the relevant body. This includes the Anti- Discrimination Board of NSW [website address](#)

## Reporting, review, evaluation and revision

This EEO policy is a dynamic document that will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the identified goals while remaining compliant with relevant legislation.

Following the review, the EEO policy may be amended to reflect the changing nature of business and the environment in which we operate. We will report on implementation of the EEO policy through the Annual Report.

## EEO policy goals

Our EEO policy supports the delivery of the Workforce Management Plan and supports Council's aim to be regional employer of choice. The goals of our EEO policy are aligned to the objectives of the Workforce Management Plan and targeted to EEO outcomes. The Workforce Management Plan objectives that directly align with this policy are: attracting a diverse workforce; investing in skill development; engaging with our employees and supporting them to maximise their full potential.

The Workforce Management Plan objectives underpin our EEO policy goals ensuring we have an integrated and strategic approach. The EEO policy goals are:

1. Policies, procedures and practices are consistent with EEO principles, legislation and guidelines.
2. Recruit and select a diverse workforce based on sound EEO principles.
3. Embed EEO objectives, requirements, and responsibilities into training and development activities.

4. Engage in regular EEO related communication with employees (supported by our EEO data).
5. Create a workplace culture, aligned to our values which support EEO practices.

Appendix 1 details the actions we will undertake to achieve these goals and the measures we will use. These actions have been designed to be:

- Achievable
- Meaningful and genuinely make a difference
- Readily understood
- Capable of assessment.

What we are going to do?	Who is accountable for making this happen?	When will it occur?
<b>GOAL 1: Policies, procedures and practices consistent with EEO principles, legislation and guidelines</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence of EEO principles, legislation and guidelines in policies, procedures and practices</b>		
Review and update (where necessary) people related policies and procedures	HR Coordinator	According to review cycle
Consider the needs of EEO groups in work reorganisation or structural changes	Senior Management Team	As required
<b>GOAL 2: Recruit and select a diverse workforce based on sound EEO principles</b>		
<b>Measure: Workforce that is representative of our community</b>		
All recruitment and selection activities promote and comply with EEO principles (e.g. procedures, processes, position descriptions, advertising, representative selection panels, terms and conditions)	Hiring manager/supervisor	Ongoing
^Document and promote the employee value proposition (EVP) – including an EEO statement	HR Coordinator	March 2019
^Establish an apprenticeship/graduate program targeting EEO groups	Senior Management Team	December 2018
<b>GOAL 3: Embed EEO objectives, requirements, and responsibilities into training and development activities</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence that training programs have EEO components or are based on EEO principles</b>		
^All new employees are made aware of EEO objectives, requirements and responsibilities as part of the induction process	All supervisors/managers	Ongoing
^Succession plans are reviewed using EEO principles	Senior Management Team	Annually
^Management training programs to include module(s) related to EEO principles and practices	Senior Management Team	By September 2018
All employees to undertake “refresher” training to maintain currency of EEO principles and practices	HR Officer	Every 2 years
<b>GOAL 4: Engage in regular EEO related communication with employees (supported by our EEO data)</b>		
<b>Measure: Evidence of regular communication with employees and Senior Management Team</b>		
Use multiple communication channels to support the release of policies and procedures	HR Coordinator	As required
^Promote and celebrate EEO achievements through channels including Staff Forums and Rous Connect	General Manager	As required
^Analyse and report on our EEO workforce data to the SMT as part of the workforce planning cycles	HR Coordinator	Annually
<b>GOAL 5: Create a workplace culture, aligned to our values which support EEO practices</b>		
<b>Measure: Majority of employees understand their EEO responsibilities and demonstrate appropriate behaviours</b>		
^Performance conversations include behaviours that support our values and EEO principles	All supervisors/managers	Ongoing
^ Seek feedback from employees (around EEO practices) by including EEO questions in engagement surveys	Senior Management Team	Ongoing

Key: ^ Initiative from the Rous Workforce Management Plan 2017 - 2021

## Contact officer

Human Resources Coordinator

## Related documents

### Policies

Complaints handling policy.

### Procedures

Bullying and harassment procedure.

Complaints handling procedure.

### Legislation

*Local Government Act 1993.*

*Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987.*

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.*

### Other

Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct procedures.

Complaint - feedback form.

Workforce Management Plan 2017 – 2021.

<b>Office use only</b>	File no.: 172/13	Next review date: 2 years	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0	Equal Employment Opportunity policy.	19/04/2017	32/17