

# LET'S WORK TOGETHER





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## Message from our Chief Executive Officer, Morven Cameron

This Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity Management Plan 2019-2022 reflects Lake Macquarie City Council's commitment to achieving our vision of being a vibrant regional City of opportunity, prosperity and diversity. It outlines our objectives and how they will be achieved over the next four years.

The Plan continues our commitment to fostering a workplace culture that is inclusive, respectful, promotes diversity, and embraces the unique skills and qualities of our people. This commitment to diversity and equal opportunity is core to our day-to-day work at Council and is reflected in our organisational values:

- Working together – collaborating with respect and understanding that diversity enables us to tap into a broader range of perspectives and knowledge, to the benefit of all.
- Shaping the future – recognising that Council's workforce should reflect the diversity of the City we serve. Through our community programming, we offer opportunities for our residents to come together, exchange stories and celebrate diversity.
- Leading at all levels – our employees are champions for equity in the workplace, modelling the behaviours that will help position Council as an employer of choice.

By respecting, valuing and harnessing the varied perspectives, skills and experience each individual brings to the workplace, we become richer as an organisation. I am a strong believer that a diverse network of empowered employees, which truly reflects the people it serves and represents, is better equipped to understand and meet the needs of our community. By supporting diversity, we can create an even better workplace, where our people are valued, the culture is positive, and innovation thrives.



## Introduction

Council is committed to having a diverse and inclusive workforce with a collection of skills, experiences and perspectives that is reflective of the community we serve. We demonstrate this commitment by promoting diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity in employment and development.

Our Workforce Management Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Equity and Diversity Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy support the objectives and initiatives identified in this EEO and Diversity Management Plan 2019-2022.

We're dedicated to providing a working environment that is fair, safe, challenging and rewarding. This applies to all aspects of employment and is supported by:

- Our Organisational Values:
  - Shaping our future;
  - Leading at all levels; and
  - Working together.
- 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 and treating people with courtesy.
- Providing those who work at Council, including Councillors, with a guide of what represents acceptable behaviour and highlighting what may constitute harassment, bullying, discrimination and victimisation at work, as well as applying fairness and equity in how we work.

Council embraces its obligation under the *Local Government Act 1933* (section 344) and is committed to the EEO Principles as outlined in the Act:

- 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 people with disabilities in councils.

Council is committed to equity and diversity, recognising every employee at Council has a responsibility to ensure compliance with the *Anti-Discrimination Act (1977)* and not discriminate on the grounds outlined in our Equity and Diversity Policy.

## Celebrating our achievements

Our EEO and diversity journey so far has been guided by our previous Plan. From 2014-2018, we made the following positive progress towards meeting our EEO objectives.

### Support

- The Contact Officer Network was re-established with members embedded across Council. Contact Officers received specific training to assist them in providing ongoing support and assistance for employees on EEO matters.
- Support to carers continued through our Enterprise Agreement provisions. This enhanced access to extended leave, recognises the additional responsibilities of carers within the community and our workplace.
- We included an entitlement for domestic and family violence leave in our Enterprise Agreement provisions, recognising the need to support our employees.
- We encouraged employees to celebrate Harmony Day, recognising and celebrating the cultural diversity of fellow employees.

### Training

- We created an online module for existing staff on bullying and harassment awareness and Council's EEO Policy, with the training included as part of the onboarding process for new employees.
- We implemented a leadership program for supervisors and team leaders, and piloted an emerging leader program focused on skills and professional development, designed to build the management capability of our existing and future leaders.
- We initiated a training program predominantly for 'outdoor' employees to build their skills in English literacy, numeracy and digital technology.
- We conducted regular cultural awareness training to enhance knowledge and skills of employees.
- We reviewed training needs to align with Council's Capability Framework, to ensure equitable access to training opportunities for all staff.



## Partnerships

- Council partnered with a disability agency to create a mechanism that provides additional opportunities to increase recruitment applications from people with a disability applying for positions with Council.
- We exhibited at the Newcastle Lake Macquarie Career and Training Expo promoting our organisation as a great place to work and encouraging people from many industries, fields and diverse backgrounds to consider a career in Council.
- During 2017, Council engaged with employees to refresh our Organisational Values. The values of Shaping our future, Leading at all levels and Working together are fundamental to the EEO and Diversity Management Plan.



## Processes

- EEO data is voluntarily collected from the commencement of employment at Council. We evolved our system to assist with the collection of data from existing employees.
- We developed a program to reduce loss of workforce skills as mature aged workers retire.
- We introduced a framework to build the number of trainees, apprentices and cadets employed directly by Council with an aspirational target of 10 per cent of the workforce, including positions targeted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants. The program demonstrates Council's ongoing commitment, as one of the largest employers in the region, to creating employment opportunities and skill development in our local area.
- We developed a Workforce Planning Framework, enabling a consistent approach across all departments. The Framework recognises that our people are our greatest asset and takes into consideration succession planning, skills recognition, targeted career planning, and equity and diversity.
- We developed our Workforce Planning Strategy to improve equitable outcomes for new and existing employees throughout their working life with Council.

## Our work environment

Council appreciates and celebrates its diverse workforce. We recognise that having employees with a range of skills and experiences enhances our ability to provide quality services for the community.

It is important that the EEO and Diversity Management Plan objectives and strategies are assessed within the context of the current work environment at Council. We believe that our workforce should reflect the community we serve.

The EEO and Diversity Management Plan 2019-2022 focuses on initiatives to increase the percentage of employees from identified target groups to be more reflective of our community.

These are our target groups:	Local government area	Council
Women – Gender balance	51.2% <sup>1</sup>	41.3%
People with disability	9-12% <sup>2</sup>	0.7%
Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	5.82% <sup>3</sup>	4.6%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders	2.7% <sup>4</sup>	1.65%

1 2016 Census

2 2016 Census and ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers 2015

3 2016 Census

4 2016 Census

Note:

Percentages in this table for the Local Government Area (LGA) are based on the assumption that 60% of the LGA are of a working age of 15-65 years.



# OBJECTIVES

This section details the actions, which will occur over the life of the Plan to support EEO and Council's diversity goals.



# Objective one

## Sound information base

Create a sound information base to inform diversity strategies.

Initiative	Responsibility	Performance indicators	Target date
Encourage employees to provide EEO data when onboarding	People, Culture and Risk	Increase in response rates	Ongoing
Demographic data is systematically collected and monitored and data is reported annually to meet legislative requirements	People, Culture and Risk	Biennial employee engagement survey incorporates EEO and diversity data	Ongoing
Analyse statistics to inform EEO and diversity management strategies and actions	People, Culture and Risk	Statistics analysed and reported annually, inclusive of qualitative information collected via monitoring HR metrics reports, Employee Assistance Program reporting, grievances and exit interviews	Ongoing



# Objective two

## Communicating and raising awareness

Develop and implement effective workplace communication and training programs to raise awareness of EEO principles, rights and obligations across Council.

Initiative	Responsibility	Performance indicators	Target date
Develop a communication plan to launch the new EEO and Diversity Management Plan	People, Culture and Risk/ Communications	All employees have been advised of the adoption of the EEO and Diversity Management Plan  EEO and Diversity Management Plan is available on the internet, intranet and hard copies are distributed as required	Ongoing
EEO training is provided to all employees	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Online modules in workplace behaviour, equity and code of conduct completed by all new employees, with refresher modules completed as appropriate	Ongoing
Ensure all employees involved with recruitment and selection processes are trained in merit-based selection	People, Culture and Risk	Training provided to all relevant employees prior to participating on selection panels, which includes information on managing equity and diversity matters during recruitment	Ongoing
Include the topic 'leveraging diversity in teams' and 'unconscious bias' in all relevant leadership programs	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Diversity themes are integrated into relevant training programs	Ongoing
Organise guest speaker events to support Equity and Diversity awareness	People, Culture and Risk/Wellbeing Committee	Consider including an annual guest speaker in the wellbeing program	2019 and annually
Establish Senior Leadership Network Sponsors	Senior Leadership Network/People, Culture and Risk	Sponsors established, briefed and trained in their role of raising awareness and advocating diversity	2019
Develop a Hiring Manager guide for employing people with a disability in the workplace	People, Culture and Risk	Guide developed and includes information on access to workplace adjustment services	2019

# 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	Responsibility	Performance indicators	Target date
Respond to requests for unpaid work experience placements to enhance employment opportunities for EEO target group	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Number of work experience placements through various schools, colleges and agencies in each EEO target group	Ongoing
Investigate University of Newcastle Indigenous Scholarship Student Work Experience Program		Program investigated and implemented if suitable	2019
Ascertain whether positions, as they become vacant, are suitable for EEO target group and redesign as appropriate	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Increase in number of positions identified as suitable including targeting trainee positions for EEO target group	Ongoing
Initial focus on suitability of positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people with disability, recognising the gap between our community and our workplace demographic			2019-2020
Identify and implement programs to increase the participation rates of employees at Council from the EEO target groups during recruitment	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Programs identified and in place	2020
Advertise job vacancies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Media		Participation rate improves on an annual basis Recruitment and selection processes are tailored for the EEO target groups	

Initiative	Responsibility	Performance indicators	Target date
<p>Partner with relevant external agencies for support in recruitment for EEO targeted positions</p> <p>Form key partnerships with disability employment and support organisations</p> <p>Attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) applicants through relationships with ATSI employment agencies and publications</p>	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Council engages specialist support for the recruitment of EEO targeted positions	2019-2020
Develop recruitment strategies designed to redress the gender imbalance in professions or departments	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Increase the percentage of opposite gender in gender heavy professions/ departments	2020-2021
Promote coaching and mentoring programs to support EEO employee groups	People, Culture and Risk	Coaching and mentoring programs are identified and implemented for EEO employee groups	2021
EEO employee groups have equitable opportunities for skill development and career progression	People, Culture and Risk	<p>A process is developed to identify and remove barriers to career progression</p> <p>A structured learning and development program is designed and implemented to support EEO employee groups to develop and progress their career</p> <p>Employees from EEO employee groups are retained</p> <p>Positive feedback is received from both employees and managers on learning and development programs</p>	2021-2022

Initiative	Responsibility	Performance indicators	Target date
Opportunities provided for EEO employee groups to participate in formal job shadowing and job rotation programs to gain experience and grow their networks for future career development opportunities	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Job shadowing and rotation programs piloted by 2021 and officially implemented by 2022  Individuals from across the EEO groups have the opportunity to participate as part of their development  Positive feedback is received on the programs from both employees and managers	2021-2022
Review gender pay gap annually	People, Culture and Risk/Executive	Strategies developed to improve pay equity	Annually
Provide a quiet room for reflection, meditation or prayer	People, Culture and Risk/Property and Business Development/ Executive	Investigate the potential for accommodating this room in Creating Spaces project	2019-2020
Provide additional support within People, Culture and Risk for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees with issues that impact their employment, career and wellbeing	People, Culture and Risk	Nominate an existing position to act as champion, mentor and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees	2019

# Objective four

## Policies, procedures, evaluation and reporting

Council has policies, procedures and plans in place that are non-discriminatory and contribute to EEO and diversity outcomes.

Initiative	Responsibility	Performance indicators	Target date
Ensure all policies and procedures comply with and support equity and diversity principles	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Policies and procedures upon review are found to comply with equity and diversity principles	Ongoing
Policies and practices meet the diverse needs of employees and Council's business and service goals	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Flexible work practices are available and communicated and all employees have equitable access with consideration of operational requirements	Ongoing
Equity and diversity principles are integrated into Council's corporate plans	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Workforce Management Strategy includes workplace equity and diversity strategies	Ongoing
Trial a workplace cultural diversity tool to measure Council's workplace diversity against best practice standards of the Diversity Council of Australia	People, Culture and Risk/Executive/ Senior Leadership Network	Investigate the tool and if found suitable utilise the tool  Findings from the tool are reported to the Executive as part of the annual EEO and Diversity Management Plan reporting	2020
Diversity of Council's workforce reflects the diversity of Council's community	People, Culture and Risk/All departments	Review of statistics see an increase in representation of EEO target groups as compared to community statistics	Ongoing
Review the EEO and Diversity Management Plan and regularly report on equity and diversity actions	People, Culture and Risk/Senior Leadership Network	The plan is reviewed and modified as required  Progress is reported on and communicated to employees and community	Annually



*For more information*

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