

Glen Innes Severn Council



Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

Revised – June 2014 Resolution 15.06/14

INTRODUCTION

An Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program aims to ensure that all employees receive fair and equitable treatment in the workplace, by providing an equal chance when applying for employment, training and promotion, and in their work conditions. In particular, EEO Programs address the needs of people who have been disadvantaged in the past i.e. members of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, and people with disabilities.

EEO Programs also benefit everyone in an organisation by providing a wider range of job and training opportunities, better opportunities for employees to use their skills and qualifications and the opportunity to gain greater career development and achieve job satisfaction. The main aim of an EEO Program is to increase efficiency in the workplace, by utilising the talents and skills of the workforce, which can only be achieved by eliminating discrimination.

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977) outlaws discrimination on the basis of sex (including pregnancy); race, colour, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or nationality; marital or domestic status; disability (including past, present or future physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability, learning disorders, or any organism capable of causing disease, for example, HIV); homosexuality (male or female, actual or presumed); age; transgender (transsexual) status; and carers' responsibilities. As an employer, Glen Innes Severn Council is bound by this legislation.

The implementation of the Glen Innes Severn Council EEO Management Plan plan will be monitored and it is important that it has the genuine support, co-operation and commitment of all staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hein Basson', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Hein Basson
GENERAL MANAGER

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) POLICY STATEMENT

Glen Innes Severn Council is committed to providing a workplace that is free of harassment and discrimination and eliminating those factors and barriers that impede access to equal employment opportunities. To achieve this Council will, through its EEO Management Plan and program, ensure that:

- (i) All current and future staff are given equal opportunity when applying for employment, promotion and training;
- (ii) Personnel, recruitment and training procedures are free from discriminatory practices;
- (iii) Staff are selected on their merits and the skills required for the job, regardless of their age, pregnancy, race, sex, colour, marital status, physical or intellectual disability, sexual preference, transgender status or responsibilities as a carer;
- (iv) Council policies are continuously reviewed to eliminate any discrimination;
- (v) As far as is practicable, reasonable accommodations are made to remove physical barriers to employment.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) PROGRAM

Glen Innes Severn Council will:

- Fulfil its social responsibility toward employees and the community.
- Recognise its legal obligations under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and subsequent amendments.
- Encourage active participation of all employees in the equal opportunity planning and implementation process.
- Review periodically all selection criteria and procedures to maintain a system in which individuals are selected, promoted and treated solely on the basis of their merit and abilities, relative to the requirements of the job.
- Seek to give all employees equal opportunity and encouragement to progress within the organisation by implementing an EEO Management Plan.
- Distribute and publicise the EEO Policy Statement and EEO Management Plan throughout the organisation and elsewhere, as appropriate.
- Provide within the EEO Management Plan, to all employees, training which may improve their prospects within the organisation and which will enhance employees' understanding of the need for an EEO Program.
- Develop, implement and review an EEO Action Plan, with specific accountabilities and timelines to ensure the implementation of EEO principles throughout the organisation.

The overall responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the EEO Policy and EEO Management Plan is vested in the General Manager; however, it is the responsibility of all employees to assist and support the implementation and practical application of EEO principles within the workplace

Specific responsibility falls upon management, supervisors and employees professionally involved in recruitment, employee administration and training, to ensure that the EEO Policy and EEO Management Plan are implemented within their areas of responsibility.

Note: To provide a mechanism for consultation and advice on all aspects of EEO implementation, Council has appointed its Staff Consultative Committee to perform the role of EEO Committee. References to the EEO Committee in this document are to be taken as references to Council's Staff Consultative Committee.

Gender Equity in Local Government

It is apparent that women are underrepresented in key roles in Local Government, both as elected members and within senior staffing positions.

The former NSW Division of Local Government's 2010 *Census of Local Government Employees*, completed by 140 general purpose (92%) and 9 county councils (64%) in July 2010, revealed that women made up nearly half (46%) of the local government workforce at that time. Key findings from the *Census* include:

- While men and women are represented equally in metropolitan councils, women make up just over two-fifths of staff at regional councils and just over a third of staff at rural councils.
- More than three-quarters of men employed in local government hold a permanent position, compared to about two-thirds of women.
- Over three-quarters (85%) of men employed in local government work full-time compared to less than half (46%) of women. About one-quarter of women work part-time and about one-quarter are casual.
- Overall, women make up nearly one-third of all full-time local government employees, more than three-quarters of part-time employees and nearly three-quarters of casual employees.
- Overall, women make up two-fifths of all permanent employees in local councils but more than two-thirds of casual employees and more than half of temporary employees. Women also make up less than one-tenth of apprentices but more than half of all trainees.
- Overall, more than three-quarters of executive positions, two-thirds of manager positions and nearly two-thirds of other supervisor positions are held by men.

Women are also underrepresented as elected members, with the Office of Local Government's *NSW Councillor and Candidate Report 2012* revealing that women only make up 27% of elected representatives in NSW, compared with 51% for the overall population. Only 19% of mayors were female and women candidates were also less likely to be elected than their male counterparts.

The National Framework for Women in Local Government

In November 2001, the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) prepared and adopted the *National Framework for Women in Local Government* (the *NFWLG*). The *NFWLG* was reviewed in 2006/2007, and a report based on this review, *The Way Forward*, was released. This report is based on ten months of consultation with the Local Government sector.

Overall, *The Way Forward* found that, in the period between the release of the *NFWLG* and its review, some progress had been made in increasing women's participation and position in Local Government; however, these changes had not substantially increased the numbers of women in decision making positions. The report identified the following significant issues that are preventing better participation by women in Local Government:

- Financial considerations for elected members;
- Lack of information and support for elected members, or those considering standing for council;
- Need for training and confidence building;
- Need for greater consideration of family responsibilities; and

- Workplace cultural issues.

The Way Forward proposes the following modified NFWLG, which councils and other stakeholders are invited to endorse.

Statement of Commitment

We will work towards increasing the representation of women in local government, both as elected members and as senior managers and professionals. We will undertake ongoing reviews of policies and practices to remove barriers to women's participation and to engender safe, supportive working and decision-making environments that encourage and value a wide range of views.

Goal

To increase the participation of women in Australian local government so that councils more accurately reflect their communities.

Objectives

- To create councils and communities where all participate and actively share their skills, knowledge and experience.
- To engender inclusive councils where a full range of opinions is sought, respected and taken into account in decision-making.
- To ensure effective leadership in pursuing agreed strategies to implement this Framework.
- To expand training and networking opportunities that will support those strategies.

Glen Innes Severn Council endorses the National Framework for Women in Local Government, as articulated in the Statement of Commitment, Goal and Objectives set out above and is committed to implementing strategies to improve participation of women in local government at all levels.

Council will implement, where practicable, the strategies set out in the 'Gender Matters' Checklist attached to the Australian Local Government Women's Association's Review of the National Framework for Women in Local Government, *The Way Forward*, and attached as Annexure A to this EEO Plan.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) ACTION PLAN

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING					
Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
That all management and employees understand EEO principles, their responsibilities in relation to them, and the EEO Management Plan and its implementation.	All staff	Conduct EEO awareness courses for all staff.	EEO Committee / Manager of Administration and Human Resources (MAHR)	Awareness training conducted. All employees receive written information on EEO.	At induction conducted four (4) times a year.
		Include information on EEO principles in employee handbooks, recruitment packs and other relevant Council policies and publications.	EEO Committee / Department Heads / MAHR	Information included in all relevant documentation.	Ongoing.
		Identify barriers that prevent or limit equal access to Council information and ensure that all employees have equal access.	EEO Committee / MANEX Managers and Supervisors	Appropriate communication means identified and used (Team meetings, Intranet, newsletters, payslips, emails, etc).	Ongoing.
Ensure that all levels of management personnel involved in EEO implementation have a sound understanding of EEO and their responsibilities.	All management / supervisory staff.	Develop and conduct training / retraining for supervisors in bullying / harassment, dealing with grievances, and implementing EEO in the workplace.	MAHR / MANEX	Training delivered and assessed.	Every second year. Next due: 2013/2014 2015/2016
		Conduct regular progress meetings between senior management, those responsible for implementing EEO, and the EEO Committee.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Regular meetings held. EEO Committee (through the Staff Consultative Committee) is a standard agenda at MANEX meetings.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Include knowledge of EEO as a requirement in all job specifications at supervisor level and above.	EEO Committee / MAHR	Knowledge of EEO included in all relevant Job / Person Specifications.	Immediate and ongoing. Part of Recruitment Checklist as positions become vacant.

CONSULTATION					
Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Promote the active participation of all employees and their representatives in decision making about the EEO Program.	All employees, relevant employee bodies and professional associations.	Invite comment and input from employees regarding implementation of the EEO Plan through the EEO Committee.	EEO Committee, MAHR	All employees aware of and adequately represented on EEO Committee, which meets regularly.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Publicise progress reports / minutes of EEO Committee and invite comment from all staff, relevant unions and industry representatives. Email minutes of meetings to all staff and include as a standard agenda item at all team meetings.	EEO Committee Chair person, Managers and Supervisors	Reports / minutes distributed regularly and made available to all employees and their representatives. All employees have access to information and decision making.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Prepare and publicise EEO Annual Report.	General Manager	EEO Annual Report produced annually and made available to staff.	Annually.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION					
Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Review recruitment / selection policies and practices to ensure they conform with EEO principles and demonstrate fair practice, to increase representation of EEO target groups in all areas of Council employment.	All employees, applicants for Council positions and members of EEO target groups.	Review practices and procedures and establish formal policies, where necessary, based on EEO principles, in areas such as recruitment advertising, selection panel membership, shortlisting and interviewing applicants, conflicts of interest, placement and induction, and career path planning.	MANEX, MAHR	Procedures reviewed. Merit based recruitment / selection policy and procedures developed and implemented. Managers / supervisors trained.	Process with checklist and guidelines in place. Review as necessary.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
		Note Council's commitment to EEO in all recruitment ads by including the statement "Council is an EEO employer" in all advertisements.	MAHR	EEO wording included in all advertisements.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Remove gender based language from all recruitment advertisements and correspondence.	MAHR	No gender based language in recruitment ads.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Check recruitment advertisements prior to publication for adherence to EEO principles.	MAHR / Media Officer	Advertisements comply with EEO requirements.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Ensure that all appointment decisions are justified and documented on merit based grounds.	MAHR, Selection Panel Convenors.	Files maintained on all appointment actions, with reasons for appointment clearly set out.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Implement the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES).	MANEX	AES implemented, in consultation with the Aboriginal Community.	Immediate and ongoing.
Ensure that selection panel members are trained to implement the principles of EEO.	All employees who are members of selection panels.	Provide appropriate training to all employees who participate in selection panels, in merit based selection principles and practices.	MAHR	External training provided to regular panel members / supervisors. Basic in house training provided to all others.	Every second year. 2014/2015 2016/2017
		Convene selection panels to comprise not less than two members with at least one male and one female member.	MAHR, Panel Convenors	Panels convened to meet requirements.	Immediate and ongoing.
		Include representatives of target groups on selection panels where appropriate.	MAHR, Panel Convenors.	Panels convened to meet requirements.	Immediate and ongoing.

ACCESS

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Where practicable, ensure that Council premises and facilities are accessible to employees with physical disabilities.	Employees with physical disabilities	Assess and make minor work site modifications to accommodate the needs of individual employees who have a physical disability.	Managers, Work Health & Safety (WHS) Coordinator.	Needs identified and accommodated, as required.	Ongoing
		Provide employees with disabilities with appropriate access to Council buildings and equipment, as required.	MANEX	Disabled access provided within funding levels.	Ongoing
		Include access for people with physical disabilities in all new design plans for staff accommodation.	MANEX	Disabled access provided in line with relevant regulations and building codes.	Immediate and ongoing.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Review / implement promotion and transfer policies and practices to ensure they conform with EEO principles and demonstrate fair practice.	All employees	Review performance appraisal and job evaluation procedures to ensure that they are non-discriminatory and consistent.	EEO Committee, MAHR	Appraisal and evaluation processes are consistent and equitable across jobs and employees.	Annually.
Ensure that all staff have equal opportunities to relieve/act at a higher grade.	All employees	Review current policies / guidelines on acting in higher positions to ensure that such arrangements are based on merit or the development needs of employees and the need to advertise any long term positions or call for expressions of interest.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Policies / guidelines are merit based and include requirement for advertising long term appointments.	Current Salary Progression Rules in place. Review in 2014/2015 then as necessary.

PROMOTION AND TRANSFER

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Encourage the representation of staff from EEO target groups in positions in which they are currently under-represented in Council.	Women, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, employees who have a disability and members of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups.	Identify development opportunities for target group members within Council.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Opportunities identified and documented, where available.	Ongoing.
		Identify / review job categories traditionally dominated by target group members to determine if such positions warrant redesign.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Review completed and recommendations made.	Ongoing as positions become vacant.
		Identify strategies to increase mobility of target groups that have limited career paths through career path planning, multi-skilling, etc.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Strategies identified and implemented.	Annually as part of skills performance review.
		Monitor training / development to ensure that target group members have equal access to skills development and promotion opportunities.	MAHR	Monitoring undertaken and results documented.	Annually as part of skills performance review.
		Include wording in recruitment ads to encourage target groups to apply for positions.	MAHR	Increased representation in the work force of target group members.	Immediate and ongoing.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Review training and development practices to ensure they conform with EEO principles and increase staff participation in training opportunities, with emphasis on EEO target groups.	All employees	Review in-house and external training to ensure it is non-discriminatory and consistent with EEO principles and that resources are fairly allocated.	EEO Committee, MAHR	Review completed and incorporated into training policy / plan.	Annually in Corporate Training Plan.
		Establish formal training policy / plan for all Council staff.		Training policy / plan implemented.	Annually.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT					
Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
		Make career path planning and counselling available to all employees and ensure that all employees have equal access to training and development.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Planning and counselling program in place for all employees.	Ongoing as part of annual Skills Review.
		Ensure that information for selection of participants for training / development is consistent with EEO principles.	EEO Committee, MAHR	Information complies with EEO requirements.	Ongoing.
		Ensure eligibility requirements for training are appropriate / job-related and that nomination and screening procedures do not disadvantage any group of employees.	EEO Committee, MAHR	Procedures comply with EEO.	Ongoing as part of annual Skills Review.
		Provide opportunities for employees to self nominate for appropriate training and development courses.	MANEX	Opportunities provided and employees encouraged to participate.	Ongoing as part of annual Skills Review.
		Administrate procedures for rehabilitation / retraining within Council fairly and so as not to disadvantage any group.	EEO Committee, WHS Coordinator	Procedures comply with EEO.	Ongoing.
Increase representation of target group members in areas by providing training / development opportunities.	Women, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, employees who have a disability and members of racial, ethnic and ethno-religious minority groups.	Review criteria for placement of employees in management courses to ensure that target group members have equal access to such training.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Criteria reviewed to ensure non-discriminatory practices.	Ongoing as part of annual Skills Review.
		Provide training and development opportunities to target groups through affirmative action training programs.	EEO Committee, MANEX	Appropriate training identified and delivered to target groups.	Ongoing as part of annual Skills Review.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT					
Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Develop / review conditions of service to ensure they demonstrate fair practice, conforming with EEO principles.	All staff	Inform all employees of conditions of service through appropriate written documentation and provision of an Induction Handbook.	MAHR	Induction Handbook written. Induction program includes all relevant information. All employees inducted.	Ongoing.
		Review current practices for allowances and benefits, Work Health and Safety, rehabilitation, part-time work, maternity leave, flexible hours / leave arrangements for staff with child care needs, to ensure EEO compliance.	MANEX	Conditions reviewed and EEO compliant.	Ongoing.

HARASSMENT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES					
Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Develop, promote and implement an accessible and effective grievance resolution policy and procedure.	All employees	Develop and distribute a Grievance Resolution Policy to all employees.	MAHR	Policy developed and distributed.	Current Policy in place. Due for review: Sept 2014 Sept 2016
Ensure a discrimination and harassment-free workplace.	All employees	Develop an effective Workplace Discrimination and Bullying / Harassment Policy to ensure that all employees are aware that bullying and harassment is unacceptable and that instances of such behaviour may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action.	MAHR	Policy developed and distributed. Staff awareness training conducted.	Current Policy in place. Due for review: February 2015 February 2017

GENDER EQUITY

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Increase the participation and role of women in Council, particularly in decision making roles.	All current and prospective female employees and councillors.	Develop a NFWLG Action Plan based on the questions set out in the 'Gender Matters' checklist attached to <i>The Way Forward</i> review of the NFWLG.	MANEX, EEO Committee, MAHR	NFWLG Action Plan adopted. Increased participation of women in decision making roles.	31 March 2015.
Increase the participation of women employed by Council in all non-traditional roles.	All current and prospective female employees.	Develop, as part of or appended to the NFWLG Action Plan, strategies and actions to promote increased employment of women in all non-traditional roles, using the Australian Human Rights Commission's report "Women in Male-Dominated Industries" as a guide.	MANEX, EEO Committee, MAHR	Straegies and Action Plan adopted. Increased participation of women in non-traditional roles.	31 March 2015.

RECORD KEEPING

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Ensure Council's Personnel Records system complies with EEO principles.	All employees	Develop guidelines to safeguard confidentiality of access to Personnel Records System.	MAHR	Guidelines developed.	Guidelines in place. Review as necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Ensure successful implementation of the EEO Management Plan by the allocation of clear responsibilities and adequate resources.	Directors, managers and supervisors with responsibility for EEO.	Determine which employees should have particular responsibilities in relation to the effective implementation of the EEO Management Plan.	General Manager	Responsibilities allocated and documented.	Annually.
		Include responsibility for EEO implementation in job descriptions of all Directors, managers and supervisors.	General Manager, MAHR	Job descriptions updated to include EEO responsibilities.	Ongoing.
		Allocate sufficient staff and other resources to undertake actions outlined in the EEO Management Plan.	General Manager	Actions successfully implemented within timelines.	Annually.
		Second / source suitable employees to assist with the implementation of specific aspects of the plan as required.	General Manager	Actions successfully implemented within timelines.	Annually.

REVIEW

Objective / Activity	Target Group(s)	Action	Accountability	Performance Indicator	Target Date(s)
Review EEO Management Plan and Program.		Review EEO Management Plan and Program.	MAHR	Review completed by June every three years.	June 2017, or earlier if required.

Annexure A: 'Gender Matters' Checklist

(Adapted from the Australian Local Government Women's Association's review of the National Framework for Women in Local Government "The Way Forward")

The list of questions below is presented as a starting point for discussion about what could be included in a self-assessment or peer review system that would encourage and assist councils to do more to promote gender equity.

Strategies for both women staff members and councillors:

- ☐ Has council adopted the goals and objectives of the National Framework for Women in Local Government and clearly allocated responsibilities for their implementation?
- ☐ Is a suitable Code of Conduct in place? Is it actively enforced and monitored, with disciplinary procedures in place, to bring respect and dignity to council meetings?
- ☐ Has council adopted an effective EEO action plan? Is it regularly reviewed and updated as required? Are outcomes measured and reported?
- ☐ Are mentoring programs available for women councillors and staff?
- ☐ Do the Mayor and General Manager actively espouse and enact values of supporting equality?
- ☐ Has council taken steps to discourage informal decision making outside meetings that excludes minority views?
- ☐ Are council and other council-related meetings timed to finish by 11pm?
- ☐ Does council report on diversity at the senior officer and elected member levels?
- ☐ Is there real equal access to training opportunities for women officers and councillors?

Strategies for women councillors:

- ☐ (where applicable) Has council set the level of the elected members allowance at the top of the range?
- ☐ Does council provide the maximum possible reimbursement of councillor expenses including child care and travel allowances?
- ☐ Does council provide appropriate support for councillors, such as equipment (computers, mobile phones), administrative support to establish a home office, councillor office space at the council administration centre etc?
- ☐ Does council provide cab-charge vouchers or other adequate transport arrangements for councillors travelling at night?
- ☐ Does council's website provide information on how to become a councillor, or link to another informative website?

- ☐ Has council formulated and adopted position descriptions for councillors?
- ☐ Is there a comprehensive induction program for all new councillors?
- ☐ Is there a 'buddy' system for new councillors to learn from more experienced colleagues?
- ☐ Is there a training plan for all councillors and is it adequately resourced?
- ☐ Is there an effective process for dealing with bullying and harassment complaints by elected members?

Strategies for women staff members:

- ☐ Does council actively implement a home-based work policy? What proportion of staff at all levels regularly work from home as an agreed part of their employment conditions?
- ☐ Does council offer flexible working hours at the workplace? What proportion of staff at all levels take advantage of that system?
- ☐ Has council designated a senior staff person as holding the 'women's portfolio' within council?
- ☐ Are women included in all job selection panels?
- ☐ Are there priority childcare places for staff in council child care centres and family day care schemes?
- ☐ What support is provided for women returning from maternity leave?
- ☐ To what extent can women access higher duties opportunities?