

	<b>COUNCIL POLICY</b>	
	<b>Inclusive Workplace Policy</b>	
	POLICY NO	028
	DEPARTMENT	Organisational Services
	PROGRAM	People and Culture
APPROVED BY COUNCIL	25 July 2018 - Folio 58238	

## 1.0 Scope

The Inclusive Workplace Policy applies to all facilities, services, programs, activities and information owned by or under the control of Mackay Regional Council (MRC). It is also applicable to all MRC staff (temporary and permanent), Councillors, contractors and consultants who are acting on MRC's behalf or engaged in MRC's business.

## 2.0 Purpose

This policy has been developed to demonstrate MRC's commitment to ensuring that all employees, regardless of their characteristics or background:

- have equitable access to entitlements, services and support that their needs as an employee,
- can fully participate in and benefit from all aspects of working for MRC, and
- feel a sense of belonging and being included in a cohesive and harmonious workplace.

Creating an inclusive workplace is fundamental to maximising diversity and creating successful organisations in today's complex global environment. When an organisation values workplace diversity and inclusion it realises benefits such as higher employee engagement, improved performance, greater innovation, retention of talent, improved employee wellbeing and lower levels of unlawful behaviour such as harassment and discrimination.

MRC believes that to have a properly functioning diverse workplace; discrimination, harassment, vilification and victimisation cannot and will not be tolerated. It involves a commitment to equality and treating each other with respect, consistent with MRC's values. The goal is to reflect the diverse community we serve and create a wonderful place to work for everyone by embracing the individual skills, perspectives and experiences our people bring to the workplace and harnessing these for high performance and improved service delivery.

The Policy outlines the processes through which MRC will promote diversity across its business operations and community.

## 3.0 Reference

- United Nations' Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.
- *Queensland Anti- Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*

- Mackay Regional Council's Indigenous Policy
- *Queensland Industrial Relations Act 2016*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following MRC documents:

- [MRC Certified Agreement 2017](#)
- [Code of Conduct - 2018](#)
- [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary Procedure Policy](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program Policy](#)

#### 4.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

**Diversity** shall mean the many and varied groups of people living in a community from diverse backgrounds who possess various attitudes, beliefs, language, behavior, and lifestyles that are an expression of their culture. Diversity can include characteristics such as cultural background and ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, language and education. Diversity also includes characteristics such as professional skills, working style, location, and life experiences.

**Inclusion** shall mean when a diversity of people (e.g. of different ages, cultural backgrounds, genders etc) feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can fully contribute their perspectives and talents to improve their organisation.

**AHRC** shall mean the Australian Human Rights Commission (<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/>)

**DCA** shall mean the Diversity Council of Australia (<https://www.dca.org.au/>)

**Age-friendly workplaces** enable people of all ages to actively participate and contribute to the workplace. Everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age. Age-friendly workplaces value, respect and actively engage with employees of all ages.

**Age discrimination** shall mean discrimination based on age.

**Vilification** shall mean behaviour that incites others to hate, to have serious contempt for or to severely ridicule individuals or groups because of their race, religion, sexuality or gender identity.

**Victimisation** shall mean treating someone unfairly because they have made, or intend to make, a discrimination or harassment complaint. This also includes those who have supported another person in making a complaint.

**Equity** shall mean being treated with fairness and/or impartiality.

**Equality** shall mean all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.

**Cultural diversity** shall mean the many and varied groups of people living in a community from diverse cultural backgrounds, who possess various attitudes, beliefs, language, behavior, lifestyles that are an expression of their culture.

**LGBTIQ** shall mean Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex and Queer

**Multiculturalism** shall mean ensuring that all Australians have equality of opportunity to benefit from the contribution to all aspects of life without prejudice or discrimination.

**MRC** shall mean Mackay Regional Council.

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Community.** For this policy, people from CALD backgrounds include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (refer to the MRC Indigenous Policy and Reconciliation Action Plan)
- Australian South Sea Islander people
- People who were born overseas (citizens, residents, migrants, refugees)
- Descendants of people who were born overseas
- Long and short-term visitors from overseas (tourists, international students, delegations, people on working visas etc)

## 5.0 Background

MRC aims to be an organisation with a leadership team and workforce that reflects the diversity of the broader communities in which we operate.

MRC commits to publishing workplace demographic data on an annual basis as a reflection of the Mackay region community data as provided through the Australian Census data or other similarly verifiable sources.

## 6.0 Policy Statement Themes

MRC embraces the contribution of the whole of the region's community to the social, cultural and economic fabric of our region. It acknowledges that all employees, regardless of their background, must have equal opportunity to access and participate in MRC facilities, services, programs, activities and information and the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging in the MRC workforce.

It is widely acknowledged across all industries that diverse and inclusive workplaces perform better than those that are not. Importantly, the focus of this policy is on two themes that reflect the application of this policy:

- *"Inclusive of Difference"* and
- *"The Difference with Inclusion"*

These themes should permeate through all thoughts and actions with regards to diversity and inclusion activities associated with MRC employment.

- The theme of *“Inclusive of Difference”* draws attention to the fact that all differences should be included, not selectively or conveniently, but in a deliberate and intentional manner.
- The theme of *“The Difference with Inclusion”* has the focus of integrating and enhancing the benefits of an inclusive workplace into operational performance.

This policy demonstrates MRC’s commitment to enhancing outcomes in the areas of:

- Accessibility and participation of all existing and new employees in MRC programs, services, activities, events, and the relevant planning and decision-making processes.
- Education and training of MRC staff and Councillors about cross-cultural issues through internal training programs, participation in other government or agency activities/events, and internal workshops and seminars.
- Provision of support to MRC Departments and Programs working directly with and building effective working partnerships with providers, contractors and other external agencies with diverse backgrounds.
- Building strong employee and workforce identity and pride in the local community in a variety of ways, including through the employment and inclusion of a diverse range of people from varying backgrounds.
- Consultation and engagement with community members and organisations from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, allowing MRC to identify, respond to and address current and emerging employment and training issues.
- Encouraging the building of strong networks across the region where people of all backgrounds can seek employment and training opportunities with MRC.
- Encouraging the building of strong networks across the region where employment and training service providers can appropriately access and support applicants for opportunities with MRC.

## 7.0 Inclusive Leadership

MRC wants an inclusive workplace that drives performance, innovation and productivity that requires inclusive leadership. Research by DCA refers to inclusive leadership as the capabilities that include the knowledge, skills and behaviours that leaders possess which make their organisation inclusive. The DCA Inclusive Leadership Model, shown below, identifies five mindsets, or ways of thinking, which are necessary for a person to be an effective inclusive leader. These mindsets are Identity-Aware, Relational, Open and Curious, Flexible and Agile and Growth-Focused.

As stewards of our workforce, MRC senior leaders challenge their leadership teams to apply these mindsets in their approach to leading teams and use them as a tool for improving individual, team and organisational performance.

As workplace diversity and inclusion is everyone’s responsibility, these mindsets can be applied by all staff to benefit the workplace and foster an inclusive culture across the department. In that context MRC has adopted the DCA five mindsets of an inclusive leader:

- **Identity-aware.** Believes diversity can significantly improve organisational performance, and so learns about their own and others’ identities (e.g. age, gender).
- **Relational.** Creates teams and networks in which a diversity of people feels they belong, are valued and respected.
- **Open and curious.** Is curious about and open to new and different perspectives from a diversity of people.

- **Flexible and agile.** Is flexible about, and responsive to, a diversity of people and perspectives.
- **Growth-focused.** Challenges accepted practices and incorporates different perspectives into how business is done.

## 8.0 Inclusive Language

Language is a powerful tool for building inclusion and exclusion at work. It can be used to create a sense of being valued, respected and one of the team or of being undervalued, disrespected, and an ‘outsider’. Inclusive language enables a diversity of people to feel valued and respected and able to contribute their talents to drive organisational performance.

Inclusive language ensures everyone is treated with respect as such language is free from words or tones that reflect prejudice, discrimination or stereotypes. Gender and sexuality are experienced and expressed in many ways, and using language that excludes or stereotypes can cause unintentional harm to a diverse range of people particularly LGBTIQ individuals. This includes 'positive' stereotyping of LGBTIQ people.

## 9.0 Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias is when your background, individual experiences, societal stereotypes and cultural context have an impact on your decisions and actions without you realising. Implicit or unconscious bias happens by the brain making incredibly quick judgments and assessments of people and situations without us realising.

A key component of building a diverse and inclusive workplace is recognizing and challenging unconscious bias. Building the capability of leaders to recognise and challenge unconscious bias, and adopt consciously inclusive behaviours and actions, is fundamental to sustainable cultural change.

MRC commits to a process of eliminating bias in all work practices through education, training, leadership development, and policy or procedural changes.

## 12.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related documents are amended or replaced.
2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than three (3) years.

Version Control:

Version	Reason / Trigger	Change	Endorsed / Reviewed	Date
0	Developed by People and Culture	New Policy	To be reviewed by CEO and Directors.	26/06/2018
			Adopted by Council	25/07/2018