

Respect for Diversity Policy and Guidelines

Purpose

The company appreciates the value inherent in a diverse workforce and is committed to developing a work environment that respects and celebrates diversity. We value the differences between people and the contribution these differences make to our business. This policy aims to create a positive and equitable work environment that respects the diverse spectrum of the people associated with the company.

This policy will assist us to actively manage diversity and to help us find ways of utilising the differences that exist, in order to improve our business. This requires that we actively and flexibly seek to accommodate the unique needs of many different employees.

Above all, we are committed to ensuring that all employees are treated with respect and dignity.

Background

Every day our employees have contact with a diverse range of people including management, colleagues, contractors, visitors, clients and members of the general public. Respecting diversity is therefore critical to maintaining a harmonious and productive work environment for our people and our clients.

Our people and those with whom we work come from a range of different backgrounds and personal circumstances. This diversity is something the company celebrates and wishes to promote by adopting a Respect for Diversity Policy. Some examples of diversity factors include age, gender, race, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, education, physical ability, appearance and language. These factors are apparent in every activity the company pursues whether it is commercial or social.

Scope

This policy applies to our people. It is designed to compliment other company policies including those specific to harassment and equal employment opportunity.

Definitions

Diversity	In the context of the company diversity includes the variety of backgrounds, characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, languages and social circumstances, sexual orientation, gender history and age of our people. Valuing diversity results in a harmonious work environment that embraces and supports diverse contributions and perspectives.
Our People	refers to all employees, contractors, sub-contractors or agents of the company who have been made aware of the policy and who have agreed to be bound by the policy.
Policy	is the Respect for Diversity Policy.
Work environment	is any location in which the business activities of the company take place including, but not limited to, the offices of the company, client sites and any location where a company function takes place.

Legislative context

The following legislative instruments should be considered in conjunction with the policy:

- a. *The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- b. *The Equal Opportunity Act 1995* (Vic)
- c. *The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* (Vic)
- d. *The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Cth)
- e. *The Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
- f. *The Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
- g. *The Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- h. *The Racial Hatred Act 1995* (Cth)

Policy

Guiding principles

Application of this policy will be guided by the following principles:

- a. The company aims to create a positive and equitable work environment that is safe, flexible, fair, culturally and socially appropriate, friendly and professional;
- b. The company celebrates the diversity of its workplace environment and recognises the rights and responsibilities of all its people;
- c. Individuals have the right to express their ideas, theories and opinion while respecting the rights of others without fear of discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- d. All discriminatory behaviour which is unlawful or offensive is unacceptable and contrary to the company's objective of creating an environment which allows all employees to achieve their full potential;
- e. Discrimination, in many of its manifestations, is unlawful under State and Federal legislation;
- f. In addition to when our people work together, diversity will be respected and considered in all of the company's activities including planning, recruitment, management, company social activities and colleague interaction;
- g. The company recognises the commercial benefits of a diverse workplace including increased innovation, creativity and improved quality of service to clients. A diverse workplace promotes a variety of perspectives and a wider range of solutions;
- h. The company will assist its people in meeting these objectives with clear policy, education, training and practice; and
- i. Treating our people equitably and respecting diversity does not mean treating everybody the same.

Workplace Strategies

The company aims to achieve its goals of developing and maintaining a diverse work environment through different workplace strategies. These include:

- a. Establishing inclusive work activities where diversity and different work styles are valued, because our people are happier and more productive when they are appreciated and included because of their individual strengths, not assimilated or tolerated.
- b. Considering the principles which support diversity when reviewing any business or workplace activities and procedures.
- c. Providing effective induction and ongoing workplace training for our people to improve their ability to work effectively in a diverse workplace environment.
- d. Encouraging our people to celebrate diversity during community wide celebrations such as NAIDOC Week and Multicultural Week.
- e. Celebrating and acknowledging the diverse experiences and talents of our people. This may include recognition of achievements outside of the workplace that reflect diversity.
- f. Acknowledging that diversity is not just about increasing visible differences in our workforce, rather it is about the strategic advantages that come from incorporating a wide variety of approaches and perspectives.
- g. Educating our people to understand their responsibilities under this policy, and appreciate the consequence of non-compliance with this Policy and relevant state and federal laws.

Staff employment, retention and recognition

The company aims to achieve its goals of developing and maintaining a diverse work environment through staff selection, retention and recognition strategies. These include:

- a. Our people will be employed, retained, developed, recognised or promoted according to merit and operational requirements, and with particular emphasis placed on the expected future performance of the staff member, irrespective of personal attributes.
- b. The company will identify and take steps to reduce the barriers that may limit the selection, retention, development, recognition or promotion of a diverse workforce. Such steps may include:
 - i. All recruitment and selection documentation, procedures and practices will be non discriminatory and respect diversity;
 - ii. Documentation (including person specifications, job advertisements, application forms, contracts, etc.) will include no direct or inferred discrimination and will respect diversity;
 - iii. Company procedures (including interviews, reference checking and testing) will be undertaken in such a way so as to respect diversity and to ensure the absence of discriminatory practice;
 - iv. Improving access to training, development, support and mentoring for all our people; or
 - v. Investment in infrastructure that will allow a person with a disability or other factor to be employed, retained, developed, recognised or promoted.

Interaction with clients and the general public

The Company aims to achieve its goals of developing and maintaining a diverse work environment by respecting the diversity of our clients' employees and customers. The Company sees this as an integral aspect of providing quality service to our clients. Accordingly, our people will respect diversity at all times during their work activities including during interactions with clients, customers or members of the general public.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the application of this Policy is shared by all our People in accordance with the following principles:

- a. Each one of our people is responsible for the creation of a workplace environment that respects diversity. Our people must apply this policy in their day to day work activities.
- b. Managers and coordinators of staff have responsibility for the maintenance and promotion of a workplace environment that respects diversity. Specifically, managers and coordinators of staff have responsibility to create an environment where:
 - i. There is tolerance of difference;
 - ii. All employees are treated fairly and with respect and dignity; and
 - iii. The ability to contribute and access opportunities is based on merit.
- c. Managers and coordinators of staff are responsible for the ongoing awareness of the policy to all employees through training and the appropriate promotion of the policy. This may include:
 - i. The publication of this policy to all employees;
 - ii. The awareness training of all employees as to their individual responsibilities under this policy and the recording and regular updating of this awareness training;
 - iii. The instigation of other practices and procedures that enable employees to contribute to the best of their ability; and
 - iv. The application of the procedures under this policy including disciplinary action.

Behaviour that does not respect Diversity

Behaviour that does not respect diversity is contrary to this policy and maybe unlawful. It may also contravene other Company policies such as those relating to equal opportunity and harassment. The Company will take any allegation of behaviour that does not respect diversity seriously and will ensure that complainants or witnesses are not victimized in any way.

As a general guide, behaviour that does not respect diversity is any unwanted conduct based on or in reference to an employee's personal circumstances or characteristics. Such personal circumstances or characteristics may include:

- a. race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, ethno-religious background;
- b. sex;
- c. marital status;
- d. pregnancy or potential pregnancy;
- e. disability, (including physical, intellectual or other disability and illnesses such as HIV/AIDs) whether real or imputed, past, present or future disabilities;
- f. age;
- g. sexual orientation;
- h. transgender status; or
- i. carers' responsibilities.

If any one of our people experience or observe behaviour that does not respect diversity, they are encouraged to address the matter in accordance with the policy.

Procedures

Procedures to Respond to behaviour that does not respect Diversity

Employees who believe that they have been subjected to behaviour that does not respect diversity should follow the practice as described below:

1. Informal

Try to resolve the matter directly with the other party involved. The HR Manager is available to provide assistance on a confidential basis in the process.

2. Informal

If the matter is unable to be resolved with the help of the HR Manager, it must be referred to a senior manager or Managing Director for assistance in resolving the matter informally.

3. Formal

Where a formal complaint is made an investigation of the alleged incident(s) shall be carried out and documented. Witnesses may be called upon as part of the investigation

4. Legal

If at any stage during the grievance procedure the complainant is not satisfied with the company's actions they may choose to take their matter to the State Equal Opportunity Tribunal or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. This is a last resort.

Dispute Resolution and Disciplinary Procedures

Once the procedure has been followed and a determination has been made, the following resolution process should be applied:

Outcome of Investigation

1. Complaint is substantiated –
 - a. An apology (either/both verbal/in writing)
 - b. An undertaking that the behaviour will cease
 - c. Formal counseling for the person in breach
 - d. Disciplinary action – including a warning or dismissal
 - e. Education and training
 - f. Notifying the police (this is up to the complainant, not the Company)
2. Complaint is not substantiated -
 - a. Explaining reasons for the decision
 - b. Advising the complainant of their right to take the matter to external organisations or jurisdictions.
 - c. Monitoring the situation to ensure there is no further victimisation.
 - d. Reminding all employees of the company standards of behaviour
3. Complaint is found to be false/frivolous
 - a. Disciplinary action may be taken against the person who made the complaint
 - b. Termination of employment may occur
 - c. Counseling/training may be required



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