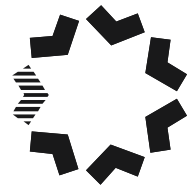


NATIONAL
COMPETITION
COUNCIL



Workplace Diversity

National Competition Council
Policy document



April 2009

WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

Introduction

This policy is intended to set out a workplace diversity program (WDP) to encourage diversity and better working relationships within the National Competition Council Secretariat.

The Council is a small Australian Government funded agency within the Treasury portfolio which is responsible for advising and deciding on a diverse range of issues that may require it to engage consultants and expert advice from time to time. Secretariat staff are employed under the terms of the *Public Service Act 1999* or under contract. The Secretariat has approximately 10 staff comprising the Executive Director, Director, 4 Legal Counsel and 2 Corporate Services staff.

This policy recognises difference (and potential disadvantage) on the basis of factors such as gender, age, language, cultural background, sexual preference, religious belief, and family responsibility. It also recognises that other forms of difference can affect working relationships and potentially lead to disadvantage, for example, differences in educational levels, work experience, socio-economic background, personality, location, marital status, or carer duties. The Council's WDP encompasses all forms of difference that, if inappropriately handled, could impair working relations and achievement of the Council's objectives.

As a small agency, the Council attempts to encapsulate these ideals in a broad sense, and strategies, responsibilities and timeframes have been outlined as a means to implement the policy.

The Workplace Diversity Statement was developed with the input of all staff. In particular, the statement is the result of a staff Workplace Diversity survey and staff meetings. It was developed by a drafting committee comprising management and staff. The statement was then circulated to all staff for comment and then accepted at a full staff meeting. The statement should be read in conjunction with the Council's Strategic Plan and Study Assistance Policy.

Objectives of the Council's Workplace Diversity Policy

The key objectives of the Council's policy are:

- **to serve as a human resource management tool** to enhance productivity by promoting more harmonious and effective working relations, a more diverse workplace, and by optimising career opportunities for employees and meeting the needs identified within the Council for diverse talents and knowledge.
- **to provide a workplace that is free from discrimination and recognises the diverse backgrounds of employees** by building on the pre-existing EEO policies in relation to women, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities, and people from a non-English speaking background.
- **to collect and publish data on equal opportunity** in the Council's Annual Report in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Public Service Commission.
- **to meet the Council's legal obligations under Commonwealth legislation** relating to equal opportunity and the elimination of workplace harassment. In particular, the Council is required to comply with the following legislation:
 - the *Public Service Act 1999* to develop a WDP; prohibit discrimination in appointments etc., on nominated grounds such as race, sex, age
 - the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, which prohibit certain forms of discrimination in employment
 - the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disabilities
 - the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991*, which places an obligation on employers to maintain a secure, healthy, and safe working environment, and in particular to address workplace harassment
 - the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*, which prohibits discrimination on a number of grounds, such as race, sex, mental disability, and social origin.

The Workplace Diversity Statement

To ensure the Council's recruitment reflects the wider community and is supported by HR policies and structures.

Performance indicators

- Selection criteria and duty statements to reflect the wide range of skills the Council requires access to, rather than focussing too specifically on academic or specialist skills
- Advertise vacancies widely in the government gazette and appropriate newspapers
- Council policies are non-discriminatory and recognise the diversity of employees in accordance with EEO policy
- Advise new staff, upon commencement, of the existence and location of Council's Policies on human resources and the work place (eg Study Assistance, Preventing Bullying in the Workplace etc.) on its intranet (SharePoint) site.

To promote access to on-the-job, internal, and external training to broaden the skills base of the organisation.

Performance Indicators

- Develop Personal Development Plan (PDP) for each staff member, if required, or initiate informal discussion on opportunities for personal growth and development. Review of arrangements to be conducted on an annual basis, or more frequently if required.
- Access to study leave in accordance with the Council's Study Assistance policy
- Access to appropriate training in the workplace or externally

To foster a climate which encourages all staff to express their ideas and participate in decision making.

Performance Indicators

- Effective consultation with staff, including weekly staff meetings and staff participation in development of relevant NCC policies.

The Council recognises the need and makes arrangements for an appropriate balance between work and family responsibilities.

Performance Indicators

- Staff access to family friendly and other employee welfare practices including working hours that are flexible and appropriate leave arrangements
- Work flow managed jointly between management and staff
- Staff feeling they have an appropriate balance between work and family responsibilities.