

COUNCIL POLICY

Council Policy Title:	Equal Opportunity
Council Policy ref. no:	7.4
Responsible Department:	Corporate and Community Services
Date of adoption/review:	24 July 2013

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy articulates Colac Otway Shire's commitment to the elimination of discrimination and harassment and adherence to the principles and practice of equality of opportunity in all aspects of:

- employment
- provision and acquisition of goods and services
- access to education and information
- membership of clubs, boards, committees (internal and external).

It also reinforces Colac Otway Shire's acceptance of its responsibilities under Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/anti-discrimination legislation and compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all Colac Otway Shire employees, prospective employees, contractors and volunteers and members of the community in their interactions with Council. It covers all aspects of employment including, recruitment and selection, promotion, transfer, training and development, conditions of service and other employment benefits and entitlements. It also covers the provision and acquisition of Council goods and services, access to council premises, sporting facilities and disposal of Council assets.

3. DEFINITIONS

EEO: Equal Employment Opportunity means equal access to jobs and benefits and services for all employees, prospective employees and volunteers in the workplace. EEO aims to ensure fair and equitable outcomes in all areas of employment.

Discrimination: Direct discrimination occurs if an employee is treated less favourably than other employees in the same or similar circumstances on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination (sex, age, race, etc).

Indirect discrimination occurs where there is a requirement or policy that is the same for all that, on initial examination, appears neutral. However, it has a disproportionate impact on certain groups (such as people of a certain sex or age) and the requirement or policy is not reasonable in the circumstances.

Positive Duty refers to a requirement to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimization as far as possible.

4. POLICY

Colac Otway Shire is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and accepts its positive duty to eliminate discrimination in its employment policies and practices.

We commit to this Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy which covers, recruitment, promotion, transfer, training and development, conditions of service and other employment benefits/entitlements. Our policy also covers our Volunteers and Contractors.

EEO reinforces the merit principle in employment. Our employees (or prospective employees) will not be denied opportunity or treated differently at work because of irrelevant factors such as gender, age, carer status, family responsibilities, parental status, disability, gender identity, lawful sexual activity, sexual orientation, industrial activity, marital status, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy, breastfeeding, religious belief or activity.

At Colac Otway Shire our employees and volunteers are treated with respect and valued on the basis of their skills, talents and expertise in relation to their employment.

Colac Otway Shire recognises that EEO is a legislative requirement. However, we are committed to EEO principles as they contribute to a positive work culture and provide significant benefits to our organisation.

Colac Otway Shire's commitment to equality of opportunity extends to the provision and acquisition of Council goods and services, access to council premises, sporting facilities and disposal of Council assets.

5. COMPLAINT PROCESS

A complaint of discrimination or harassment may be made writing or in person to the Manager, Organisation Support and Development (including a complaint involving the Chief Executive Officer). Complaints will be treated as confidential, and dealt with in a timely manner. The complaint resolution process is based on the principles of natural justice and victimisation of any person involved in a complaint will not be tolerated.

6. TRAINING/ COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Policy to be posted on intranet and TRIM
- General Managers to be informed by Organisational Support and Development
- General Managers to ensure communication within individual departments
- Human Resources Induction will inform new staff of the policy

7. RELATED LEGISLATION

State

- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010.*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

Federal

- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Fair Work Act 2009.*

8. RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

- Colac Otway Shire Enterprise Agreement.

ADOPTED/AMENDMENT OF POLICY

Policy Review Date	Reason for Amendment
24 May 2006	Adopted by Council
24 July 2013	Review



Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Commitment to equality of opportunity in employment

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Rob Small
Chief Executive Officer