

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Aboriginal Employment Plan



DECEMBER 2009

For questions relating to this document, please contact:

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1. Introduction

Commitment to the local Aboriginal Communities of Robinvale and Swan Hill and their people and culture is a central component of Swan Hill Rural City Council's corporate values and operations. Council has demonstrated its commitment to Aboriginal issues by the appointment of its Manager Aboriginal Affairs and through the Council Plan 2009 – 2013 which identifies a number of strategies to help achieve Aboriginal Recognition including the implementation of an Aboriginal Employment Plan.

This document presents an exciting opportunity for Council to achieve its mission to advance reconciliation, foster greater understanding between Council and Aboriginal population and to enhance community well being as consistent with Council's Aboriginal Partnership Plan. Significant numbers of Aboriginal people reside within the municipality but experience employment rates substantially lower than both State and National averages. Relevant statistics for Aboriginal people in the municipality are

- Swan Hill Rural City Council contains a total Aboriginal population of 850+ or 4% of the total Council population. This is the highest percentage of all Victorian councils.
- There are currently seven Aboriginal staff members employed by Council which represents 3.3% of Council's total workforce of 210 equivalent full time staff (EFT).
- Of Victorian Aboriginal labour force participants, 21% are unemployed compared to an overall unemployment rate of 5.3% in the Swan Hill Rural City Council municipality.

Council's Aboriginal Employment Strategy will assist in increasing the employment level of Aboriginal people within Council and improve the employment prospects of the local Aboriginal community generally, while ensuring recruitment of suitability-qualified applicants is not compromised.

2. How the Strategic Plan will support Council Objectives

Council has identified the need for an Aboriginal Employment Plan which will be a vehicle to advance reconciliation and promote greater employment opportunities for Aboriginal people specifically within Council and the wider municipality. The Aboriginal Employment Strategy introduces a wide range of employment actions for Council staff and Councillors to raise cultural awareness of Aboriginal people.

The Plan's aim is to increase the attraction/employment of Aboriginal people to a range of employment positions at Council. Aboriginal people will be encouraged to apply for permanent employment with Council and to be considered on their merits as they compete for available vacant positions.

It is proposed to encourage employment opportunities across the organization and therefore provide a wide range of positions. This will include opportunities in a range of unskilled, semi skilled and professional positions employment.

Increasing knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture is a key priority in Council's Aboriginal Partnership Plan. It is anticipated that greater cultural awareness will enhance the employment experience of all staff at Council, both non-aboriginal and Aboriginal staff. Cultural awareness and understanding is crucial to the success of this Employment Procedure and underpins Council's ability to deliver its various initiatives and programs related to the wider Swan Hill Aboriginal communities in the municipality.

The Plan aims to:

- Employ suitably qualified Aboriginal people in a variety of roles across the Swan Hill Rural City Council.
- Improve long term employment prospects of Aboriginal people through scholarships, traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Encourage Aboriginal applicants to apply for permanent positions at the Swan Hill Rural City Council.
- Improve understanding of Aboriginal culture amongst existing staff

3. Strategies

3.1. Provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to work in a variety of roles across the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Strategy 3.1.1. Commence scholarship / apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people with assistance from available appropriate Government programs.

Actions

- Linking in with existing programs, provide as a minimum four scholarships/ apprenticeships within Council. Aim to provide these opportunities in different areas of the organization eg unskilled / semi skilled / skilled and professional.
- Promote the availability of scholarships / apprenticeships through traditional advertising outlets and through Aboriginal organizations such as:
 - The Swan Hill Aboriginal Health Service
 - Swan Hill Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
 - Wamba Wamba Land Council
 - Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative
 - Sunraysia TAFE
 - Local employment network providers
 - Centrelink
 - Connectus
- Assist Aboriginal trainees with post Council employment opportunities including linking in with job network service providers, job applications process and mentoring for up to one month post termination date with Council.

Strategy 3.1.2. Ensure trainees / apprentices complete their training period of employment.

Actions

- Engage the Indigenous Youth Employment Mentoring Program to provide support to the mentoring process as required.

- Provide a workplace 'buddy' to assist with the induction process of new employees, to explain fully Council's employment practices, conditions of employment, occupational health and safety, Council's policies and procedures and other general information.
- Institute a three monthly informal employment review process including mentors, supervisor and trainee / apprentice to identify and address any problems that may be occurring in the workplace
- Encourage the establishment of an informal Aboriginal Employees Support Network involving all Aboriginal employees of Council. The role of the network is to provide an opportunity for Aboriginal employees to meet, offer each other support and discuss issues affecting them in the workplace. The Network will be coordinated through Human Resources and appropriately supported by the Manager Aboriginal Affairs.
- Encourage Aboriginal employees to nominate for relevant Aboriginal Employment award and recognition programs.

Performance Indicators

- Demonstrated successful completion of scholarship, trainee or apprentice training requirements.
- Traineeships, apprenticeships, scholarships are provided in a range of areas in the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

3.2. Encourage suitably qualified Aboriginal people to apply for permanent positions within the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

Strategy 3.2.1. Encourage Aboriginal people to apply for permanent positions.

Actions

- Promote the availability of permanent positions through traditional advertising outlets and through local Aboriginal organisations and Government Departments:
- Council to make available to possible Aboriginal applicants a recruitment kit including job description and example resume and written application delivered through a group briefing session or individually.

Performance Indicators

- Increase in number of Aboriginal people employed by Council in permanent positions.

3.3. Improve cultural awareness between Aboriginal people and non-aboriginal employees.

Strategy 3.3.1. Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program to enhance knowledge of Aboriginal cultural issues as identified in Council's Aboriginal Partnership Plan.

Actions

- Develop a Cross Cultural Awareness Training Program that educates Councillors, the Executive and staff on Aboriginal Cultural issues to enable them to work effectively in a culturally diverse workforce.
- Cross Cultural Awareness Training will form part of an employee's training within their first year of employment.
- The Staff Induction and Information Manual updated to contain information outlining Council's commitment to the employment of Aboriginal people.
- All staff be required to undertake Cross Cultural Awareness Training on a three yearly basis.

Performance Indicators

- Total employee hours committed to Cross Cultural Awareness Training on an annual basis.

3.4. Provide information and advice to the Aboriginal students regarding career and employment opportunities within Council.

- 3.4.1. Make available a range of information and opportunities for Aboriginal students to identify Swan Hill Rural City Council as an employer of choice.**

Actions

- Brief local school student groups on the availability of work experience & VET placements, the Scholarship Program and school based apprenticeships within Council.
- Establish work experience placements for Aboriginal school leavers and the wider Aboriginal community
- Develop employment brochure specific for Aboriginal job applicants and school groups.

Performance Indicators

- Demonstrated take up of work experience placements by Aboriginal students.
- All schools with Aboriginal students visited annually.

Signed: Dennis Hovenden _____ **CEO** **Date: 16/12/09** _____

Signed: Greg Cruickshank _____ **Mayor** **Date: 16/12/09** _____

Date Adopted:	15 December 2009
To be Reviewed:	2013

4. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

No.	STRATEGY	ACTION	TIMELINE	END DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COST
1.	Commence scholarship/apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people.	Linking in with existing programs, provide as a minimum four scholarships / apprenticeships within Council.	Year 1	Nov 2010 then ongoing	HR / MAA	Nil
2.	Commence scholarship/apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people.	Promote the availability of scholarships / traineeships / apprenticeships through traditional advertising outlets and through Aboriginal organisations.	Year 1	June 2010 then ongoing	HR / MAA	Nil
3.	Commence scholarship/apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people.	Assist trainees with post Council employment opportunities.	Year 2	Nov 2011 then ongoing	MAA	Nil
4.	Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Engage the Indigenous Youth Employment Mentoring Program to provide support to the mentoring process.	Year 1	Nov 2010 then ongoing	MAA	Nil
5.	Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Provide a workplace 'buddy' to assist with the induction process of new employees.	Year 1	Nov 2010 then ongoing	Program Managers/HR / MAA	Nil
6.	Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Institute a 3 monthly informal employment review process including mentors, supervisor and trainee.	Year 2	Nov 2011 then ongoing	Program Managers/ MAA	Nil

No.	STRATEGY	ACTION	TIMELINE	END DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COST
7.	Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Encourage the establishment of informal Aboriginal Employees Support Network involving all Aboriginal employees of Council.	Year 2	Nov 2011 then ongoing	Program Managers /HR / MAA	Nil
8.	Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Encourage Aboriginal employees to nominate for relevant Aboriginal Employment award and recognition programs	Year 2	Nov 2011 then ongoing	Program Managers/ MAA	Nil
9.	Encourage Aboriginal people to apply for permanent positions	Promote the availability of permanent positions through traditional advertising outlets and through local Aboriginal organization and Government Departments	Year 2	Nov 2011 then ongoing	HRM	Nil
10.	Encourage Aboriginal people to apply for permanent positions	Council to make available to possible Aboriginal applicants a recruitment kit including job description, example resume and written application delivered through a group briefing session or individually.	Year 2	Nov 2011 then ongoing	Program Managers/ MAA	Nil
11.	Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program.	Develop a Cross Cultural Awareness Training Program that educates Councilors, the Executive and staff on Aboriginal Cultural issues.	Year 1	Nov 2010 then ongoing	MAA/HR	Nil
12.	Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program.	Cross Cultural Awareness Training will form part of an employee's training within the first year of employment.	Year 1	Nov 2010 then ongoing	MAA/HR	Nil

No.	STRATEGY	ACTION	TIMELINE	END DATE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COST
13.	Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program.	The Staff Induction and Information Manual updated to contain information outlining Council's commitment to the employment of Aboriginal people.	Year 1	Nov 2010 then ongoing	HR	Nil
14.	Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program.	All staff required to undertake Cross Cultural Awareness Training on a three yearly basis	Year 1	July 2010 then ongoing	HR/Program Managers	Nil
15.	Make available a range of information and opportunities for Aboriginal students.	Brief local school student groups on the availability of work experience, VET placements, the Scholarship Program and school based apprenticeships within Council	Year 2	Nov 2011 then ongoing	CFM/MAA	Nil
16.	Make available a range of information and opportunities for Aboriginal students.	Establish work experience placements for Aboriginal school leavers and the wider Aboriginal community	Year 2	Nov 2011 & Ongoing	CFM/MAA/HR/Program Managers	Nil
17.	Make available a range of information and opportunities for Aboriginal students.	Develop employment brochure specific for Aboriginal job applicants and school groups.	Year 2	Nov 2011	HRM/CFM	Nil

**SWAN HILL RURAL CITY COUNCIL ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY
TIMELINE FOR INITIATIVES / ACTION IMPLEMENTATION**

YEAR 1: December 2009 to November 2010

Strategy	Action	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Commence scholarship/apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people.	Linking in with existing programs, provide as a minimum four scholarships / apprenticeships per year within Council.	_____												
Commence scholarship/apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people.	Promote the availability of scholarships / apprenticeships through traditional advertising outlets and through Aboriginal organisations.	_____												
Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Engage the Indigenous Youth Employment Mentoring Program to provide support to the mentoring process.	_____												
Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Provide a workplace 'buddy' to assist with the induction process of new employees.	_____												
Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program.	Develop a Cross Cultural Awareness Training Program that educates Councilors, the Executive and staff on Aboriginal Cultural issues.	_____												
Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program.	Cross Cultural Awareness Training will form part of an employee's training within the first year of employment.	_____												
Develop and implement a Cross Cultural Awareness Program.	The Staff Induction and Information Manual updated to contain information outlining Council's commitment to the employment of Aboriginal people.	_____												

YEAR 2: December 2010 to November 2011

Strategy	Action	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Commence scholarship/apprenticeship opportunities for Aboriginal people.	Assist trainees with post Council employment opportunities.	_____												
Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Institute a 3 monthly informal employment review process including mentors, supervisor and trainee.	_____												
Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Encourage the establishment of informal Aboriginal Employees Support Network involving all Aboriginal employees of Council.	_____												
Ensure trainees/apprentices complete their training period of employment	Encourage Aboriginal employees to nominate for relevant Aboriginal Employment award and recognition programs	_____												
Encourage Aboriginal people to apply for permanent positions	Promote the availability of permanent positions through traditional advertising outlets and through local Aboriginal organization and Government Departments	_____												
Encourage Aboriginal people to apply for permanent positions	Council to make available to possible Aboriginal applicants a recruitment kit including job description, example resume and written application delivered through a group briefing session or individually.	_____												
Make available a range of information and opportunities for Aboriginal students.	Brief local school student groups on the availability of work experience, VET placements, the Scholarship Program and school based apprenticeships within Council	_____												

YEAR 2: December 2010 to November 2011 (continued)

Strategy	Action	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Make available a range of information and opportunities for Aboriginal students.	Establish work experience placements for Aboriginal school leavers and the wider Aboriginal community	—————											
Make available a range of information and opportunities for Aboriginal students.	Develop employment brochure specific for Aboriginal job applicants and school groups.	—————											