

Department of Jobs,
Precincts and Regions

Local Government Act 2020

RECRUITMENT POLICY GUIDE



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1 Introduction

This guide has been designed to assist councils to meet the foundational requirements necessary to produce a recruitment policy that adheres to local government legislative requirements and fundamental business requirements.

The ability to effectively recruit and select an organisation's workforce is a core function of all businesses. Local government, as the tier closest to the community, has obligations to conduct this function with recognition of the organisation's needs, with the respect of its employees and in the interests of the community it serves.

This document focusses on the core principles that councils should invest into their process and policy to ensure that the process is one that benefits all parties.

1.1 Mandatory requirements from the Local Government Act 2020

Under Section 48(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Council's Chief Executive Officer is required to adopt and maintain a recruitment policy that:

- Ensures that recruitment decisions are based on merit; and,
- Supports transparency in recruitment processes and the public advertising of positions; and,
- Has regard to the gender equity, diversity and inclusiveness measures specified in the workforce plan.

This document must be maintained and have clear linkages to the Council's Workforce Plan.

Within the scope of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Council's Chief Executive Officer is also responsible for developing and maintaining a workforce plan. This plan available to the Mayor, councillors and all council employees¹, outlines the current and future workforce requirements for the organisation. This includes the organisation's intended aims to ensure gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness across the workforce.

In addition to this Act, other State and Federal legislation may apply to Council's recruitment practices, including:

- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Privacy Act 1988
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Council should consider all relevant legislation when drafting their recruitment policy. All policies should have a review schedule to ensure policies are maintained and up to date.

1.2 Development of this guide

This guide was developed through co-design with the sector as part of the Local Government Act 2020 Implementation work.

¹ Section 46(6) of the *Local Government Act 2020*

This guide was developed to provide the core elements for inclusion in a recruitment policy. Council may choose to incorporate elements into their own policy layout and document structure.

This is **not** a best practice guide. It has been developed to assist in the foundational design of a recruitment policy only and councils would be encouraged to seek additional advice in determining the needs for their specific workforce. **Section 4 – Further reading**, provides links to further content to assist in drafting human resources policies.

The following organisations were involved in the co-design of this work:

- City of Ballarat
- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Campaspe Shire Council
- Cardinia Shire Council
- City of Casey
- City of Glen Eira
- Monash City Council
- Mount Alexander Shire Council
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- City of Port Phillip
- City of Whittlesea
- Australian Services Union (Victorian and Tasmanian Branch)
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

2 Overarching core principles

2.1 Foundational requirements

To meet local government legislative requirements² and minimum business requirements, a recruitment policy is required to address following principles:

<input type="checkbox"/> Be merit based.
<input type="checkbox"/> Be fair, transparent, and consistent.
<input type="checkbox"/> Align with Council's strategic goals, objectives, workforce plan and values.
<input type="checkbox"/> Adhere to principles of equal employment opportunity.
<input type="checkbox"/> Be a confidential process that respects the privacy of all candidates.

Keeping these principles front of mind as a recruitment policy is developed will ensure that Council's policy meets legislative requirements and provides the best possible recruitment outcomes. It may also be useful to test a draft policy against the overarching core principles to ensure it will meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholders.

2.2 Values

Good recruitment practices encapsulate values such as inclusiveness, diversity and procedural fairness. Through the process, Councils are encouraged to consider how special measures may be used to progress workforce planning (diversity and inclusion) strategies (including all genders, ages, abilities, cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs and sexual orientations). Refer to **Section 4** for more information.

Council is also encouraged to consider conflicts of interest throughout the process and include safeguards within the policy that ensure that all applicants are assessed fairly.

² Section 48(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*

3 Detailed elements

In demonstrating council's commitment to the overarching core principles outlined in Section 2, Council may wish to elaborate on components of the recruitment and selection process within their policy, including:

- The position description
- Selection panels
- Attracting or sourcing candidates
- Selection methods
- Appointment

These components are outlined in further detail in this section. Each component includes suggested principles council may consider that align with the overarching principles and may contribute to an equitable and efficient recruitment process.

For further detailed information on these requirements and the process of developing your recruitment policy, refer to [Section 4 – Further reading](#).

3.1 Position description

A position description is a vital document in the recruitment and selection of employees. The position description outlines the requirements of the role, how the role fits within the organisation and the expectations of the employee's knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the role.

Elements may include:

- All roles should have a current position description which outlines:
 - The title of the position and associated remuneration
 - The duties and requirements of the role
 - The required knowledge, skills or abilities to perform the role.
- Position descriptions are most effective when they are simple and easy to read.
- Should achieve balance between technical details and succinct description of the position.
- Should be simplified and consistent in structure and content to allow easy reviewing and updating.
- Can appeal to suitably qualified candidates of all genders, ages, abilities, cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs and sexual orientations. This may include the use of non-gender specific language.
- A review date for the position description to ensure the position undergoes regular job design reviews and reflects the current organisational direction, deliverables and expected workload. As a minimum, all positions should be reviewed prior to recruitment.

3.2 Selection panels

A selection panel is a group charged with the responsibility of selecting the most meritorious candidate within the recruitment process. The group is designed to eliminate individual bias from the selection decision.

Elements may include:

- A panel is convened for the purposes of selecting the successful applicant with one panel member assigned the role of Chairperson.
- A panel requires a minimum of two people.
- One panel member should have familiarity with the role and requirements and, or technical experience in the area.

- All panel members should have an understanding of, or training in the recruitment and selection policy.
- Consideration should be given to gender balance and diversity of panel members.
- The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring documentation is produced regarding the outcome of the selection process.
- Each selection panel member must disclose any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest prior to shortlisting applicants.
- Panel members should ensure they are not influenced by irrelevant attributes of candidates and do not unlawfully discriminate based on protected characteristics of a candidate.

3.3 Attracting or sourcing candidates

Central to the recruitment and selection process is the sourcing or attraction of suitable candidates for the position. This includes ensuring the vacancy reaches the widest appropriate audience of potential suitable candidates.

Elements may include:

- A combination of attraction methods (such as job boards, advertisements, networks) should be used to attract suitable candidates.
- Where possible, attraction methods should actively source a diverse pool of candidates, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with diverse sexes, gender identities and sexual orientations.
- Vacancies should have a minimum 'advertising' period to give time for candidates to see and prepare a response.
- Processes for submitting an application should allow candidates to present their interest and suitability for a position without significant burden on the candidate.
- The ability to view and apply for roles should be easily available to all council employees.

3.4 Selection methods

Selection methods refer to the techniques used to assess a candidate's suitability to the role. Selection methods should be chosen by the selection panel to allow a fair and equitable assessment of each candidates' suitability.

Elements may include:

- All candidates will be assessed according to principles of merit. This will include ability to meet the selection criteria, alignment to the Council's values and may consider a candidate's potential for growth.
- To be successful, a candidate should undergo a minimum of two selection methods, this may include (but is not limited to) any combination of written application, video application, phone screening, psychometric or competency assessments, interview, work test and reference checks.
- Reference checks (referee reports) are a mandatory selection method and a minimum of two references should be obtained.
- Candidates' performance can be assessed after each selection method and be eliminated if they do not pass the assessment.
- Where possible, selection methods should be adapted to better allow candidates to demonstrate their suitability for the role.
- Considerations should be given to workplace adjustments for selection methods to enable equitable assessment of people with disabilities.

3.5 Appointment

Once a selection decision has been made and a suitable candidate has been found, the appointment process commences to finalise the selection and initiate the onboarding processes. This step completes the recruitment and selection process but also ensures the correct documentation and accountability is in place for the selection decision.

Elements may include:

- Selection decisions should be documented but not delay the process.
- Approval should occur before successful candidates are offered positions.
- All candidates should be notified of the outcome of their application.
- All internal candidates should be offered feedback.
- All successful candidates should receive as a minimum, a written offer of employment.
- Unsuccessful internal candidates should have the ability to lodge a grievance or appeal against the selection decision within a given timeframe. The internal candidate must have sought feedback from the Chairperson of the panel prior to lodging an appeal.
- Any grievance or appeal should be handled independently of the selection panel. A response to the grievance or appeal should be provided to the appellant within a given timeframe.

4 Further reading

Government resources:

- [Local Government Act 2020](#) – Part 2 – Division 7 – Section 46 – Members of Council staff
- [Gender Equality Act 2020](#) – Part 4 – Workplace gender equality
- [Guide to hiring with special measures in the public sector](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#)
- [Local Government Act 2020 - Foundational Guide for Workforce Planning](#)

Non-government specific resources:

- Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) – [Developing policy](#)
- Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) – [Recruitment and Selection](#)
- Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) – [HR Metrics](#)

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