

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Policy at Edward River Council (ERC) is to foster an environment where diversity is genuinely valued, all individuals are actively included, and every employee experiences a sense of belonging. This policy reaffirms Edward River Council's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all and aligns with relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Specifically, the policy aims to:

- **Promote Equality of Opportunity:** Ensure equal opportunity for all individuals regardless of gender, identity, background, or ability, enabling fair participation in employment and decision-making.
- **Foster Workplace Inclusivity:** Develop a culture that supports diverse identities and perspectives, ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all.
- **Eliminate Discrimination:** Prevent and address discrimination, harassment, or bias based on disability, gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural background, or any other protected characteristic.
- **Enhance Community Engagement:** Reflect and support the diversity of the community in employment practices and service delivery.
- **Strengthen Leadership Commitment:** Ensure leadership publicly endorses and champions equal opportunity and inclusive practices across Council operations.

ERC is committed to ongoing education, outreach, and evaluation to ensure diversity and inclusion are central to operations and that the community thrives through its diversity.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, and elected officials of Edward River Council. It applies across all work sites and covers all aspects of employment, including recruitment, development, promotion, and termination.

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Legislation	Regulations	Codes, Plans or Strategies
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986	Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010	Code of Conduct
Age Discrimination Act 2004		Disability Inclusion Action Plan
Sex Discrimination Act 1984		
Racial Discrimination Act 1992		
Racial Hatred Act 1995		
Disability Discrimination Act 1992		
Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012		
Work Health and Safety Act 2011		
Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)		
Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)		

POLICY STATEMENT

Edward River Council (ERC) embraces diversity in all its forms and strives to create an inclusive environment that respects and supports all individuals in our local government area.

This are committed to:

- **Equitable Access:** Ensuring all individuals have equal access to council services, infrastructure, and public spaces.
- **Community Engagement:** Advocating for diverse community needs and ensuring all voices are heard and represented.
- **Workplace Inclusion:** Promoting equal opportunity for career progression, training, and leadership roles.
- **Flexible Work Practices:** Supporting work arrangements that accommodate diverse needs, including parental leave and caring responsibilities.
- **Discrimination Prevention:** Maintaining robust mechanisms to prevent and address discrimination and harassment.
- **Leadership Commitment:** Leaders actively promote equal opportunity and model inclusive behaviours.

Reporting and Accountability:

Managers are supported in balancing diversity with merit-based decisions and are expected to follow inclusive practices.

Employees can report breaches of this policy to their Manager, Supervisor, People and Culture, or through designated channels. Reports will be handled confidentially and investigated promptly.

This Policy will be reviewed in align to council term 4 years or more frequently as required.

ROLES AND DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Management (CEO, Directors, Managers):

- Model inclusive behaviours and create an equitable workplace culture.
- Implement and enforce this policy within their respective teams.
- Identify and enforce barriers to inclusion.
- Provide strategic direction on diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure recruitment and development practices support equal opportunity.
- Support People & Culture in diversity initiatives.

Supervisors & Coordinators:

- Promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging in daily operations.
- Support employees in fostering inclusive culture.
- Act on reports of discrimination or harassment.
- Encourage participation in diversity initiatives.

People & Culture:



- Own and maintain this policy.
- Provide training and resources.
- Monitor effectiveness and recommend updates.
- Support managers and employees in promoting diversity and inclusion.

Employees:

- Foster a respectful and inclusive workplace.
- Engage in diversity training.
- Report concerns regarding discrimination or bias.

RISK ASSESSMENT

This policy aligns with Council's Risk Appetite Statement, which defines a **low tolerance** for behaviours that compromise physical or psychosocial wellbeing, including discrimination or exclusion. Diversity and inclusion efforts support risk mitigation by promoting staff safety and wellbeing.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy	Procedure
Equal Employment Opportunity Policy	
Bullying & Harassment Policy (Draft)	
Respect @ Work Policy (Draft)	
Public Interest Disclosure Policy & Procedure	
Grievance Handling Management Practice	

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Term	Definition
ERC	Edward River Council
Diversity	Differences in age, gender, identity, orientation, culture, ability, and experiences.
Inclusion	Equal access to participation, opportunities, and decision-making.
Belonging	A culture where individuals feel safe, respected, and valued.
Equality of Opportunity	Ensuring everyone has access to the same opportunities by removing barriers.
Discrimination	Unfair treatment based on a protected attribute.
Harassment	Unwelcome conduct that offends, humiliates or intimidates often creating a hostile work environment.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document Reference	Document Description
	Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan
	Workforce Management Strategy 2025- 2029



POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL TABLE

Policy #		POL-PEC-0010	Policy Title	Diversity Inclusion & Belonging Policy		
Policy Owner		People & Culture				
Policy Type		Operational		Approval Type	Executive Management Team	
Version Control						
Version Number	Modified by (position)	Modifications made		Date modified, approved or adopted	Council Minute Number	Status
1.0	Manager People & Customer Service	Original EEO and Diversity Policy adopted		19/03/2020		Approved
2.0	Manager People & Culture	Policy reviewed and updated Supersedes Version 1.0		23/06/2025		Approved