

POLICY TITLE: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
POLICY NUMBER: PP-009
CATEGORY: Council Policy
CLASSIFICATION: Statutory

Approved by Council		Meeting number and date	
16 December 2014		16 December 2014	
		Resolution number	
		3917	
Approved by CEO		16 December 2014	
Effective date		Review date	
17 November 2014		17 November 2016	
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Endorsed by			
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Version 2
 Policy No: PP-009
 Authorised by: Office of the CEO
 Document Maintained by: People and Performance
 Next Review Date: 17 November 2016

30/11/2015

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles that constitute a sound basis for efficient and effective human resources management in Isaac Regional Council (IRC). They are flexible and dynamic, and will adjust in line with evolution of the organisation. Policy implementation will be inspired by sound judgment, compliance with relevant employment legislation, common sense, and taking into account the specific context relevant to its application.

This policy and the associated procedures apply to all those who have responsibility for managing 'our people'. IRC recognizes they are our greatest asset, and are critical in ensuring the achievement of the objectives in our corporate and operational plans. It is through 'our people' that we make Isaac a region of first choice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the management of human resources within IRC and its subsidiaries and defines the guiding principles upon which the human resources (HR) management procedures are based.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
IRC	Isaac Regional Council
HR	Human Resources
Our People	Employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers at IRC

4. Policy

4.1 Responsibility for Our People

Each employee has a responsibility when dealing with our people, whether as a leader of a team, or as a team member. The HR team is there to provide professional support in handling matters, but should not substitute for being a responsible manager. The prime role of the HR services team is to contribute actively to the quality of human resource management throughout IRC by providing an adequate policy and procedures, ensuring consistency of application, and ensuring a strong foundation of fairness and equity. Acting as partners within the business, the HR team offers positive impact solutions, proposes best practices, and provides support and counselling to support the effectiveness of IRC in achieving its corporate and operational plans. Operational leaders and the HR team work together to act as co-responsible partners for all HR matters, to deliver effective people management.

4.2 Responsibility of Our People

The Code of Conduct: Responsible Conduct, Integrity & Ethics outlines the four principles upon which acceptable behaviour within the organisation must be based. As follows:

- Integrity and impartiality
- Promoting the public good
- Commitment to the system of government
- Accountability and transparency

In conjunction with other procedures referenced in this policy, the following principles provide a strong foundation for acceptable behaviour upon which the HR bases its operations:

- At IRC there is no place for intolerance, discrimination or harassment of any kind
- Transparency and honesty in dealing with people are essential for efficient communication. This is to be complemented by open communication with the purpose of sharing skills and information
- To communicate is not only to inform, it is also to listen and to engage in dialogue
- The willingness to cooperate and to help others should be encouraged
- In case of discord between an employee and her/his superior or another employee, the possibility must be offered for a fair hearing. The HR team have a role in ensuring disharmony is dealt with impartially, and by ensuring that each party has the opportunity to explain her/his viewpoint regardless of hierarchical position
- The HR team offers positive impact solutions, proposes best practices and provides support and counselling to the whole of the organisation

4.3 Becoming Part of the Isaac Team

The long term success of IRC depends on its capacity to attract, retain and develop employees able to ensure its commitment to Isaac as a region of first choice.

IRC's principle for recruitment is to hire employees with personal attributes and professional skills that enable them to develop a long term relationship with IRC, with it's strong commitment to professional development.

Each new staff member becomes an important participant in developing our future and is integral to our success. As a result the IRC recruitment process pays special attention to matching candidate and organisational values and ethics. The recruitment process ensures a robust selection process. Candidates are selected through a transparent and equitable process. No consideration in a recruitment process will be given to a candidate's origin, nationality, religion, race or gender, age, unless it is to verify a candidate's right to work in Australia.

Those who are not willing to adhere to the principles and values of IRC cannot be part of our team.

IRC is committed to promoting the organisation as a regional employer of choice, and will engage with schools, universities and education providers to deliver employment opportunities to local candidates.

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Promoting employees from within the organisation will be encouraged, HR will ensure that external benchmarking of internal skills is undertaken to ensure that overall competency within positions is aligned within the broader employment market.

Whilst HR will provide a range of tools to streamline the recruitment process, the decision to hire a candidate remains the jurisdiction of the hiring manager.

It is as important to hire the right person as it is to integrate newcomers in the organisation so that their skills and behavior can merge smoothly within teams. New employees are expected to respect our culture and align with our values, and show an open mind.

4.4 Working in Our Team

IRC is committed to fully endorsing and respecting principles and legislative requirements related to employee rights and ethical conduct, as outlined in the procedures aligned to this policy. These principles are to be respected everywhere and under all circumstances, and the organisation will implement the necessary processes to ensure they are understood and enforced.

IRC has procedures in place to manage the conduct of employees. Employees of IRC are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct.

IRC is committed to providing a working environment that protects the health and welfare of employees in accordance with the Work Health and Safety policy. Each employee should not only care for his or her own safety, but also that of their team members.

In the same way that there is no discrimination for reason of origin, nationality, religion, race, gender or age when joining IRC, no such discrimination will be tolerated towards IRC employees. Any form of harassment will not be tolerated in our workplace. Procedures have been implemented to specifically prevent discrimination and harassment.

At IRC we consider it not enough to avoid discrimination or harassment. It is essential to build a relationship based on trust and respect of employees at all levels. It is critical that each manager knows how their employees feel in their work environment. Managers are actively encouraged to communicate and engage with their teams to continually support organisational culture and values.

The HR team will investigate, manage and coordinate misconduct issues through a robust process, ensuring natural justice and procedural fairness for employees. Compliance with local government processes and legislative requirements will be maintained confidentially at all times.

IRC encourages long term employment. Wherever possible, any operation or activity should be undertaken by IRC direct employed staff. Where an operation cannot be undertaken internally, or a decision is undertaken to outsource an operation, IRC is committed to taking all reasonable steps to avoid overall loss of employment.

4.5 Life Balance

At IRC we believe that our employee's private and professional life should have a good balance, not only because it reinforces employee satisfaction, loyalty and enhances productivity, but also because it positively reflects on our reputation. IRC supports attracting and retaining people for overall wellbeing.

IRC supports employees who wish to take an active part in the life of the community, or by assuming responsibilities in civic, cultural, religious or voluntary organisations. In the same spirit, IRC encourages flexible working conditions and encourages its employees to have external interests.

4.6 Remuneration

IRC is committed to a regionally equitable and fair remuneration structure competitive and attractive remuneration packages, including both salary and other benefits.

A competitive remuneration procedure is aligned with this policy, and takes into account relevant external compensation levels as well as internal fairness. Regular external benchmarking is practiced across all levels of positions within the IRC.

IRC strives to position itself as an employer of choice by offering remuneration levels that are competitive. Regular reviews position IRC with other peer organisations to keep aligned with trends. Remuneration is significantly influenced at all levels by the ability to improve productivity and to maintain a sustainable financial position.

Variable remuneration components such as bonuses are linked to a combination of group, business and individual or team target achievements. Assessment of eligibility for variable remuneration components will be conducted in a timely, fair, equitable and transparent process.

IRC appreciates that it is not remuneration alone that motivates an employee and is committed to the provision of non-remuneration related benefits for employees.

HR has an integral role in ensuring the implementation of appropriate remuneration across the organisation.

4.7 Learning and Development

Learning and development is an important part of HR culture at IRC. Employment principles support an active program of learning and development and a commitment to work health and safety requires employees to be provided with the relevant competencies.

At IRC, the commitment is for the provision of on the job training through a culture of guiding, coaching and mentoring, and it is the responsibility of managers to ensure that employees expand the skills related to their positions.

When formal training programs are organised, the learning and development team will ensure that courses provide alignment to overall programs and the competency framework. Priority will be attached to training programs that enhance the competency of staff and increase safety within our work places.

IRC will also endeavour to provide and support opportunities for development of capabilities aligned with the objectives of the organisation.

The overall IRC objective is to retain and motivate employees by offering attractive and realistic career progression, allowing development of skills.

Where succession plans forecast organisational needs, they will be reconciled where possible with individual development plans. HR will provide support for implementing the necessary planning tools to facilitate learning, development and talent management.

4.8 Performance

Counselling and guidance are recognised at IRC as tools for improving performance and for helping develop skills. It also allows an opportunity to transform knowledge gaps into a positive learning experience to provide accurate, timely and honest performance feedback.

Each manager has a responsibility to mentor their employees. Formal performance assessments should take place on a regular basis. Its purpose is to provide feedback on past performance and potential, as well as other relevant aspects concerning an employee's work, including the development of their skills and competencies. Both the positive and negative aspects of individual performance should be discussed during these assessments. For managerial positions, assessment will be based on agreed objectives and achievement.

Efficient performance management emphasising the achievement of agreed objectives is a prime responsibility for each manager. Necessary time should be dedicated to the monitoring and the follow-up of the progressive achievement of objectives during the year.

Feedback should stimulate performance and take place through an open dialogue based on mutual trust and willingness to progress and written evidence of such meetings. Focus on continuous improvement, appropriate training measures, and on fostering a stimulating working environment.

In the case of serious underperformance, IRC will apply the relevant disciplinary processes with due respect for the employee.

When assessing employee potential, it should be kept in mind that the best indicator of talent is achievement. Candidates for managerial positions should clearly have demonstrated their willingness and ability to align with organisational values.

4.9 Workplace Relations

IRC upholds the freedom of association of its employees and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. IRC maintains a relationship with unions and other representative associations, to sustain the long-term development of the organisation to benefit employees and the organisation, thus maintaining a level of competitiveness adapted to its economic environment.

IRC ensures that direct and frequent communication is established with employees, including both union members and non-members. Relations with unions will be established under strict observation of the industrial relations legislation applicable to local government.

In accordance with legislation, IRC will refrain from any action restricting an employee's right of affiliation to a union. IRC will not engage with any union or other representative association in activities or discussions other than those relating to employment and working conditions relating to the workplace.

Whenever negotiations take place, they will be prepared with the full involvement of management, and take into account both the organisation's and the employee's legitimate interest.

4.10 Human Resources Function

Processes and systems will support HR management but never to the detriment of the human dimension.

The HR team will demonstrate professionalism and competencies as a credible and trustworthy partner to the operational leaders.

The HR function will provide flawless administrative support to add value to the business and to play a proactive role in every situation where HR action is required. The HR team will optimise overall IRC performance through improving people performance.

HR will play a pivotal role in the development and implementation of people strategies that positively impact financial results and the organisation's overall reputation and effectiveness.

5. Related Policies and Legislation

- Local Government Act 2009
- Industrial Relations Act 1999
- Associated HR Procedures
 - Apprentice & Supervision
 - Building a Respectful Workplace
 - Development & Education
 - Discipline
 - EEO Diversity
 - Employee & Contractor Induction
 - Employee Grievances & Dispute
 - Flexible Working Arrangements
 - Leave
 - Learning for Professional Development
 - Learning for Competency Development
 - On-Call Management
 - Performance Recovery & Counselling
 - Recruitment & Appointment
 - Redeployment & Redundancy
 - Relocation
 - Remuneration & Working Conditions
 - Responsible Conduct, Integrity & Ethics
 - Responsible Employment of Family
 - Responsible Service to the Community
 - Workplace Relations

6. Communication Channels

This policy will be communicated throughout IRC via:

- An announcement on the IRIS intranet
- Online policy library