



Equal Employment Opportunities

The Hauraki District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in the recruitment, employment, training and promotion of its employees.

The District Council regards the elimination of any discrimination and the provision of equal opportunities as essential principles in management of its staff resources.

Council will ensure there is a positive programme to identify and to eliminate discrimination in the areas of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, gender, religion, marital status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, people with disabilities, where it exists.

Objectives include:

- *To select the best person for the job on the basis of the job requirements and the ability of the person to perform the job;*
- *To promote employees on the basis of performance and the willingness of the employee to accept greater responsibility;*
- *To identify and provide appropriate training opportunities to increase knowledge and awareness of equal opportunity;*
- *To implement an appropriate performance appraisal system to encourage the development of employees and assessment of their individual training requirements;*
- *Identifying and providing appropriate training programmes to enable employees to best meet the requirements of their current jobs and to develop additional skills with a view to future promotion opportunities.*

What is Equal Employment Opportunity, or EEO?

Equal Employment Opportunity, commonly referred to as EEO, is all about providing a fair workplace and fair procedures for employees.

The Local Government Act 1974 interprets an Equal Employment Opportunities programme as being a programme: -

“... aimed at the identification and elimination of all aspects of policies, procedures, and other institutional barriers that cause or perpetuate, or tend to cause or perpetuate, inequality in respect to the employment of any persons or group of persons.”

In practical terms, it means:

- Everyone is hired on an equal basis;
- There is no discrimination in the workplace;
- Barriers are eliminated so there are no advantages for some and disadvantages for others;
- The best person is employed for the job - job opportunities are fair and equal;
- Employees are judged on their merit, with no barriers;
- There is no favouritism, with all staff treated the same - gone are the days of the “old boys network”!

Positive aspects of EEO therefore, are that everyone is treated equally, ensuring staff are judged on their merits or qualifications. This in turn makes for a happier workplace and provides a sense of trust in the organisation. EEO leads to good staff morale, encourages more objective appointments, and can provide diversity in the workplace.

Why Have EEO?

Legislation requires that local authorities (thus Hauraki District Council) act as a good employer, with particular emphasis on Equal Employment Opportunities for all staff.

The Human Rights Act sets out 13 grounds on which discrimination in employment is prohibited in New Zealand, aiming to prevent discriminatory action against people because of their age, sex, marital status, religious belief, ethical belief, colour, race, sexual orientation etc.

In local government, employers are not only guided by the Human Rights Act, but are also bound by the Local Government Act 1974 and its amendments which requires them to *pro-actively promote Equal Employment Opportunities* within the organisation.

In summary, local authorities are required to:

- Operate a personnel policy complying with the principle of being a good employer;
- Develop and publish an Equal Employment Opportunities programme each year;
- Ensure the EEO programme is complied with throughout the local authority;
- Report on the EEO programme in the Annual Report;
- Make appointments on the basis of the best person suited to the position;
- Notify any vacancies to enable suitably qualified people to apply.

Local authorities throughout New Zealand are therefore pro-actively promoting EEO, with objectives to encourage non-discriminatory recruitment practices, a workplace free from discrimination and harassment, effective training and education opportunities, and the removal of job barriers particularly for women and ethnic minorities.

Hauraki District Council is bound like any other local authority to abide by the Local Government Act and actively promote equal employment opportunities.

What Can I Expect at Hauraki District Council?

An informal staff survey carried out in late 1995 asked employees to assess Hauraki District Council as an EEO employer. Results indicated that employees were generally complimentary about Hauraki District Council as an EEO employer. The majority of participants believed Council lived up to its legal responsibilities, describing the Council as a fair place to work, with fair opportunities for recruitment, promotion and training. There was no problem of sexual harassment, and little feeling of discrimination.

It was typically felt that the Council was fairly well on its way to being an EEO employer, but some thought it could “do more” to promote EEO.

Employees who participated in the survey made a number of suggestions to assist Hauraki District Council move towards an even better workplace. Many of the suggestions were valid, and it is likely that they will be investigated further with a view to forming part of the goals and objectives in future EEO programmes at the Council.

If you have any queries or concerns about employment opportunities at Hauraki District Council, you are urged to discuss them with your Supervisor, Department Manager, General Manager, or the Human Resources Officer.

Any suggestions which would lead to better opportunities for employees are also welcome. These too, should be directed to either your Supervisor, Department Manager, the General Manager or the Human Resources officer.
