

# Human Rights Law Centre

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Approved June 2021

### Purpose of this Policy

The HRLC is committed to promoting all forms of diversity, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, disability and age. Promoting diversity is central to our work. It is not only the right thing to do, it helps us to attract, and retain, the staff we need to effectively do our work supporting people and communities to eliminate inequality and injustice. This policy outlines the diversity, equity and inclusion principles that guide HRLC practices. The Policy is supported by the Action Plan which provides the current initiatives in place to ensure the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is thoroughly implemented and maintained. The HRLC is committed to monitoring levels of diversity at HRLC and perceptions and attitudes of staff at least annually as well as the achievement of the Action Plan activities.

### Authority to Approve or Vary this Policy

HRLC Executive Director

### Promoting equality and eliminating discrimination

In accordance with our Equal Opportunity, Non-discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy, the Human Rights Law Centre will take all reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination and harassment in our workplace.

### Facilitating an inclusive workplace

The Human Rights Law Centre is committed to fostering a safe and welcoming workplace where every staff member feels comfortable expressing all aspects of their identity at work. Diversity helps to create an environment where staff with underrepresented identities feel meaningfully included. It also benefits

HRLC through the exchange of different skills, experiences and perspectives. It ensures greater innovation and improved decision-making. People thrive and are more innovative in working environments that are free from racism, bias, discrimination, that promote substantive equality and where diversity of experiences and views are encouraged.

## **Recruitment**

The HRLC's greatest asset is the commitment, skills, expertise and reputation of its staff. We know our staff team and our work are stronger when we have a diversity of backgrounds and experience. At a minimum, our staff team should reflect the community we serve. In particular, we seek to ensure that we employ staff with lived experience of the specific issues we work on. This is vital to the effectiveness and legitimacy of our work.

Recruitment is a critical part of promoting diversity at the HRLC. We must ensure that our recruitment processes do not discriminate against candidates. This is not merely about refraining from discrimination in decision-making. We need to ensure that all aspects of our hiring processes are inclusive and designed to seek a diverse range of candidates. The HRLC Recruitment Policy outlines the steps that must be taken to ensure recruitment is conducted in line with the HRLC's principles.

## **Staff Conduct**

The Human Rights Law Centre endeavours to create a respectful and informed workplace environment by increasing awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion amongst staff. All workers are made aware of the Human Rights Law Centre's commitment to, and expectations around, diversity and inclusion through staff inductions.

Leaders within the organisation model inclusive behaviour and are encouraged to increase their capability in supporting employees with diverse identities through professional development. The HRLC values the diversity of all employees, and as part of this and where appropriate, will draw on the knowledge and skills of employees to share with the organisation.

## **Training, Events and Significant Days**

All workers are provided opportunities to extend their knowledge and examine their values, assumptions, and behaviours through training on gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and age, held at regular intervals. These trainings encourage workers to build respect, recognise and avoid unconscious biases, and speak up against inappropriate behaviour. Furthermore, they support HRLC to adapt and change work practices so that they embed values learnt in the trainings. Where possible, opportunities will be provided for both in-house and online training, and through external providers.

The HRLC has an Enterprise Agreement covering the organisation. The agreement provides HRLC employees with paid and unpaid cultural, religious and ceremonial leave. Workers are encouraged to celebrate, share and learn about events of significance.

Workers are encouraged to continue practicing their allyship outside the workplace by standing in support with communities experiencing marginalisation, such as by attending annual Invasion Day rallies where possible, and to promote and participate in external equity and diversity events, such as presentations and discussions.

### **Career Progression**

The HRLC encourages the career advancement and development of all employees and strives to ensure as much support is available to employees as the Centre's resources allow. When assessing opportunities for career progression or advancement, relevant lived experiences of applicants will be included in the factors to be considered alongside other relevant qualifications and experience. Consideration will also be given to assessing the ability of the employee to understand and apply equity and diversity principles and policies in the course of their work.

The HRLC recognises that employees come from varied backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge. For that reason, human resources policies and processes are designed to ensure the opportunities that are made available are as accessible as possible to facilitate employees with special needs, caring responsibilities, or requiring tailored support.

### **Flexible work**

In addition to meeting its legal obligations to provide flexible working arrangements, the HRLC seeks to support staff to adopt flexible work practices that help staff to balance work commitments with personal, family, cultural, study and other commitments and that promote equality and diversity.

Flexible work arrangements can involve issues including the hours of work; days of work; place of work; leave; breaks from work; and IT and other equipment to facilitate different ways of performing work.

The HRLC has a range of existing policies that promote flexible work practices, including the Working From Home Policy, the Flexitime and Overtime Policy and the Parental Leave Policy.

There are laws dealing with flexible work arrangements including the National Employment Standards and the SCHADS Award. The HRLC has an Enterprise Agreement that contains provisions dealing with flexible work practices. A failure to provide flexible work arrangements may constitute unlawful discrimination under some circumstances.

Employees are encouraged to consider and utilise flexible work arrangements. Managers are strongly encouraged to consider the values underpinning the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in discussing flexibility with their employee.

### **Complaints**

Best practice complaint management ensures staff are well aware of what to do if they have a problem, investigation of complaints is a transparent process, staff feel supported and are clear on the available pathways for external resolution if required. Some staff may not feel comfortable raising issues. The HRLC

provides employees with a forum for anonymously raising concerns and discussing potential pathways for directly resolving the issue or supporting the employee to feel safe and welcome at work.

The HRLC Raising and Resolving Complaints policy outlines the procedure for staff and management to follow.

## **Environments**

In order to create an inclusive office space, the Human Rights Law Centre displays welcoming and inclusive signage, posters and information in our offices, such as an Acknowledgement of Country plaque, pride flags, and a statement of welcome and inclusion. The Human Rights Law Centre will work to provide toilets that are all-gender toilets.

Staff are encouraged to work with the Office Manager at their location if there is anything they would like to see displayed in the office.

## **HRLC Internal & External Communications**

### **Policies and procedures**

Embedding our diversity and inclusion commitments into HRLC policies and procedures is a means to achieve organisational accountability for our diversity and inclusion commitments – as a recruiter, as a workplace, and as an organisation seeking to eliminate inequality and injustice in Australia.

Our policies and procedures guide our staff and Board members in decision-making and performing their roles. Our policies and procedures also serve as a way of communicating our organisational values and behavioural expectations to staff. All staff and board members undertake to comply with these policies when they join the HRLC.

The Human Rights Law Centre will ensure that diversity and inclusion commitments are institutionally embedded and consistently considered in decision-making and business practices.

### **Inclusive communications**

The Human Rights Law Centre is committed to ensuring that our communications reflect our values of diversity and inclusion. To do this HRLC will endeavour to:

- Ensure our communication is accessible
- Ensure our communication is inclusive, respectful and non-discriminatory
- Use our platform to promote the work of organisations who represent diverse communities

## **Disability action plan and reasonable adjustment policy**

Under disability discrimination law, the HRLC must make reasonable adjustments to enable appropriately skilled people with disability to perform the inherent requirements of their positions unless this would cause unjustifiable hardship to our organisation. Reasonable adjustments may include; changes to

recruitment procedures; job redesign; flexible working arrangements; alternative methods of information provision; additional training and specialist assistance; and workplace modifications including the purchase or modifying of equipment.

The HRLC will develop a reasonable adjustment policy to ensure we have an accessible and inclusive workplace for people with disability. This will be developed as a part of a broader Disability Action Plan to promote equality for people with disability in all aspects of our work.

## Related Policies

- Equal opportunity, non-discrimination and sexual harassment policy
- Flexitime and overtime policy
- Occupational health and safety policy
- Parental leave policy
- Raising and resolving complaints policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Pronoun Policy
- Working from home policy

## Change History

DATE	CHANGE DETAILS
June 2021	Policy created
March 2022	Policy updated to reflect we now have an Enterprise Agreement, and Whispli is up and running