Equal employment opportunity management plans and workforce planning in the public sector

Public Sector Commissioner's Circular

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| **Enquiries To:** workforceanddiversity@psc.wa.gov.au Public Sector Commission | **Number:** 2017-04  **Issued Date:** 2 September 2017  **Review Date:** 2 September 2019 **Supersedes:** Public Sector Commissioner’s Circular 2013-04 |

## Policy

## Authorities as defined in Section 139 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (EO Act) are required to prepare and implement an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan under Section 145 (Preparation and implementation of management plans). A copy of a current EEO management plan is to be forwarded to the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment (DEOPE) in the Public Sector Commission (PSC).

## Authorities are required to report annually under Section 146 (Annual report to Director). Unless specifically advised otherwise, this requirement is met to the satisfaction of the DEOPE through provision of workforce data to the PSC through data collection processes administered by the PSC, including the human resource minimum obligatory information requirement process and the EEO survey

## All agencies and non-SES organisations, as defined in Section 3 of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (PSM Act) are encouraged to develop, implement and review an integrated workforce and diversity plan that meets the requirements of Section 145 of the EO Act, and additionally serves as a broader workforce plan addressing attraction, retention and workforce development objectives linked to service outcomes, and government and business priorities.

## Background

Workforce and diversity planning is a business imperative that links a range of cross-government documents, strategies and legislation, including:

1. *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*
2. *Public Sector Management Act 1994*
3. See my abilities: An employment strategy for people with disability
4. Attract, appoint and advance: An employment strategy for Aboriginal people
5. Skilling WA—A Workforce Development Plan for Western Australia (second edition)
6. Disability Access and Inclusion Plans
7. Reconciliation Action Plans

In February 2011, Commissioner’s Circular 2011-02 Workforce planning and Diversity in the Public Sector was released encouraging entities to develop an integrated workforce and diversity plan. Integrating the requirements of diversity and EEO into a broader workforce and diversity plan ensures public authorities manage the diverse backgrounds, skills, talents and perspectives of their workforce in strong economic climates or periods of downturn.

## Implementation

Diversity is a key component of workforce planning and goes beyond the traditional concept of EEO management planning. Workforce and diversity planning encourages public authorities to address the holistic needs of their employees and the community.

Current best practice involves aligning EEO strategies with broader workforce planning initiatives and harnessing the skills of a diverse range of people to create a positive, dynamic, high performing and robust workforce. This is critical to ensuring the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of government services that meet the needs of our diverse community.

Integrated workforce and diversity plans should be action-oriented and include strategies and initiatives that are (SMART):

**Specific:** Focussed on specific objectives to clearly define what needs to be achieved (e.g. targeted retention strategies that address a high level of staff turnover for a category of positions or employees).

**Measurable:** Matched to a qualitative and/or quantitative metric (e.g. 10 per cent reduction in turnover for group ‘x’ in a ‘y’ month period).

**Achievable:** Realistic given the available resources, the nature of issues and other competing priorities.

**Relevant:** Aligned to the strategic objectives and business priorities of the entity Timed: Planned accordingly with a timeframe for the achievement of the objective. Key focus areas should include:

* addressing workforce challenges that are clearly linked to capacity building to deliver services to the whole of the eligible community (including diversity groups that may not be experiencing substantive equality in access to services)
* maintaining compliance with Section 145(1) of the EO Act
* ensuring accurate and complete workforce data for reporting purposes
* conducting regular reviews of the plan in order to be responsive to internal or external changes in operating environments.

## Public Sector Commission support

Support to agencies is available through contact with the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment and from the workforce planning and diversity toolkit. Further information and tools on workforce planning and diversity are available on WA.gov.au.

M C Wauchope  
PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONER

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| Other relevant Public Sector Commissioner’s Circulars: n/a |