



A diverse, fair and safe workplace

Essential information about working for the NSW Government

When you work in the NSW Public Sector you are not just doing a job — you are representing the NSW Government to achieve what is in the community's best interests.

The NSW Government is dedicated to building a talented and responsive workforce that reflects the diversity of the people of NSW. This means valuing the participation of people with different life and work experiences. By valuing different people and different approaches to what we do, we are more innovative and ultimately deliver better services.

The NSW Government is committed to occupational health and safety, freedom from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and respect and fairness to its staff and the community.

All employees and managers are expected to understand and support these principles and practices and to meet their responsibilities in these areas.

People who work for the NSW Government need to understand these principles:

- **Cultural diversity**
- **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**
- **Ethical Practice**
- **Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S).**

The information provided here is designed to give you a broad understanding of these areas. Your employer will be able to provide you with more information on how these principles apply to your own workplace.

Cultural diversity

The NSW Government recognises and values the different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds of all the people of NSW. The Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000 sets out four principles of multiculturalism. These are:

- Everyone in NSW should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate.
- All individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language.
- Everyone should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided or administered by the NSW Government.
- All NSW institutions should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the NSW population as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the State's development.



All NSW Government agencies must have in place strategies to meet the principles of multiculturalism. Agencies must include these strategies in an Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement (EAPS) contained in their annual report to Parliament. Strategies can include:

- Offering programs and services which reflect the needs of the entire community
- Developing and implementing policies which are sensitive to all staff and client needs
- Providing information in ways that will reach all staff and clients
- Providing language services for all clients
- Ensuring that boards and committees reflect the multiculturalism of the community
- Training staff on multiculturalism and how these apply in their jobs
- Using flexible, inclusive consultation processes.

For more information contact the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW, Phone: 02 9716 2232, website: www.crc.nsw.gov.au

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is about:

- Ensuring workplaces are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Providing programs to assist members of EEO groups in employment.

EEO groups are people affected by past or continuing disadvantage or discrimination in employment. These groups are women; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; members of racial, ethnic, and ethno-religious minority groups, and people with a disability.

Discrimination is treating someone unfairly or harassing them because they belong to a particular group. Under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, it is against the law in NSW for any employer, including the Government, to discriminate against an employee or job applicant because of their age; sex; pregnancy; disability (including past, present or possible future disability); race, colour, ethnic or ethno-religious background, descent or nationality; marital status; carer's responsibilities; homosexuality; transgender.

Both **direct and indirect discrimination** are against the law. Direct discrimination means treatment that is obviously unfair or unequal. Indirect discrimination means having a requirement that is the same for everyone but has an effect or result that is unfair to particular groups of people.

All employees have the right to:

- A workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Equal access to benefits and conditions
- Fair processes to deal with work-related complaints and grievances.

Employees also have the responsibility to:

- Act to prevent harassment and discrimination against others in the workplace
- Respect differences among colleagues and customers such as cultural and social diversity
- Treat people fairly (don't discriminate against or harass them).

Managers and supervisors have the additional responsibility to:

- Ensure that work practices and behaviours are fair and free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Provide employees with equal opportunity to apply for jobs, training and development, higher duties and flexible working hours
- Ensure selection processes are consistent, transparent and based on merit.



Ethical practice

People who work for the NSW Government must always work ethically and act in good faith in the public interest. This is their public duty. The Independent Commission Against Corruption has developed these principles to help Government employees make better decisions and resolve ethical dilemmas they may face at work:

Serving public above private interests

Government employees must make decisions and take actions which best serve the public interest. When making decisions, employees should not consider their private or personal interests.

Integrity

Government employees should ensure that any decision made, or action taken, has these qualities:

Openness

- Giving reasons for decisions
- Revealing all avenues available to the client or business
- When authorised, offering all information
- Communicating clearly.

Honesty

- Obeying the law
- Following the letter and spirit of policies and procedures
- Observing codes of conduct
- Fully disclosing any possible conflicts between the public interest and personal interests.

Accountability

- Recording reasons for decisions
- Submitting to scrutiny
- Keeping proper accessible records
- Establishing audit trails.

Objectivity

- Fairness to all
- Impartial assessment
- Merit selection in recruitment and in purchase and sale of government resources
- Considering only relevant matters.

Courage

- Giving advice fearlessly and frankly where required
- Doing the right thing even in the face of adversity
- Reporting and dealing with suspected wrongdoing
- Acting in the public interest above loyalty to colleagues or supervisors.

Leadership

- Demonstrating, by your own ethical behaviour, the value of these principles in serving the public interest
- Promoting public duty to colleagues and others in an agency and outside.

For more information contact the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Phone: 02 8281 5999, website: www.icac.nsw.gov.au

You can also ask any Government agency for a copy of its Code of Conduct for employees.



Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)

What everyone needs to know

The NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of people at work through general requirements which must be met at every place of work in NSW. The Act covers employees as well as employers and self-employed people.

Employees must:

- Take reasonable care of the health and safety of others
- Co-operate with employers in their efforts to comply with OH&S requirements.

Employers must:

- Ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees
- Maintain workplaces in a safe condition and provide safe entrances and exits
- Ensure the safe use, handling, storage and transport of equipment and substances
- Provide work systems and working environments that are safe and without risks to health
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure employees' health and safety at work
- Maintain adequate facilities for the welfare of employees
- Consult employees so they can contribute to decisions affecting their health, safety and welfare
- Adopt a risk management approach to managing workplace health and safety.

Both employers and employees must not:

- Interfere with or misuse things provided for the health, safety or welfare of persons at work
- Obstruct attempts to give aid or attempts to prevent a serious risk to the health and safety of a person at work
- Refuse a reasonable request to assist in giving aid or preventing a risk to health and safety
- Disrupt a workplace by creating health and safety fears.

Note: This is general information only. Managers and employees should seek more information from their own workplace. Nothing in this document shall be construed to waive or modify any obligations imposed by the OH&S Act 2000 or the OH&S Regulation 2001.

For more information contact WorkCover NSW, Phone 02 4321 5000, website: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au.