Functional Area: ORGANISATIONAL

POLICY: WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Purpose

This policy provides a framework for Barcoo Shire Council to meet its obligations under work health and safety legislation and to promote a safe, healthy and supportive workplace for all workers and others who may be affected by Council activities. The Policy aims to prevent work-related injury, illness and harm by ensuring that physical and psychological hazards are identified, risks are effectively managed, and a positive safety culture is maintained across all Council workplaces and operations.

Policy Statement

Barcoo Shire Council is committed to providing and maintaining a safe, healthy and inclusive workplace for all employees, councillors, volunteers, contractors, visitors and members of the public who may be affected by Council activities. Council will, so far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate or minimise risks to physical and psychological health and safety through effective leadership, consultation, risk management, training and continuous improvement.

Council expects all workers to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, the health and safety of others, and to comply with Council policies, procedures and lawful directions. Workplace health and safety is a shared responsibility, and all persons engaged by Council are expected to contribute to a positive safety culture where hazards, incidents and concerns are reported, addressed and managed promptly.

Council is committed to complying with all applicable work health and safety legislation, regulations, codes of practice and standards, and to fostering a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, Councillors, contractors and subcontractors, labour hire workers, apprentices, trainees and work experience participants working for Council regardless of whether they are permanent, temporary, full time, part time or casual. Council's responsibility for workplace health and safety extends to visitors and any other person who may be affected by Council activities.

Definitions

Hazard: Anything that has the potential to cause injury, illness, damage or harm.

Hostile workplace environment: Conduct that creates or contributes to a workplace that is characterised by hostile behaviours such as gossip; humiliation or intimidation. A hostile workplace environment may create a significant workplace health and safety risk and may exist even where behaviour is not directed at a specific individual.

Incident: An event or circumstance that resulted in, or had the potential to result in, injury, illness, damage or harm.

Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU): This term has a particular meaning under Work Health and Safety legislation. A PCBU is a person who has a primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of workers and others affected by work in the business or undertaking. In the context of Council, the PCBU is the organisation itself (the legal entity). The CEO holds the primary PCBU duty because they hold the highest level of influence and control over how work is carried out. Supervisors and Managers are not PCBU's, they are "officers" or "workers with WHS duties" under the Act.

Psychological safety: A workplace climate in which people can raise questions, concerns, mistakes and ideas respectfully without fear of humiliation or retaliation. It does not prevent accountability, reasonable disagreement or reasonable management action.

Psychosocial hazard: A hazard that arises from, or relates to, the design or management of work, a work environment, plant at a workplace or workplace interactions and behaviours, and may cause psychological harm, whether or not it may also cause physical harm. Examples include: aggression (from other employees, customers, or anyone else); bullying or harassment; excessive workloads; poor support; poor change management; lack of role clarity; poor workplace relationships; traumatic events.

Psychosocial risk: The risk of psychological or physical harm arising from exposure to a psychosocial hazard.

Risk: The likelihood that a hazard will cause harm and the severity of the consequences.

Reasonably practicable: What is reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring, the degree of harm that may result, what is known about the hazard or risk, and available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk.

Safety culture: The shared attitudes, behaviours and commitment of workers and leaders that support a safe, healthy and respectful workplace.

Workplace: Any place where work is carried out for Council, including offices, depots, worksites, vehicles, remote locations and any other place where Council business is undertaken.

Workplace health and safety: The physical and psychological wellbeing of workers and other persons who may be affected by Council activities.

Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer: Provide executive leadership and oversight of Council's Work Health and Safety Management System, ensuring appropriate resources are available to support workplace health and safety, promoting a positive safety culture, ensuring compliance with legislative obligations, and exercising due diligence to verify that effective systems are in place to identify, manage and monitor workplace health and safety risks.

Directors, managers and supervisors: Assess and manage workplace safety; identify and respond to workplace hazards and risks, consult with workers on matters affecting health and safety, ensuring workers receive appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision; investigate incidents and hazards, and take reasonable steps to ensure work is performed safely.

Directors, managers and supervisors are encouraged to seek professional specialist, human resources, industrial relations, legal or work health and safety support and advice where required.

Work health and safety function: Provide advice and support to Council; facilitate hazard identification and risk management processes; support consultation and incident management activities; monitor compliance with Council's safety management system; and drive continuous improvement of workplace health and safety practices.

All workers: Creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace is everyone's responsibility. All workers must contribute to a safe and positive culture; follow reasonable directions and controls; use equipment safely, report hazards, incidents and near misses; and be empowered to stop unsafe work if there is an immediate risk to health and safety.

Contractors and sub-contractors: Must comply with all applicable workplace health and safety legislation, contractual requirements and Council safety procedures. Contractors are responsible for ensuring their workers are appropriately trained, competent and equipped to undertake their work safely and without risk to others.

Human resources function: Provide guidance; triage concerns; facilitate access to appropriate support services, entitlements and workplace adjustments; facilitate workplace safety planning; maintain appropriate records; arrange external assistance where independence or expertise is required.

Policy Implementation

Strategies to implement this policy include:

- Development, implementation, maintenance, and regular review of Council's Work Health and Safety Management System across all facilities and workplaces
- Implementation and maintenance of Council's Work Health and Safety Risk Management Program, including risk assessment and adequate controls
- Establishment of measurable objectives and targets to facilitate continual improvement of Work Health and Safety in the workplace and to reduce work related illness and injury
- Provision of appropriate Work Health and Safety training and the dissemination of appropriate Work Health and Safety information to all workers and visitors to the workplace
- Consulting with workers and other Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) (including contractors and affiliated entities) about decisions that may affect their Work Health and Safety
- The provision of adequate resources to ensure effective implementation of the WHSMS
- The documentation and communication of Work Health and Safety responsibilities for all workers, and
- The communication of this policy, together with practical procedures and guides, throughout Council through induction and training.

Workplace Safety Culture

Council recognises that workplace culture has a direct correlation to workplace safety.

Council is committed to maintaining a positive workplace safety culture where health and safety are integrated into everyday work practices. It is reflected in everyday behaviours, attitudes and decisions, where people look out for one another, follow safe work practices, report hazards and incidents, speak up about concerns without fear of blame, and actively participate in improving workplace safety.

A hostile workplace environment may create a significant workplace health and safety risk. Council has policies that confirm our approach to workplace discrimination and psychosocial health; domestic and family violence support; and managing challenging behaviours, acknowledging that these may create physical and psychosocial risks at work.

A strong safety culture supports both physical and psychological wellbeing and recognises that safe and healthy workplaces are achieved through leadership, consultation, accountability, respect and continuous improvement.

Breaches and consequences

A breach of this policy, including misuse of Council plant, vehicle, equipment, or systems, or failure to follow a reasonable safety direction, may result in risk controls, management action, counselling, training, disciplinary action, termination of employment or engagement, or referral to an external authority. Any action will be lawful, proportionate and procedurally fair.

It is important to know that failure to follow safe systems of work, misuse of equipment, bypassing of a risk control measure or interfering with another person's efforts to work safely, may lead to prosecution under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)* or other applicable legislation and may also be dealt with under Council's Code of Conduct.

Support

- Chief Executive Officer
- Directors, managers and supervisors
- Workplace health and safety function
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Governing legislation, regulations and references

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

Barcoo Shire Council Certified Agreement
Barcoo Shire Council Code of Conduct

Queensland Legislation

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice 2022 (Qld)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (Qld)
- *Electrical Safety Act 2002*
- Electrical Safety Regulation 2026
- *Industrial Relations Act 2016*
- *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- Local Government Regulation 2012

Commonwealth Legislation

- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*

Document references and control:

Policy owner:	Chief Executive Officer
Policy reference no.:	BSC-010
Related policies:	BSC-012 Employee Code of Conduct BSC-045 Workplace Discrimination and Psychosocial Health Policy BSC-060 Risk Management Policy BSC-065 Mobile and Smart Devices Policy BSC-068 Domestic and Family Violence Support Policy
Related forms:	Work Health and Safety Procedures, Guides and forms are contained within Council's Integrated Safety Management System.
Version:	2
Council resolution no:	2026.10.006
Date approved:	14 October 2026
Review:	This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier following relevant legislative change, a significant workplace incident, an identified deficiency in Council's Work Health and Safety systems, or a material change to Council operations.