
HR - Equal Employment Opportunity

Headway Gippsland Inc., values the contribution that can be made to our agency by all members of the community. Therefore, the Board of Management has a commitment to the promotion of equal opportunity principles and practice in employment at Headway Gippsland Inc, the Board of Management discharge their duty to the Chief Executive officer to ensure all of the following occurs.

This policy will guide all employment-related dealings between Board of Management and workers. It will be referred to in all position descriptions. Therefore, all applicants for positions at Headway Gippsland Inc., will be aware of the existence of this policy and be able to pursue their rights to equal opportunity in employment issues.

Aim of the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

This policy aims to:

- Reinforce this agency's commitment to the provision of equal opportunity in employment-related matters, in recognition of the positive contributions that can be made by all members of society.
- Help all current and potential workers members to understand what constitutes employment discrimination, and their rights to redress if they believe that this has occurred in their dealings with Headway Gippsland Inc.
- Outline the procedures that will be followed if any person believes that they have been discriminated against in their employment-related dealings with Headway Gippsland Inc.

Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination can be direct and indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of his or her status or private life, or because of a stereotyped belief about people with that status or private life (The Law Handbook, Victoria, 1994).

Such stereotypical beliefs could include:

- "women can't handle stress"
- "homosexuals are paedophiles"
- "Asians don't assimilate"

Indirect discrimination occurs when an unreasonable condition is placed upon everyone in a particular situation (eg. job seeking), and it is more difficult for people of one status or private life to comply with this condition than it is for others. (The Law Handbook, Victoria, 1994).

Examples of indirect discrimination include:

- Height requirements in job advertisements could discriminate against people on the grounds of gender or ethnic background.

HR - Equal Employment Opportunity

- Certain hours of work (eg. evening meetings) could discriminate against people who are breastfeeding infants.
- Expectation to participate in certain cultural or religious events/festivals could discriminate against people on the basis of their religious beliefs or cultural background.

The law concerning equal employment opportunity

In Victoria, the following Acts enable people who have experienced discrimination to have this situation stopped and receive remedy for the harm caused by the discrimination:

- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (Vic)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).
- Age Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

These acts combine to make it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their status, which includes:

- Gender (including the condition of pregnancy)
- Marital status
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Impairment or assumed impairment (including physical, intellectual or psychological disability or presence in the body of organisms causing disease)
- Condition of being a parent or childless
- Or private life which includes religious beliefs, political views or related activities.

In employment related matters, it is unlawful to discriminate on the above grounds when hiring workers, negotiating terms and conditions of employment, considering or offering promotion, training or dismissal.

Our responsibilities regarding equal opportunity

Every person in this agency has a responsibility to not discriminate against employees or potential employees in employment-related matters.

HR - Equal Employment Opportunity

The Board of Directors of Headway Gippsland Inc. will:

- Refer to this policy in all position advertisements and job descriptions.
- Monitor its employment decisions to ensure that discriminatory work conditions or practices are not included in any position descriptions or expectations.
- Promote this equal employment opportunity policy
- Treat all complaints about discrimination seriously and take immediate action to investigate and resolve the matter.
- The Board of Directors of Headway Gippsland Inc., will take all reasonable steps to provide special facilities for employees with impairment. However, where such facilities cannot be reasonably provided, Headway Gippsland Inc. will seek exemption from the Equal Opportunity Act, 1984 (Vic) under Sections 21 & 28.

The workers of Headway Gippsland Inc. will:

- Comply with this policy in their dealings with colleagues and potential colleagues in employment-related matters.
- Offer support to anyone who is discriminated against and refer him or her to this policy.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, in contravention of this policy, you should make a complaint of discrimination to the person/group/panel whom you believe is being discriminatory, drawing their attention to this policy. If you feel uncomfortable in pursuing this matter on your own, you have the right to have an advocate present.

If the discrimination continues you may use the Headway Gippsland Inc., Grievance Procedure.

You may also make a complaint to the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity Victoria, 4th Floor, 356 Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000. Or telephone: 1800 134 142.

This policy is designed to complement the laws regarding equal opportunity, and in no way is intended to divert employees or potential employees from seeking legal redress.