

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Introduction

This report provides some insight into the practices and processes that we follow to ensure Council is a good employer and one of the highest performing local authorities in New Zealand.

NRB Survey

Council staff have consistently maintained a high performance rating by residents. In 2003 some 70% of the residents rated the staff performance at very or fairly good. Staff have continued to be rated by residents above their peer group nationally.

Staff Development

As with all local authorities this Council has a wide range of career paths on offer with work places ranging from a labourer/driver, to planner, to engineer through to chief executive.

The Council does its best to encourage both professional and personal development by identifying individual training requirements through the Performance Development Review process (P.D.R).

As part of our overall training programme the Council has over the last four years entered a team in the Local Government Management Challenge and this year was no exception.

The Challenge is an Australian competition in which New Zealand Local Authorities compete. The Challenge is a contest of "Management Teams" of 6 people from Councils who address a range of issues based on a theme

The N.Z. winner of the Challenge then competes against the winner of each Australian state in an Australasian final. To date the Council has used the Challenge as a leadership training exercise and selects the team with this in mind, together with the willingness of staff to take part, rather than basing selection purely on maximising our chances of winning.

Health and Safety

We are focussed on a safe working environment and continue to strive to improve the overall health and safety record of our operations including those contractors and other organisations that we work with. Our Health & Safety record continues to improve each year.

Occupational Safety & Health Inspectors continue to acknowledge that Council is very good at proactively ensuring that staff work in a safe environment.

Staff Numbers

The total number of staff employed by Council for the year ending 30 June 2003 was 425 full time equivalents. Staffing levels are anticipated to remain similar over the next 10 years.

Staff Support Systems

Council has a number of initiatives to support staff health and wellbeing. One of the initiatives most used is the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides staff with an independent counselling service for both work and personal issues that are impacting on their work performance or have the potential to.

Free flu injections are also provided for staff as are Hepatitis injections for those staff working in Waste Water Reticulation activities. Ongoing hearing tests are also provided for staff working in noisy work sites.

Subsidised school holiday programmes for children of staff are also provided and have proven to be very popular. These programmes are organised in conjunction with Forest Research and have been successfully operating for some years now.

Managing Diversity

Te Waka Awhina O Aotearoa was established in 1991 and is an annual national conference that exists to provide appropriate and timely training for Maori within local and regional government to discuss, debate and learn about the various social, economic and political issues that impact on Maori. It is also a vehicle for

establishing a national Maori network for Maori involved in local and regional government.

The 2003 Conference was hosted for the first time by our Council. As well as participating, our staff played a central role in organising the hui with a number also attending. Annual participation in te Waka Awhina is one example of how Council manages diversity in the workplace.

Council is committed to making sure that staff at all work sites within Council have the same opportunities to contribute to, and share in, the successes.

Other initiatives that have been implemented for managing diversity are:

- Cultural Awareness Programmes
- Te Reo and Te Kanga Maori – Maori language and customs workshops

Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee made up of the Chief Executive, three staff members elected 'at large' and one Union nominated representative from the Public Service Association reviewed 35 positions during the year ending 30 June 2003 compared with 30 positions for the same period the previous year. Ten of these positions were new positions with the balance being either re-grading applications or restructured positions through a reallocation of duties.

Equal Employment Opportunities Policy and Programme 2003/2004

Rotorua District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in the recruitment, employment, training and promotion of its employees and has a stated policy to this effect. This commitment is not only because of legal (Local Government Act) and moral obligations, but also because EEO makes good business sense. EEO is about good management practices; it is about valuing and encouraging diversity; about developing our human resource and about attracting the best people to our jobs. As such, Rotorua District Council will implement a purposeful programme of action to ensure its activities and services are carried out with an awareness of, and an intent to eliminate, discrimination in the areas of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender, religion, marital status, family responsibilities, age, people with disabilities, political opinion and sexual orientation.

The proposed programme of action for 2003/2004 is as follows and is a progression of the current policy and overall programme

Significant Objectives

Objective	How Often
To promote and maintain EEO awareness with all staff and management through:	
• Orientation training for all new staff.	• Ongoing.
• EEO Committee meetings.	• Quarterly.
• Liaison with other EEO networks.	• Ongoing.
• Ongoing training for staff in structured interview skills.	• Ongoing.
• Ongoing training in EEO issues for supervising staff and training for staff in general.	• Ongoing.
To produce EEO Census Reports on the demographic profile of job applicants and appointed staff for the EEO Committee and Management Team.	Quarterly.