

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Consultation, LG](#)
Cc: ["Paul Terrett"](#)
Subject: Merit-based recruitment
Date: Tuesday, 21 March 2023 4:42:02 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the discussion paper "Merit-based recruitment in Council", throughout Australia there have been a number of cases of inappropriate recruitment of staff. Councillors and the public have little to no ability to rectify recruitment process as the General Manager is ultimately responsible for staffing and recruitment matter.

The General Manager and Council should work together to ensure that council is recruiting on merit. Councils must have policies that ensure recruitment and selection and there are satisfactory succession planning in councils. Currently, there are no obligations for the General Manager to consult with the Council on the organisational structure. Councils should, after each election, review its organisational structure in consultation with the General Manager. Council should consider:

- the senior staff positions within the organisation structure of the council,
- the roles and reporting lines (for other senior staff) of holders of senior staff positions,
- the resources to be allocated towards the employment of staff.

The General Manager should, after consulting the council, determine the positions (other than the senior staff positions) within the organisation structure of the council. The positions within the organisation structure of the council are to be determined to give effect to the priorities set out in the strategic plan.

The general manager should only appoint or dismiss senior staff only after consultation with the council.

The practice of Equal Employment Opportunity must encourage and fostered councils should establish EEO management plans to ensure that there are reviews of personnel practices within the council (including recruitment techniques, selection criteria, training and staff development programs, promotion and transfer policies and patterns, and conditions of service) with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices.

I support the Ministerial Order for the General Manager recruitment and performance assessment to ensure that the performance agreements of general managers include performance indicators related the General Manager's function under the Local Government Act. As Council and the General Manager have a close working relationship that hinders the objectivity of the performance assessment. The current system assumes that Councillors have the skills needed to adequately assess the General Manager's performance. I would support an independent process, possibly under the Office of Local Government or LGAT. This would remove the situation where the performance assessment is done by an associate of the GM or unskilled Councillors.

In recruitment process there have been instances of practices that have avoided

merit selection including:

- making a long-term temporary appointment to evade competitive processes.
- Restricting advertising timeframes to limit who can apply.
- writing selection criteria to favour a certain applicant.
- appointing selection panel members that can be influenced to ensure a favoured candidate is selected.
- concealing negative referee reports from the rest of the selection panel
- appointing a fellow employee, who is a friend or family member, to a more senior position than their current role without declaring a conflict of interest.

This highlights the importance of a model recruitment and selection process.

Recruitment policies for senior staff should have the following:

- that a senior human resources manager, or external recruitment consultant, be involved in recruitment processes, and have a role in verifying that council processes and procedures were followed in the appointment of senior staff.
- the inclusion of subject matter experts on interview panels for the appointment of senior staff, especially for high-risk positions that require specialised technical knowledge.
- the provision of independent assurance through the involvement of internal audit in conducting periodic reviews into senior staff recruitment processes
- full review of qualifications before their appointment to reduce the incident of false qualifications.
- the appropriate avenues for reporting concerns for accountability

Regards

