PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

Office Procedural Circular No. 63
Workplace Diversity Program

Document release 4.0

Reissued July 2013

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Part 1—Introduction

OPC's Workplace Diversity Program

1   OPC's Workplace Diversity Program consists of the principles, objectives and actions set out in this Office Procedural Circular together with the plans, policies, practices and procedures contained in other Office Procedural Circulars that reflect and embed workplace diversity. This Office Procedural Circular should be read in conjunction with OPC's workplace agreements and the Office Procedural Circulars set out in Attachment A.

What is workplace diversity?

2   Diversity relates to gender, age, linguistic and cultural background, disability, and religious beliefs. Diversity also refers to the many other ways we are different in other respects such as educational background, socio-economic background, personality, marital status, family and personal responsibilities, pregnancy and sexual orientation.

3   Managing diversity successfully in the workplace means creating an environment that values and utilises the contributions of people with different backgrounds, skills, experiences and perspectives.

Public Service Act 1999 and workplace diversity

4   Under section 18 of the *Public Service Act 1999* (**PS Act**), FPC must establish a workplace diversity program to assist in giving effect to the APS Employment Principles. The relevant employment principles (paragraphs 10A(1)(f) and (g) of the PS Act) provide that 'The APS is a career-based public service that…provides workplaces that are free from discrimination, patronage and favouritism; and recognises the diversity of the Australian community and fosters diversity in the workplace.'

5   The Public Service Commissioner has issued legally binding Directions under the PS Act setting out the scope and application of the APS Employment Principles and providing more detail about implementing workplace diversity (see Chapter 3 of the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2013).

6   The Directions require FPC to publish OPC's Workplace Diversity Program on our website and, as soon as practicable after revising the Program, publish the revised Program on our website. FPC must report annually on the progress and effectiveness of our workplace diversity program. This report is provided in our annual report.

7   OPC also has a responsibility to ensure that we have up-to-date data on the diversity status of our employees. This information, which is provided on a voluntary basis by employees, is essential, both for monitoring diversity in OPC, and for ensuring that the APS Employment Database is as accurate as possible, to enable service-wide monitoring of diversity. OPC supplies the diversity information to the Australian Public Service Commission on a monthly basis.

Part 2—Workplace diversity in OPC

8   Workplace diversity contributes to OPC attaining its organisational objectives. At OPC we recognise that ensuring equity in employment and eliminating workplace discrimination, bullying and harassment are essential for developing a diverse workforce, attracting, recruiting and retaining high quality employees and maximising productivity.

Principles

9   Workplace diversity principles should be integrated with and underpin all aspects of human resource management, such as planning, selection and recruitment, performance management, training and development, occupational health and safety and workplace relations.

10   Workplace diversity is a broad concept, which encompasses both equity and diversity. The key workplace diversity principles are:

- treating people with respect and dignity;

- valuing the differences and diversity of people;

- eliminating unfair and inappropriate barriers;

- making judgements based on equity and merit.

Objectives

11   The objectives of OPC's Workplace Diversity Program are:

- to raise the awareness of workplace diversity and the value of a diverse workforce to OPC;

- to ensure that workplace structures, conditions, systems and procedures foster diversity and allow employees to manage work and personal life;

- to ensure equity in employment is promoted and upheld;

- to continue to provide opportunities for employees to participate and contribute to the work of OPC;

- to prevent and eliminate bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination in the workplace.

Challenges and opportunities

12   OPC is committed to creating a diverse workforce. There are both challenges and opportunities for OPC in relation to workplace diversity.

13   The *challenges* are that statistical information for such a small group may, relatively, be of little value. The specialised nature of the work and the size of OPC means that there are limits on the range of career paths available in OPC. Further, some measures that would be

practical for larger organisations are impractical in small ones (for example, setting up a child care centre).

14   The *opportunities* arise largely from the fact that individual needs can be taken into account, and flexible work arrangements can be negotiated relatively quickly, in a small agency.

15   OPC recognises that good policy and practice in relation to workplace diversity (including, but not only, in relation to work and family) has benefits for both staff and for OPC as an organisation.

16   The main benefits of workplace diversity to staff are that their working environment is fair and does not unlawfully discriminate, and is sympathetic to the non-work aspects of their lives. The benefits to OPC of having a successful Workplace Diversity Program include:

- improved recruitment outcomes through being an employer of choice;

- higher job satisfaction and retention rates;

- improved workplace relations and morale;

- increased productivity;

- access to a broader range of ideas and approaches; and

- reduced workplace stress and a reduction in absenteeism.

Part 3—Workplace Diversity is everyone's responsibility

17   We all have a responsibility to support workplace diversity.

18   Each individual is responsible for:

- behaving in a way that is consistent with the APS Values, APS Employment Principles and Code of Conduct;

- respecting different ways of thinking and working;

- maintaining a workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment;

- supporting employees who access reasonable adjustment and flexible work arrangements; and

- being aware of the OPC Workplace Diversity Program and contributing to its objectives.

19   Each team leader is responsible for:

- practising and promoting behaviour consistent with the APS Values, APS Employment Principles and Code of Conduct;

- incorporating workplace diversity principles into their team and management practices;

- supporting employees who require reasonable adjustment in the workplace (see OPC No. 80—*Disability awareness*);

- supporting employees who seek flexible work arrangements, subject to business needs;

- resolving workplace issues quickly, sensitively and effectively wherever possible;

- maintaining a workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment;

- ensuring meetings, travel and other work arrangements do not place inappropriate pressure on employees with personal and family commitments; and

- considering innovative job solutions to meet business and employee needs.

20   FPC is responsible for:

- upholding and promoting the APS Values, APS Employment Principles and Code of Conduct;

- complying with the PS Act by establishing a Workplace Diversity Program within OPC which gives effect to the APS Values, APS Employment Principles and Code of Conduct;

- preventing direct and indirect discrimination in employment within OPC;

- promoting workplace diversity principles; and

- providing resources to implement the Workplace Diversity Program.

Part 4—Actions to achieve our objectives

21   The following actions to achieve our objectives are in addition to and/or support the actions that are contained in the other Office Procedural Circulars listed in Attachment A which also contribute to the Workplace Diversity Program.

Item	Objectives	Actions
1	Raise awareness of workplace diversity and the value of a diverse workforce to OPC.	• Include workplace diversity awareness in induction programs. • Celebrate theme and promotional days that relate to workplace diversity. • Consult with OPC staff on changes to the Workplace Diversity Program. • Examine holdings of workplace diversity materials

Item	Objectives	Actions
		and periodically inform staff about materials. • Include workplace diversity information in Bills and Papers. • See also OPC No. 11—*Reconciliation Action Plan*.
2	Ensure that workplace structures, conditions, systems and procedures, foster diversity and allow employees to manage work and personal life.	• Consider work-life balance when developing, reviewing and updating OPC's policies, practices and procedures where applicable. • Maintain contact with staff on extended leave to allow them to keep up-to-date and to assist in their smooth transition to work. • See also OPC's workplace agreements.
3	Ensure equity in employment is promoted and upheld.	• Regularly review duty statements, selection criteria, selection documentation and job advertisements to ensure workplace diversity principles are being considered and applied and advertised positions are attractive to a diverse range of applicants. • Regularly review recruitment and selection processes to ensure workplace diversity principles are being considered and applied and applicants are not impeded from fair and equitable consideration. • See also OPC No. 85—*Workplace diversity and recruitment matters*, OPC No. 83—*Selection and recruitment policies, practices and procedures*.
4	Continue to provide opportunities for employees to participate and contribute to the work of OPC.	• Promote open participation and contribution in work meetings, WCC and other OPC committees. • See also OPC's workplace agreements, OPC No. 5—*Workplace Consultative Committee*, OPC No. 36—*Staff Development Plan*.
5	Prevent and eliminate bullying, harassment and unlawful discrimination in the workplace.	• Continue to monitor rates of personal leave and other unscheduled absences. • Encourage the use, by all OPC employees, of OPC's employee assistance program. • See also OPC No. 80—*Disability awareness*, OPC No. 50—*Prevention of bullying policy and plan*, OPC No. 49—*Employee assistance program*, OPC No. 41—*Resolution of disputes and grievances*.

22   The General Manager will have the role of Senior Executive Responsible for Workplace Diversity (**SERWD**). In this role, the General Manager will facilitate the implementation of the actions to achieve objectives and report to the SMT annually on the progress of the actions and provide recommendations regarding changes to the Workplace Diversity Program where appropriate. Staff will be consulted on any proposed changes to the Workplace Diversity Program through the WCC.

23   Where it is considered that a workplace diversity issue has arisen, staff are encouraged to discuss the matter with FPC or the SERWD.

Performance indicators

24   OPC will use the Employee Survey, which is conducted in OPC annually, to monitor and measure the effectiveness of OPC's Workplace Diversity Program. Although the questions in the survey may vary slightly from year to year, there will be enough information to indicate if OPC is meeting the performance indicators for each objective.

Objective	Performance Indicators	Source of Information
1	75% or more of respondents agree that OPC: • values and manages diversity in the workplace; and • is committed to creating a diverse workforce.	OPC Employee Survey
2	75% or more of respondents agree that they are satisfied with their work-life balance in OPC. 75% or more of respondents agree that OPC supports people to achieve a good work/life balance.	OPC Employee Survey
3	75% of more of respondents agree that recruitment and promotion decisions in OPC are fair. 75% or more of respondents agree that OPC routinely applies merit in decisions regarding engagement and promotion.	OPC Employee Survey
4	75% or more of respondents agree that: • communication between senior leaders and staff is effective; and • senior leaders are receptive to ideas put forward by other employees. 75% or more of respondents are satisfied with the most important workplace attributes that impact on job satisfaction.	OPC Employee Survey
5	75% or more of respondents agree that OPC is a good place to work. 90% or more of respondents indicate that they have not been subjected to harassment or bullying.	OPC Employee Survey

25   The information obtained from the Employee Survey will form the basis of the report on OPC's Workplace Diversity Program provided in OPC's Annual Report.

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1 July 2013

Document History

Release number	Release date	Document number
2.0	2 March 2010	s09am208.v05.docx
3.0	17 October 2012	s09am208.v07.docx
4.0	1 July 2013	s09am208.v09.docx

Attachment A—Other relevant Office Procedural Circulars

26   In OPC, we already have in place a number of plans, policies, practices and procedures contained in Office Procedural Circulars that reflect and embed workplace diversity. This Office Procedural Circular should be read in conjunction with OPC workplace agreements and the following Office Procedural Circulars:

OPC No. 5—Workplace Consultative Committee

OPC No. 6—Participative work practices

OPC No. 11—Reconciliation Action Plan

OPC No. 12—Leave

OPC No. 16—Workforce planning in OPC

OPC No. 18—Equal treatment of same-sex couples and their families

OPC No. 36—Staff Development Plan

OPC No. 37—Managing unsatisfactory performance

OPC No. 38—Health promotion

OPC No. 40—Flex time

OPC No. 41—Resolution of disputes and grievances

OPC No. 49—Employee assistance program

OPC No. 50—Prevention of bullying policy and plan

OPC No. 52—Work Health and Safety Policy and organisational arrangements

OPC No. 59—Performance Management Program for Assistant Drafters

OPC No. 65—Flexible Working Hours

OPC No. 66—Performance Management Program for Corporate Services and Publications staff

OPC No. 78—Recruitment and training of drafters

OPC No. 80—Disability awareness

OPC No. 83—Selection and recruitment policies, practices and procedures

OPC No. 85—Workplace diversity and recruitment matters

OPC No. 87—Performance Management Program for Senior Executive Service Employees