

Policy Title: **Domestic Violence Leave and Support**

Policy No: 266

Directorate: Human Resources

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Adopted Date: General Meeting – 17/11/2015

Review Date: 17/11/2017

VERSION	MEETING APPROVED	MEETING DATE	HISTORY
1	General Meeting	17/11/2015	New Policy, Biennial Review

Authorities: Consistent with Council’s Adopted Enterprise Bargaining Agreement

INTRODUCTION:

North Burnett Regional Council considers that all forms of violence are a violation of fundamental human rights. Violence threatens the victim’s physical health, housing security and mental wellbeing. People exposed to violence are at greater risk of developing a range of health problems, and are more likely to report poorer physical health overall and engage in practices that are harmful to their health. And while family and domestic violence cuts across socio-economic groups, it is reported at higher rates among disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Council recognises that employees may face domestic and family violence that affects their attendance or performance at work. Council is committed to providing leave and other support to staff that experience domestic and family violence.

Domestic and Family violence for the purpose of this policy includes physical, sexual, financial, verbal, psychological, spiritual, or emotional abuse of a person by an immediate family member, or who has been or is in a continuing social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim, or who is or has continually or at regular intervals lived in the same household as the victim.

OBJECTIVES:

To inform all employees of their rights and responsibilities when accessing Domestic Violence Leave and Support. Further to establish consistent standards across all areas of Council.

PRINCIPLES:

1. This document must be read in conjunction with the NBRC Enterprise Bargaining Agreement taking note of any relevant clauses.
2. All employees engage under the North Burnett Regional Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement or Common Law Contracts are eligible to access this support.

SPECIAL LEAVE FOR EMPLOYEES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE:

Full time, part time or fixed term employees personally experiencing domestic and family violence may access up to 10 business days per year of paid Special Leave for medical appointments, legal proceedings, attending to accommodation matters, childcare and education matters and other activities, which are related to domestic and family violence. This leave is non-cumulative and non-transferable and may be taken in units of one hour. Employees may also access Personal Leave or any other form of accrued leave balances for medical appointments, legal proceedings, attending to accommodation matters, addressing childcare and education matters and other activities, related to domestic and family violence.

LEAVE FOR EMPLOYEES SUPPORTING A PERSON EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE:

Employees supporting a person experiencing domestic and family violence may take Personal Leave or any other form of accrued leave to accompany them to court, to hospital, or to assist with childcare, accommodation or other matters.

NOTICE AND NOTIFICATION:

While notice is not strictly required prior to taking the leave, an employee should notify their supervisor, CEO or HR Officer as soon as reasonably practicable of their intention to take or remain on Special or other leave for this purpose. Proof of domestic and family violence may be required and can be a document issued by the Police Service, a Court, a Doctor, a Domestic and Family Violence Support Service or Lawyer.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT:

In order to provide support to an employee experiencing domestic and family violence and to provide a safe work environment, Council will approve any reasonable request from an employee for changes to their span of hours or pattern or hours and/or shift patterns; job redesign or changes to duties; changes to their telephone number or email address to avoid harassing contact; or any other appropriate measure including those available under existing work arrangements.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

An employee experiencing domestic and family violence may raise the issue with their supervisor, the Chief Executive Officer or the Human Resources Officer. The supervisor may seek advice from the Human Resources Officer. All personal information

concerning domestic and family violence will be kept confidential and only shared with employees who have a genuine need to know. No information will be kept on an employee's personnel file without their express written permission.

Council will work collaboratively with the employee who is experiencing domestic violence to develop protocols to restrict access to the employee's personal information and contact details.

ADVERSE ACTION:

No adverse action will be taken against an employee if their attendance or performance at work suffers as a result of experiencing domestic and family violence provided they make a confidential disclosure of the violence to their supervisor or the Human Resources Officer. Council may require evidence of domestic and family violence.

CONTACT PERSON:

Council will identify a contact person who will be trained in domestic violence, discretion and privacy issues. The contact will be in possession of appropriate resources and referral information. The employer will advertise the name of the contact within the workplace and provide the details at induction for new staff.

WORKPLACE SAFETY PLANNING STRATEGIES:

Council will develop and implement workplace safety planning strategies to ensure the protection of all employees. Council will ensure all employees are aware of and trained in the safety planning strategies.

Safety planning can include:

- Accompanying employees to the car park or transport when leaving work.
- Notifying relevant staff not to disclose private information about employees' locations or movements.
- Ensuring employees do not work alone at locations with public access.
- Providing a photo of the abusive person to front desk staff, so that they can identify them and call the police if necessary.
- Policy on workplace violence.
- Strategies to protect employees from abusive phone calls and emails.