

Policy

Function:	GOVERNANCE - CORPORATE
Policy:	ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES
Objective:	Gunnedah Shire Council (Councillors, Staff and Delegates) recognises the need for a agreed upon set of principles that govern behaviour in the transaction of Council business. The purpose of the comprehensive set of principles is the creation and cultivation of a workplace environment that delivers services to the community in the most efficient and effective manner
Application:	This policy applies to Councillors, staff and delegates of Council including volunteers.
Adopted:	<i>Minute No 9.2 Ordinary Meeting 18 July 2007.</i>
Review:	Annually
Pages:	4

1. BACKGROUND

Council recognises the pressures and conflicts that arise in the carrying out of its roles and responsibilities. It also acknowledges the need to address the negative effects of conflict, low morale and significant frustration that occurs in the discharge of the Local Government charter. These unwanted effects derive from a number of factors:

- Provision of a complex and varied range of services.
- Limited resources to meet service requirements.
- Increasing community expectations in service delivery.
- Departmentalisation of Council operations with diminished emphasis on cross functional teamwork.
- Perceived and actual division between the community, Councillors and staff.
- Poor definition and measurement of individual and organisational performance.
- Lack of leadership in defining strategic direction and policy development.
- Lack of understanding of the different roles of Councillors and management.
- Lack of a focus on service delivery to customers with too great an importance placed on personal concerns and personal power and influence.
- Tendency toward factionism and division rather than unity and teamwork.
- Focus on meeting individual, group or departmental wants rather than corporate needs and charter. This problem partly stems from a failure to see the need for a corporate direction and focus.
- Diminution of personal trust and respect which undermines cooperation and impacts on overall performance.

The combination of one or more of these factors impacts on the level of cooperation, morale and performance and inevitably on public opinion or organisational image. It is crucial to understand that all of these factors are self and mutually reinforcing. The presence of any one or more of these factors reinforces these and other negative factors. For example lack of respect and trust impacts on performance, creates division and itself breeds further lack of trust and ultimately leads to a range of other negative attitudes or behaviours. Such an environment is not conducive to the development of positive attributes that foster honesty, trust, performance and customer service. An organisation that spends much of its time fighting conflict is not capable of satisfactory performance.

Conversely attributes such as trust, respect, cooperation, teamwork, communication, support, honesty and integrity are mutually supportive and will result in an organisational culture that has the respect of the community. Such an organisation will have a propensity to perform at a significantly higher level.

The purpose of the introduction of principles is to break this self and mutually reinforcing negative cycle and improve operations.

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2. BENEFITS OF ADOPTED PRINCIPLES

- Direct communication to the community of expected staff and Councillor performance and behaviour;
- Improved communication in relation to Council business;
- A set of standards that is understood by Councillors, staff and the community;
- A set of principles that provides direction in service delivery including identification of community needs, setting of performance standards, measurement of performance and an emphasis on outcome focus.
- A focus on strategic or long term planning and the future;
- A focus on community consultation as an important part of decision making;
- Respect for the roles and responsibilities of Councillors, Managers and employees;
- Acceptance of the principle of continuous improvement through awareness and promotion of best practice and industry standards.
- A corporate approach that cultivates professionalism.
- Development of a sense of trust, support, cooperation between Councillors, staff and community and an overall environment of confidence and optimism.

3. ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The following principles have been adopted by Staff and Councillors.

3.1 COUNCILLORS

We as Councillors agree to uphold the following principles to facilitate organisational performance and excellence in customer service:

- Delivery of **efficient and effective services** to the community.
- Introduction and maintenance of **a leadership role in policy making and strategic planning** with minimal involvement in operational matters.
- **Respect for the diversity of views** and opinions held by fellow elected members, staff and members of the community.
- Ensuring decisions made by Councillors relate to the **facts and merit** of the case and not hearsay and personal bias.
- **Provide support for decisions** made by Council in the broader community.
- **Respect the role of Management** and staff in day-to-day operation of the organisation and support for the General Manager and staff in this statutory role.
- **Communicate immediately** and directly to Senior Staff maintenance and other issues that are identified.
- Cultivate and support an **environment of trust, honesty, integrity and cooperation**.
- Upholding Council's **Code of Conduct** and adopted principles.
- Undertake **early and ongoing consultation with the community** in matters of policy setting, strategic planning, Management Plan preparation and **decision making that affects the community**.
- **Monitoring of Council service delivery** against community expectations and performance criteria.
- Taking of all possible measures to **represent the community** to achieve **appropriate service levels**.
- **Provision of resources** to allow for effective operation of the organization.
- Adoption of an approach where staff and Councillors operate in a **team environment** with common objectives and goals.
- Taking of a corporate and community view in decision making that acknowledges individual or group needs but weighs these up against broader strategic and wider community needs and priorities.
- **Respect for the sound professional advice** of staff or consultants.
- Uphold principles of **continuous improvement** with substantial time spent on questioning existing practice and identifying ways to improve service delivery.

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- **Demonstrate respect and courtesy** towards fellow Councillors, staff and members of the community with any response and decisions centered on the issues at hand and not on individuals at a personal level.

Key elements: efficient and effective service delivery, strategic leadership, operational matters left to management, community consultation, respect for the views and roles of others, defining and monitoring service delivery, teamwork and communication, merit based decisions, Code of Conduct, continuous improvement and respect for advice.

3.2 MANAGEMENT

The following principles have been adopted by MANEX:

We as Managers agree to uphold the following principles to facilitate organisational performance and excellence in customer service:

- Delivery of **efficient and effective services** to the community.
- Provide **support for decisions** made by Council in the broader community.
- Implementation in an **efficient and effective manner** policy and strategic direction provided by Council.
- Develop and encourage **effective communication** with staff, Councillors and the community.
- Cultivation of an environment of **trust, honesty, integrity and cooperation**.
- Upholding of Council's **Code of Conduct** and adopted principles.
- **Assisting Council** in all ways to develop and define strategic directions to achieve community service levels.
- Provision of timely and accurate advice to Council on Council matters including **best practice, legislation and guidelines**.
- **Show leadership and effective management** in environmental, building and planning services, engineering services, financial services, human resource management, social and economic development and corporate governance.
- Taking of all possible measures to **represent the community** to achieve appropriate service levels.
- Undertake **early and ongoing consultation** with the community in matters of policy setting, strategic planning, Management Plan preparation and decision making that affects the community.
- Define and **monitor effectiveness** of delivery of services to the community.
- Adopt an approach where staff and Councillors operate in a **team environment** with common **objectives and goals**.
- **Take a corporate** and community view in decision making that acknowledges departmental, individual or group needs but weighs these up against broader corporate and wider community needs and priorities.
- Apply the principles of **risk management** to all activities undertaken.
- Encouragement of excellence in **customer service**.
- Adoption of **best practice** across all organizational functions.
- Ensure decisions made by Management relate to the **facts and merit** of the case and not hearsay and personal bias.
- **Recruitment of employees based on merit** including ability to adapt to change, multi-skills, qualifications, experience, desire for improvement, motivation in relation to performance, leadership and corporate focus.
- **Demonstrate respect and courtesy** towards Councillors, fellow staff and members of the community with any response and decisions centered on the issues at hand and not on individuals at a personal level.

Key elements: efficiency and effectiveness, timely and accurate advice, cultivate communication, leadership in service delivery, community consultation, define and measure performance, risk management, customer service, team work, Code of Conduct, merit based decisions, continuous improvement and best practice.

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3.3 WORKPLACE PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide employees in the workplace and **have been adopted by MANEX** to facilitate organisational performance and excellence in customer service:

- **Respect by all staff** for management in their decision making role.
- **Provide support** for decisions made by Council in the broader community.
- **Respect by Management** of the views and valuable input by staff at all levels. Management to develop and **facilitate participatory decision making** to include staff at all levels within the organisation.
- **Effective communication** up and down the lines of responsibility and across functional areas. This includes the **sharing of information** to improve service delivery.
- **Taking of initiative** by all staff within their delegations and levels of responsibility.
- **Strong customer focus** with resources directed to identification and meeting of customer needs.
- Upholding Council's **Code of Conduct** and adopted principles.
- **Defining and monitoring staff performance** against set criteria including key responsibilities, duties and performance criteria contained in position descriptions.
- **Nurture training** and tertiary studies as means of improving skills and knowledge including emphasis on training staff internally.
- **Recruitment of staff based on merit** including ability to adapt to change, multi-skill and show leadership, interest and energy at work.
- Adoption of an approach that encourages **job extension and enrichment**, succession planning and career opportunities and development.
- Adoption of an approach that provides **reward for high levels of performance**.
- Uphold principles of **continuous improvement** with substantial time spent on questioning existing practice and identifying ways to improve service delivery.
- Performance of duties to high level of **efficiency and effectiveness**.
- Management to develop and **facilitate participatory decision making** to include employees at all levels within the organisation.
- **Recruitment of employees based on merit** including ability to adapt to change, multi-skills, qualifications, experience, desire for improvement, motivation in relation to performance, leadership and corporate focus.
- **Communicate immediately** to appropriate Supervisors or Managers safety and operational matters issues.
- Follow sound **OH&S practice**.
- Staff to exercise duties in an **efficient and effective** manner.
- Require staff to **demonstrate respect and courtesy** towards Councillors, fellow staff and members of the community with any response and decisions centered on the issues at hand and not on individuals at the personal level.

Key elements: Mutual respect, career development and opportunities, communication, initiative and continuous improvement, customer services, workplace performance management, staff recruitment, workplace safety, fostering of competency and skills and reward for performance.

4. BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Council holds strong views regarding compliance with this policy, which it considers to be the guide to corporate behaviour and outcomes. Breaches of the policy will result in immediate action by the General Manager or his delegates in relation to staff matters or the Mayor and /or Deputy Mayor in relation to Councillors.