

Coonamble Shire Council

Plan for Implementation of Recommendations of ICAC

Investigation into attempted corrupt payment and submission of false resumes to public authorities

Recommendation 1.

That Coonamble Shire Council ensures that:

- a) adequate employment screening checks are performed on preferred applicants in line with the current Australian Standard on Employment Screening (AS 4811-2006) and
- b) applicants for positions complete a form indicating that:
 - they consent to employment screening checks being conducted upon them
 - the information provided in support of their application is true and
 - they acknowledge that any employment or offer of employment may be withdrawn if they have provided false support in support of their application.

Summary of response

The recommendation will be:

- Implemented as described in the report

Action proposed

For recruitment to positions of Manager and above:

- a) Engage a recognised screening agency to carry out screening checks in line with AS4811-2006. In respect of employment history the check is to cover the past ten years' employment.
- b) Ensure a suitable form is completed by applicants confirming that:
 - they consent to employment screening checks being conducted on them; and
 - the Information provided in support of their application is true; and
 - they acknowledge that any employment or offer of employment may be withdrawn if they have provided false information in support of their application.

Council has moved to restructure its workforce to create a Human Resources Manager position to address all issues relating to recruitment and staff management issues. This position will be tasked to ensure that best practice processes are developed and implemented in relation to staff issues at Council. Council believes the position will be filled by the end of October 2011 and the appropriate policies developed by the end of 2011.

Supporting material

Council will introduce a recruitment and selection policy and procedures in December 2011.

Council's proposed recruitment and selection policy will require independent employment screening be carried out for positions at levels of Manager and above.

Recruitment procedures will include the receipt of confirmation from the recommended applicant for the position that all information provided is correct. The procedure will require receipt of consent for employment screening and acknowledgement that false claims will lead to any offer of employment being withdrawn and referral of the matter to the appropriate authority for investigation.

Proposed evaluation method

The screening agency will be required to provide a report to the Human Resources Manager demonstrating that screening checks have been performed in line with AS4811-2006. The Human Resources Manager shall, on a test basis, verify independently the accuracy of the information provided and that all checks required under the standard have been completed appropriately. These processes outlined above will be detailed in Council's recruitment and selection policy and procedures due for introduction in December 2011. Council will review the effectiveness of the policy and procedures on a biennial basis.

Recommendation 2.

That Coonamble Shire Council engage the use of an employment screening company if they are recruiting senior staff and are having difficulty in verifying the information supplied by the preferred applicant.

Summary of response

The recommendation will be:

- Implemented in an alternative way

Action proposed

For recruitment to positions of Manager and above:

- Engage a recognised screening agency to carry out screening checks in line with AS4811-2006.
- In respect of employment history, the check is to cover the past ten years' prior employment.
- Council currently only has one senior staff position as defined by *the Local Government Act 1993*, that is the position of General Manager. Positions considered senior in nature due to the responsibility carried are referred to as Director and Manager positions within Council's structure.

Supporting material

Council will introduce a recruitment and selection policy and procedures in December 2011.

Proposed evaluation method

The screening agency will be required to provide a report to the Human Resources Manager demonstrating that screening checks have been performed in line with AS4811-2006, indicating how information has been verified and identifying any information supplied by the candidate that could not be verified. The Human Resources Manager will review the supplied report to ensure that there is sufficient verification of information as required by the standard.

These processes outlined above will be detailed in Council's recruitment and selection policy and procedures due for introduction in December 2011. Council will review the effectiveness of the policy and procedures on a biennial basis.

Recommendation 3.

That Coonamble Shire Council ensures that it knows and is satisfied with the:

- a) verification checks performed by professional bodies before it relies on membership of them as evidence of a candidate's skills or experience and
- b) process used in relation to a migrant skills assessment before it relies on that assessment as evidence of a candidate's skills or experience.

Summary of response

The recommendation will be:

- Implemented in an alternative way

Action proposed

In respect of a candidate, Council will rely on verified qualifications and past experience rather than on membership of professional bodies as proof of qualifications and vocational skills.

Where Council decides that membership of a professional body is relevant or where a candidate relies on membership of a professional body or on a particular membership status as evidence of their skills and experience, the Human Resources Manager or a reputable employment screening organisation will be engaged to document and provide full information on the verification checks performed by the professional body when it assessed the candidate's application for membership or conferred a particular membership status on the member .

In some cases, where an applicant has overseas qualifications and experience and has been required to undergo a migrant skills assessment, it may be necessary for the Human Resources Manager or a reputable screening company to identify and describe how the migrant skills assessment was conducted to ensure that such an assessment provides adequate evidence of claimed skills and experience.

A review of the information gathered in the above processes will be conducted to determine if the claimed membership or membership status and/or if the migrant skills assessment can be reasonably relied upon as evidence of the candidate's skills or experience. The review will be carried out by: Directors for Manager positions, the General Manager for director positions and the Mayor for the General Manager position. The Human Resources Manager will be able to provide assistance if required.

Supporting material

The process for the above verification checks for positions of Manager and above will be included within the proposed recruitment and selection policy and procedures.

Proposed evaluation method

Council will require full documentation from the employment screening organisation on all checks undertaken on Council's behalf. These will be reviewed to ensure they meet Council's requirements.

These processes outlined above will be detailed in Council's recruitment and selection policy and procedures due for introduction in December 2011. Council will review the effectiveness of the policy and procedures on a biennial basis.

Recommendation 4.

That Coonamble Shire Council:

- a) obtains consent from employment applicants to verify memberships or other status that they claim to hold with professional bodies and
- b) ensures that this consent has been provided to these professional bodies.

Summary of response

The recommendation will be:

- Implemented in an alternative way

Action proposed

- a) Where a decision is made to consider the professional memberships of a candidate, written consent will be obtained from the candidate to confirm the details of their membership and other status directly with the issuing professional body. This consent will be provided to the professional body as required to obtain the necessary information.

Supporting material

The proposed recruitment and selection policy and procedures will set out the process for obtaining consent and confirming membership and other status directly with professional bodies.

Proposed evaluation method

Recruitment and selection policy and procedures reflect that evidence of professional associations shall not be definitive as evidence of qualifications and skills in the selection process.