

	EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICY	
	CATEGORY:	COUNCIL POLICY
	SP CLASSIFICATION:	HR
	LG ACT 2019 REF:	Section 173
	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1. PURPOSE

Wagait Shire Council recognises that an employee's performance can be affected by mental distress and illness resulting from issues in their work or personal life and is committed to assisting employees in dealing with these issues. The objective of this policy is to provide the means by which employees and elected members can access counselling.

2. SCOPE

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is provided by Wagait Shire Council to provide confidential counselling and guidance for employees, elected members, and their families, relating to issues that are affecting work performance such as:

- marriage and family problems;
- interpersonal relationships;
- grief and loss;
- stress and trauma;
- alcohol and drug dependency;
- financial and legal problems;
- other work related issues, such as injury, disciplinary action, re-deployment, or redundancy;
- gambling problems; or
- life threatening illness.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Employee	Permanent, fulltime, part-time casual and volunteer employees of Wagait Shire Council.

4. POLICY

Employee Assistance Services Australia (EASA) have been contracted to provide the Employee Assistance Program to all Wagait Shire Council employees, elected members, and their family members. Wagait Shire Council will meet the costs of up to 3 counselling sessions per year per employee or elected member.

The Employee Assistance Program emphasises a positive approach to and allows time for the

employee or elected member to overcome their problems without adverse consequences to their status or employment or promotional opportunities.

A vital feature of this program is the high level of confidentiality and respect for the individual employee/elected member’s privacy. EASA will not identify employees/elected members directly by name and any information shared with EASA will not be communicated unless expressly authorised by the employee/elected member.

Should an employee elect to attend EASA services during normal work time, their supervisor/manager will coordinate the appropriate time off work, leave or approach to be taken. The responsibility for following any course of action as an outcome of the EASA sessions, rests with the individual employee/elected member.

Employees/elected members can book counselling sessions directly with EASA on Freecall 1800 193 123.

5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Council Staff Code of Conduct
- Human Resources Policy
- Dispute Resolution, Counselling, Discipling and Dismissal
- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy

6. REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

- Local Government Industry Award 2020*
- Local Government Act 2019 (NT)*
- Work Health and Safety (WHZS) Act 2011*
- Fair Work Act 2009*
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*

7. REVIEW HISTORY

Date Approved 18/05/2021	Approved By Council Moved: President Neil White Seconded: Vice President Tom Dyer Vote: AIF/Carried	Resolution # 2021/072	Date for review 2022
Date Approved 18/01/2022	Approved By Council Moved: Vice President Tom Dyer Seconded: Cr Noeletta McKenzie Vote: AIF/Carried	Resolution # 2022/013	Date for review 2023
Date Approved 17/01/2023	Approved By Council Moved: Cr Peter Clee Seconded: President Neil White Vote: AIF/Carried	Resolution # 2023/009	Date for review Next council election