

	<b>COVID-19 &amp; INFECTIOUS DISEASES RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	
	CATEGORY:	GOVERNANCE
	LG ACT 2019 REF:	Section 172 (e)
	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## 1. PURPOSE

The 2020-22 Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic created unique challenges for all workplaces, particularly with respect to workplace health and safety. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all steps are taken, as are reasonably practicable, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and other highly infectious diseases within the workplace.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all workplace participants of Wagait Shire Council in providing clear direction and a safe working environment during their employment.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
<b>Workplace participants</b>	Includes the Chief Executive Officer, full-time and part-time staff members, casual employees, volunteers and contractors.
<b>The Act</b>	Means the NT Work Health and Safety Act 2011
<b>Reasonably practicable</b>	Means what could reasonably be done at a particular time to ensure health and safety measures are in place (as defined by The Act)

## 4. POLICY

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented and exceptional circumstances, and the public service workplace is now acknowledged as a high-risk environment for infectious diseases in these circumstances. Wagait Shire Council understands the need to exercise flexibility and reasonableness in all decision-making processes with regards to mitigating risks due to highly infectious diseases and pandemics.

Council will ensure it meets its statutory and governance obligations in accordance with the requirements of the *NT Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Council will also ensure its actions in response to infectious diseases do not contravene anti-discrimination or privacy legislation.

Given the rapidly changing nature of infectious diseases, this policy will enable Council to rapidly introduce preventative safety measures to help protect the health and safety of its workplace participants.

As new information regarding infectious diseases becomes available, Council will carefully

review the effectiveness of the controls it has in place to ensure they comply with the most up-to-date health advice.

#### **4.1. Work Health & Safety Obligations**

Wagait Shire Council recognises its duty to provide and maintain a safe workplace environment, which limits so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk to health and safety at work associated with infectious diseases. This includes the risk of contracting highly infectious diseases in the workplace or while carrying out duties.

Council will actively take steps to:

- Identify and monitor risks to health and safety resulting from infectious diseases in the workplace
- Provide adequate equipment and facilities to workplace participants to ensure they can carry out their duties safely
- Provide information, training and supervision that is necessary to protect workplace participants from the risks of infectious diseases in the workplace
- Monitor the health and conditions of all workplace participants and undertake risk assessments where required; and
- Inform workplace participants of their obligation in taking reasonable care of their own health and safety.

#### **4.2. Risk Mitigation**

Safe Work Australia has recognised that employers will not be able to completely eliminate the risk of workers contracting highly infectious diseases while carrying out work.

However, in accordance with The Act, employers must do all that is reasonably practicable to introduce appropriate control measures, implement the control measures and clearly communicate them to all workers.

What is 'reasonably practicable' requires a number of considerations, including the likelihood of the risk occurring, the degree of harm that might result, and the availability and sustainability of a control measure.

Wagait Shire Council will, where possible and practical to do so, implement the following measures and flexible arrangements to help minimise the risk of coronavirus in the workplace:

- Directing and/or allowing some workplace employees to work from home
- Providing flexible leave arrangements
- Implementing controls to reduce direct contact with clients, including, enforcing social distancing of at least 1.5 metres (where practicable)
- Reinforcing hand washing/hand hygiene and infection control procedures
- Providing workplace participants with adequate equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks
- Providing workplace participants with access to Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) or other appropriate self-testing tools

- Implementing controls to reduce environmental exposure, including cleaning and disinfection of high traffic areas or shared surfaces
- Providing sufficient cleaning products and instructions for cleaning
- Providing instruction and amenities for personal hygiene and infection control
- Providing workplace participants with information and additional training in infection prevention and control and use of personal protective equipment; and
- Providing workplace participants with access to counselling through the Employee Assistance Services (EAP) scheme.

## 5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- P05 Council Staff Code of Conduct
- P07 Employee Assistance Services
- P33 Work Health and Safety Policy
- WSC Employee Manual 2021

## 6. REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

*Local Government Act (NT) 2019*  
*Work Health and Safety Act (NT) 2011*  
*Anti-Discrimination Act (NT) 1992*  
*Information Act (NT) 2002*  
*Fair Work Act*

## 7. REVIEW HISTORY

<b>Date Approved:</b> 21/02/2023	<b>Approved By Council</b> Moved: Cr Sarah Smith Seconded: President Neil White Vote: AIF	<b>Resolution No.</b> 2023/29	<b>Date for review:</b> January 2024 or as required
<b>Date Approved:</b> 19/03/2024	<b>Approved By Council</b> Moved: Cr P Clee Seconded: President N White Vote: AIF	<b>Resolution No.</b> 2024/056	<b>January 2025 or as required</b>