



Policy Title: **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(EAP) POLICY**

Policy Type: **HUMAN RESOURCES**
(Statutory, Financial, Administrative, Human Resources)

Policy Number: **HR005**

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Corporate Services		Human Resources Manager	
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1. Policy Background/Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Aurukun Shire Council.

It is to provide appropriate, consistent and equitable assistance and support to all employees experiencing problems and/or difficulties either personal or work related.

2. Policy Provisions

Council will offer a short-term external professional and confidential telephone counselling through the Employee Assistance Program to assist employees who may need help with particular work or personal issues affecting their health, safety, wellbeing and / or work performance.

Employees attend Employee Assistance Program telephone counselling services on a voluntary basis. The services may also be accessed on a face to face basis where an employee is either residing or visiting Cairns.

Employee Assistance Program Services may be used for assistance with resolving any problems relating to, but not restricted to, the following that may be causing concern to an employee:

- Stress and anxiety
- Financial or legal concerns
- Interpersonal conflict
- Gambling, drug, alcohol and other addictions
- Grief bereavement and loss
- Bullying, harassment and abuse
- Concern over work related issues.

3. Confidentiality

The Employee Assistance Program service will respect the privacy of the user and will remain confidential where possible.

Promoting a safe and trusting environment is critical to the success of the service therefore the privacy of employees seeking help will be enforced to the best of Council's ability. Any information concerning the employee obtained through Duty of Care processes, will be restricted in its use and only be used in the best interest of the employee.

4. Participation

Participation in the Employee Assistance Program telephone counselling services is on a voluntary basis. It is the employee's decision to seek help.

An employee has the right to decline an offer of referral to the Employee Assistance Program.

The Employee Assistance Program can only be accessed through the Human Resources Manager.

Fellow employees who know about the program and who are aware of situations where the program can help, may suggest that the Employee Assistance Program may be of help.

Employees may be granted time off to attend an Employee Assistance Program telephone counselling session during normal working hours. This may be taken as sick leave. Employees will need to consult with their Manager/Supervisor to determine a suitable time.

5. Cost for the EAP

Employees are entitled to receive three (3) telephone counselling sessions per annum at no cost to the employee. If further telephone sessions are required, the service provider will contact Aurukun Shire Council on a strictly confidential basis, to request permission to undertake these further sessions and these requests will be considered on a case by case basis by the Chief Executive Officer.

In some instances, the counsellor may suggest referral to a specialised service to address specific issues, for example a solicitor, medical practitioner, accountant etc. Costs if applicable for these services are the employee's responsibilities. It is the employee's choice whether or not to accept such a referral. Every attempt will be made to refer the employee to agencies that meet any specific needs and are affordable.

6. Employee Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the employee to:

- a) Seek the assistance of the Employee Assistance Program where he/she feels there is a need.
- b) Be open to suggestion of a referral to the Employee Assistance Program where the suggestion is clearly in the best interest of the employee
- c) Seek approval from their Manager/Supervisor when such leave is required for a phone appointment with the Employee Assistance Program during work hours.

7. Manager/Supervisor Responsibility

Where work performance or safety is being affected by a personal problem of an employee, a Manager/Supervisor/ Human Resources Manager may assist by suggesting the option of counselling to an employee by way of a free and confidential telephone counselling service via the Employee Assistance Program.

The Manager/Supervisor/Human Resources Manager will provide contact details to an employee to make an appointment for a telephone counselling session, or where the employee does not wish to make initial phone contact with the Employee Assistance Program provider, the responsible Manager/Supervisor or Human Resources Manager may be required to arrange initial contact.

It is the responsibility of the Manager/ Supervisor to:

- a) Suggest the service of the Employee Assistance Program phone counselling service to employees where there is evidence of a personal problem;
- b) Arrange for Human Resource Manager to contact the Employee Assistance Program for urgent phone counselling assistance in the event of a traumatic or threatening incident in the workplace.
- c) If the referral is as a result of a workplace incident, ensure an incident report is completed according to Aurukun Shire Council's relevant policy
- d) Respect the privacy of employees who have requested to utilise the Employee Assistance Program counselling service.

8. Further Information

For further information and advice on the services of the Employee Assistance Program, please contact your Manager/Supervisor, Human Resource Manager or Workplace Health and Safety Officer.

9. Related Documentation

Work Health and Safety Policy