



# Support For Employees Affected By Domestic And Family Violence Policy

## 1. PURPOSE

To provide information on the support and options available for Balonne Shire Council ("Council") employees who are affected by domestic and family violence.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to employees of Balonne Shire Council. Part-time employees will have leave provisions applied pro-rata.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

Domestic and family violence has the same meaning as domestic violence as defined in the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012.

## 4. POLICY

Balonne Shire Council is strongly committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all employees. It is recognised that employees sometimes face difficult situations in their work and personal life, such as domestic and family violence, that may affect their attendance, performance at work or safety.

Domestic and Family Violence occurs when one person in a relationship uses violence and abuse to maintain power and control over the other person. This can include behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening, coercive or aimed at controlling or dominating the other person through fear. Domestic and Family Violence can affect people of all cultures, religions, ages, genders, sexual orientations, educational backgrounds and income levels.

Balonne Shire Council leaders, managers, supervisors and all employees are committed to making Balonne Shire Council a great place to work. Balonne Shire Council can make a significant difference to employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence by providing appropriate safety and support measures.

Domestic and Family Violence is unacceptable in any setting, including the workplace. Any Balonne Shire Council employee who perpetrates violence and abuse from the workplace, including by telephone, fax, mail, email, internet or social media may be subject to disciplinary action.

All employees have a responsibility to follow the code of conduct, promoting a work environment free from any form of violence and supporting those who are affected by Domestic and Family Violence. Fostering a workplace culture where employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence are supported in the workplace, contributes to a healthy and safe working environment for all.

## 5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

Balonne Shire Council employees have the right to choose whether, when and to whom they disclose information about being affected by Domestic and Family Violence. This policy does not override any legal obligations to disclose information. Information disclosed by an employee in relation to Domestic and Family Violence will be kept confidential, except to the extent that disclosure is required or permitted by law.

---

Document No. >> 35253, Version No.1

Adopted by >> Council

Authorised by >> Director, Finance & Corporate Services

Current Date of Adoption: 21 September 2017

Next Review Date>> 20 September 2021



## Support For Employees Affected By Domestic And Family Violence Policy

### 6. AWARENESS RAISING

Balonne Shire Council will provide awareness training on Domestic violence. All employees are strongly encouraged to complete the program. Council will also ensure that information on support options are made available to employees.

### 7. SUPPORT OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES

There are a number of support options available to assist employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence. In relation to clauses 7.3 to 7.6, these arrangements should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that they are appropriate.

#### 7.1 Documentation

When considering the support options outlined below:

- a) Proof of family domestic violence may be required, and can be in the form of an agreed document issued by the police service, a court, a doctor, district nurse, counsellor, a Family Domestic Violence Support Service, lawyer or a statutory declaration from the employee.
- b) any related communications must be conducted in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner. Any documentation sighted must be returned to the employee unless the employee requests otherwise.

#### 7.2 Leave entitlement

- a) A Balonne Shire Council full time employee - not a casual, who is affected by Domestic Family Violence is entitled to 10 days per year of paid leave. A long term casual employee is entitled to 10 days per year unpaid leave, and a short term casual employee is entitled to 2 days per year unpaid leave.
- b) The reasons may include, but are not limited to, attending medical, legal, police or counselling appointments; attending court and other legal proceedings; and organising alternative accommodation and care or education arrangements for the purposes of attending to matters arising from Domestic Family Violence or supporting the person affected by Domestic and Family Violence.
- c) Leave should be granted where the Chief Executive Officer is satisfied that the employee requires leave because the employee is affected by Domestic and Family Violence.
- d) The employee does not have to use other leave entitlements before accessing this leave. This leave can be taken as consecutive days, single days or a fraction of a day.  
The employee may also access further paid or unpaid leave, including sick/ carers leave or other accrued time to attend to matters arising from Domestic and Family Violence -this will be in accordance with the Industrial Relations Act 2016.

#### 7.3 Work performance and attendance

- a) Work performance or attendance may be influenced by factors not connected with work. Employees will be supported and encouraged to raise concerns about their personal circumstances, including whether Domestic and Family Violence is a contributing factor to work performance and attendance.



## Support For Employees Affected By Domestic And Family Violence Policy

- b) It may also be necessary to include additional support and provide reasonable workplace and role adjustments for a period of time. Regular reviews, a return to work plan and a performance improvement process may still be required.

### 7.4 Flexible working arrangements

Balonne Shire Council will provide employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence with access to flexible working arrangements. Employees are encouraged to discuss their request for flexible working arrangements with their managers in the first instance.

### 7.5 Counselling support services

Balonne Shire Council will offer the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to all employees and their immediate family members. The EAP offers free and confidential support services through face-to-face, telephone and online counselling.

### 7.6 Other workplace support and role adjustments

Balonne Shire Council may also consider:

- a) Workplace safety needs and arrangements to protect the employee and colleagues following a risk assessment, including increased security measures
- b) Supporting employees to have the workplace included in a domestic violence order issued by the courts, where appropriate.
- c) Providing other support and reasonable adjustments in the workplace, such as:
- Job redesign or changes to duties
  - Changes to working hours or patterns of work
  - Alternative suitable employment in other teams, offices and locations, where appropriate
  - Changes to email address and telephone numbers
  - Secure parking.

## 8. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 8.1 Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors

- Model behavior that promotes a work environment free from any form of violence
- Actively participate in Domestic and Family Violence related learning and development activities to effectively communicate and manage any domestic violence arising in the workplace
- Encourage employees to actively participate in Domestic and Family Violence related learning and development activities
- Sensitively communicate with employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence
- Take prompt and appropriate action to address any reports of employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence
- Ensure appropriate levels of support are provided to employees affected by Domestic and Family Violence
- Ensure appropriate management of work performance and monitoring of attendance issues.



## Support For Employees Affected By Domestic And Family Violence Policy

### 8.2 Responsibilities of all Council employees

- Model behavior that promotes a work environment free from any form of violence
- Actively participate in Domestic and Family Violence related learning and development activities
- Sensitively communicate with colleagues affected by Domestic and Family Violence
- Ensure colleagues are aware of available support services and encourage colleagues to seek assistance.

### 9. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Industrial Relations Act 2016

### 10. RESOURCES

- Domestic Family Violence Fact Sheet
- Domestic and Family Violence Referral Pack
- <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/end-domestic-family-violence/resources>