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POLICY

PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to affirm Centacare Cairns commitment to raising awareness about racism; assisting all members of staff to recognise and value the cultural diversity within the organisation; and to work in anti-racist and culturally competent ways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

SCOPE
This policy applies to “all members of staff” which is the common term used throughout the policy. Nonetheless this policy applies to:
- All members of staff regardless of their status as full-time, maximum-term, casual, part-time or sessional;
- Volunteers;
- Individuals who enter into specific relationships with Centacare Cairns for any period of time, for example, student placements and work experience.

AWARENESS OF POLICY
Centacare Cairns supports staff to meet the obligations set out in this policy through the following mechanisms:
- Clear and explicit policies and work instructions
- Training and education
- Staff Supervision
- IQBM II
Staff requiring further explanation, information or assistance in understanding aspects of this policy, throughout their employment, shall seek clarification from their line Supervisor.

DEFINITIONS

Anti-Racism The goal of anti-racism is having equal and reasonable privilege granted to all people regardless of race. Anti-racism is misapplied when it is reduced to the presence of good will or good intent alone. Anti-racism in this context involves a commitment resulting in conscious and strategic action(s).

Cross-cultural competency An awareness and ability to communicate, collaborate and understand a person’s needs and context: it requires a high degree of self-awareness.

Culture
- Culture is learned, shared and constantly changing.
- Culture incorporates all aspects of our lives both conscious and unconscious, material and non-material and therefore affects how we behave, perceive things and adapt to the world

Cultural competence Cultural competence is not a position to be at but a continuum, a way of working and operating which continually seeks to improve and respond more effectively to cultural diversity. An integrated approach to increasing cultural competence requires change within individuals and organisations. Cultural competence is not a position to be at but a continuum, a way of working and operating which continually seeks to improve and respond more effectively to cultural diversity. An integrated approach to increasing cultural competence requires change within individuals and organisations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies....consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing.
**Racism** The act of treating a person unfairly because of their race, colour, nationality, descent, ethnicity or ethno-religious background. Racial harassment, a form of discrimination, is any form of unwelcome, unsolicited and unreciprocated behaviour that denigrates someone, offends or humiliates on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, descent, ethnicity or ethno-religious background. Institutional racism is racial prejudice supported by institutional power and authority used to the advantage of one race, over others.

**Racist Behaviour** Any hostile or offensive act or expression by a person of one racial or ethnic origin against a person of another, or incitement to commit such an act. Such behaviour may involve derogatory name-calling, insults and racist jokes, racist graffiti, verbal abuse and threats, and ridicule of an individual for cultural differences in such matters as religion, dress, food or music.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Executive Director, Centacare Cairns is responsible for the overall development and continuous improvement of this policy. Managers, Team Leaders and Coordinators are responsible for the appropriate and consistent implementation of this policy.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Centacare Cairns is committed to the equal treatment of all people regardless of their race, colour, nationality, descent, ethnicity or ethno-religious background in accordance with the **Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)**, the **Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)** and the **Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)**. All types of racial discrimination, harassment and vilification are unlawful and the agency is required by legislation to ensure that they are addressed and eliminated.

This policy expresses the agency’s unconditional rejection of racist behaviour and its commitment to eliminate racism in its organisational structure and to take steps towards cross-cultural competency. Centacare Cairns, in its commitment to the goal of freedom from racial discrimination, whether it is direct and/or indirect racism, racial vilification and harassment; will, in its structures, culture, values and working environment:

- Protect the rights of clients to achieve their full potential through service delivery that is accessible, equitable, anti-racist and culturally appropriate;
- Protect the rights of members of staff to achieve their full potential through encouraging the affirmation of the cultural identities of individual staff;
- Continue to develop and implement policies and programs to counteract the causes; and redress the effects of racism in this organisational context;
- Ensure that all members of staff have a knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities in the implementation of this policy;
- Encourage an organisational culture that respects cultural difference and diversity, including measures that support and facilitate effective and harmonious cross-cultural teams.

Centacare Cairns recognises that working in anti-racist and culturally appropriate ways requires an ongoing procedure of development and learning for all members of staff.

Centacare Cairns is committed to increasing its number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse staff and its culturally diverse workplace.
PROCEDURE

Centacare Cairns enacts this policy through the following procedures:

Policy Implementation

- Management are accountable for ensuring that all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and rights in a culturally diverse organisation.
- Management will take responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented fully, and supporting members of staff to develop their knowledge of anti-racist and cross-cultural competencies by providing appropriate professional development and learning opportunities. Such knowledge and skills will enable staff to interact with, and operate effectively both within their teams and in a diverse community.
- Management will promote workplace practices that are consistent with the needs of a socially and culturally diverse staff community, and specifically recognise the cultural and religious obligations of staff, in order to support, promote, cultivate and encourage harmonious cross-cultural teams within Centacare.
- Management will create a climate that expects and encourages all members of staff to respect and welcome cultural differences, and a range of cultural value systems.
- Facilitate a management culture which values and promotes cultural and linguistic diversity, and competency in managing diversity.
- Encourage the contribution and participation of members of staff from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds in all aspects of work life at Centacare.

Anti-Racist and Cross Cultural Competence

Whilst it can be challenging for members of staff to have knowledge of all cultural practices and diversities, an anti-racist and cross-cultural framework should be a consistent element of practice and underpins cross-cultural competency. This policy reflects a strong commitment to anti-racism and cross-cultural competency, which requires staff to:

- Develop cross-cultural and anti-racist competencies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Recognise and understand the historical, structural and institutional basis of racism
- Understand the ways in which current social, political and economic structures can perpetuate racism
- Understand the adverse consequences of racism for individuals, families and communities
- Understand the ways in which racism intersects with other forms of oppression, for example, sexism
- Identify and eliminate systemic discrimination in Centacare policies, practices and procedures
- Assist in the development of policies, practices and procedures that reflect the identified needs of a diverse community
- Challenge racism and discrimination in all its forms
- Develop and participate in positive and effective cross-cultural teams
- Collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural service providers to refer clients on, where this may be more appropriate, and develop services that facilitate appropriate access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and linguistically diverse client groups.

Working in cross-cultural teams will merge people of low context/individualistic perspectives and high context/collectivist perspectives meaning there will be different values, beliefs and skills. All members of staff need to be aware of and value these differences and make efforts to...
accommodate each other to ensure cohesive and effective teams that operate congruently with Centacare’s mission and values. See Extended Definitions And Concepts guide.

Use of interpreters
Refer to Interpreting Services.

Recruitment
Employment equity is concerned with eliminating unlawful discrimination and creating a work environment in which target group members can participate in employment opportunities and pursue careers as effectively as others. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) groups are people affected by past or continuing disadvantage or discrimination in employment. As a result they may be more likely to be unemployed or working in lower paid jobs. In the context of this policy EEO groups include:

- Aboriginal people
- Torres Strait Islanders
- People from Non English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB)

The organisation aims to ensure both the absence of discrimination based on any personal characteristic irrelevant to the work to be performed, and the provision, where appropriate, of programs to overcome past disadvantage. Refer also to Access And Equity Policy and Recruitment And Selection Policy.

Making A Complaint
Management has a responsibility to resolve any dissension and conflict on cultural or linguistically diverse grounds through appropriate processes. Refer to Client Complaints Policy and Staff Grievance Policy.
### RESOURCES

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**Useful Website:**

- [http://www.culture-at-work.com/highlow.html](http://www.culture-at-work.com/highlow.html)

**Useful Other:**

For more information refer to: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol, *As A Matter Of Fact*: answering the myths and misconceptions about Indigenous Australians and Centacare’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

### REFERENCES:

- *Indigenous Australians. ATSIC 2nd Edition*  
- *Social Inclusion Principles for Australia 2008* (Australian Government)  
- *Cultural Competence Checklist for Workers, Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW*  
- *Cultural Competence Checklist for Agencies, Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW*  
• Adopted from a range of organisational policy guidelines – per research papers

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REVIEW FREQUENCY CYCLE
Three years or following legislative changes.

Review Due Date: August 2017