

Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy

v1

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1. Legislation

When a worker is injured, whether arising out of or in the course of their work or not, Council has certain obligations to assist the worker to return to normal duties at work. In the Northern Territory, these obligations are legislated in the *Return to Work Act 1986* as well as the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

2. Definitions

Council means the MacDonnell Regional Council.

The Council means the Councillors, President and Deputy President.

Employee is any person working for MacDonnell Regional Council.

Workplace Participant is any person working on behalf of MacDonnell Regional Council.

Worker is an employee or workplace participant.

Non Work-Related Injury is a physical or mental injury that did not arise out of or in the course of the worker's employment.

Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator is the staff member appointed by the Manager, People and Capabilities, to coordinate the workers compensation and return to work process.

Suitable Duties Program means duties that are matched to the worker's capacity for work. Suitable duties could involve performing in the normal role with some restrictions or performing duties in a completely different role.

Work Related Injury is a physical or mental injury arising out of or in the course of the worker's employment.

3. Statement

This policy provides the principles to:

- Foster a culture of early intervention and workplace rehabilitation in the event of injury or illness, including non-work-related conditions.
- Implement a rehabilitation process that supports ill or injured workers.
- Facilitate a team approach to the injured worker's recovery and return to work.
- Ensure that workers participating in the rehabilitation process are treated with confidentiality, respect and equity.

4. Policy

4.1 Principles

4.1.1 Governance that Protects

Maintain workplace standards and procedures that ensure the security, health and safety of workers.

4.1.2 Ensuring Legal Compliance

Comply with Work Health and Safety regulations and legislation to fulfil Council's duty of care to ensure a safe working environment.

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4.1.3 Uphold Transparency and Maintain Privacy

Matters are to be transparent whilst maintaining the privacy of all those who are involved, following the recommended process.

4.2 Responsibilities of Council

- 4.2.1** Acknowledge that aiding workers to remain at work or return early and safely after injury/illness reduces impact on the injured worker and their families.
- 4.2.2** Support injured/ill workers by having a system of workplace rehabilitation and providing suitable duties during recovery, irrespective of their entitlement to compensation.
- 4.2.3** Expects that all injured workers will return to work on suitable duties as soon as they are declared fit to perform work in some capacity.
- 4.2.4** Expects that all levels of the organisation will support injured/ill people throughout the rehabilitation process.
- 4.2.5** Appoint a Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator to coordinate workplace rehabilitation for injured workers.

4.3 Responsibilities of Injured Workers

- 4.3.1** All injured workers are required to cooperate with the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator and their supervisors and managers to develop a suitable return to work plan.
- 4.3.2** Injured workers are to submit any medical information regarding their condition to the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator as soon as possible.
- 4.3.3** The directions of doctors and allied health professionals must be followed by injured workers in order to aid the recovery process.

4.4 Responsibilities of Supervisor

- 4.4.1** Ensure no worker returns to work without clearance from the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator.

4.5 Responsibilities of People and Capabilities

- 4.5.1** Assist the injured workers with any inquiries about leave entitlements whilst they are unable to work.

4.6 Responsibilities of Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator

- 4.6.1** Assist injured workers to submit workers compensation claims if a worker chooses to submit such a claim.
- 4.6.2** Liaise with Council's insurers regarding workers compensation claims.
- 4.6.3** Liaise with injured workers, medical and allied health practitioners, supervisors and managers to develop return to work plans.

5. Authority

The Council, 20 June 2025

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6. Owner

Office of the CEO, Safety

7. Review Date

30 June 2029

8. Related Documents

Work Health and Safety Policy
Work Health and Safety Management System Manual
Rehabilitation and Return to Work Procedure