**POsition descriptioN**

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| **POSITION TITLE:** | FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER |
| **DIVISION:** | FINANCE & GOVERNANCE |
| **DEPARTMENT:** | GOVERNANCE |
| **SECTION:** | INTEGRITY SUPPORT |
| **CLASSIFICATION:** | BAND 6 |

**POSITION OBJECTIVES:**

The key objectives of the position are:

* To provide high level support and specialist advice to senior management and Council staff in relation to Freedom of Information (FOI) queries and requests.
* To process FOI applications in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) (FOI Act).
* To drive the FOI Professional Standards Action Plan to assist Council to meet its compliance obligations under the FOI Act.

Subject to workload, the following tasks may also be required:

* To support the management, investigation and response to a range of matters including, but not limited to:
  + Victorian Ombudsman complaints,
  + Requests for review of compensation claim decisions,
  + Privacy and Discrimination Complaints,
  + Infringement Management Reviews
* To support investigations and reporting which drives an integrity culture and which may arise from complaints or referrals from external integrity agencies.
* Work in a discreet and professional manner, ensuring integrity of council processes and compliance with legislation.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES:**

1. **Freedom of Information Administration and Coordination:**

* Receive, review/analyse and process FOI requests in accordance with the FOI Act.
* Liaise with applicants and key stakeholders to support efficient processing of requests.
* Prepare FOI decision letters for review by the Authorised Freedom of Information Officer, ensuring it complies with the requirements of OVIC.
* Ensure compliance with the FOI Professional Standards.
* Engage with OVIC in matters pertaining FOI review and complaint notifications
* Provide informed specialist advice to senior management on FOI issues.
* Maintain and monitor FOI Registers.
* Provide input to policy development and process improvement.
* Complete annual FOI Reporting to OVIC.
* Prepare reports for Governance and Risk Committees.

1. **Subpoena Administration and Coordination**

* Manage and answer incoming subpoenas.
* Provide advice to staff on subpoena requirements.
* Request documentation from Council departments and assist departments to understand the terms and requirements of the request.

1. **Integrity support**

* Support integrity investigations which may arise from allegations of fraud or misconduct
* Support investigations required by and/or in conjunction with external integrity agencies
* Deliver internal education programs to upskill staff and increase awareness of integrity responsibilities
* Provide advice to internal stakeholders in relation to privacy, fraud, discrimination and conflicts of interest as required.
* Maintain registers such as Fraud, Data Breaches and Ombudsman Complaints.
* Support the development of a Legislative Compliance Framework in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

1. **Ethical Complaint Management**

* Conducting efficient, independent and effective investigations into complaints ensuring the principles of natural justice, procedural fairness and confidentiality are applied in all circumstances.

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| **ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS:** | |
| Reports to: | Coordinator Integrity Support |
| Supervises: | Nil |
| Internal Contacts: | Chief Executive Officer, Executive Leadership Team, Senior Leadership Team, Manager Governance, Governance team, Executive Assistance team, Mayor, Councillors, Council employees |
| External Contacts: | Business community and employers, Community, General Public, Consultants, State and Federal Government Officials, other local government agencies |

**ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT**

**VISION**

Hume City Council will be recognised as a leader in achieving social, environmental and economic outcomes with a common goal of connecting our proud community and celebrating the diversity of Hume.

**MISSION**

To enhance the social, economic and environmental prosperity of our community through vision, leadership, excellence and inclusion.

**OUR VALUES**

At Hume City Council, our Values underpin everything that we do.

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| Icon  Description automatically generated | We’re better, every day  We give things a go and value progress over perfection. We have permission to go for it and are expected to reflect and learn. |
| Icon  Description automatically generated | We’re in it together  At Hume, everyone matters. We welcome and include all.  Respect and safety are expected. |
| Icon  Description automatically generated | We show up  We empower and trust others and own our work. We rise to the challenges and are expected to do what we say we will. |
| Icon  Description automatically generated | All for Hume  We strive to achieve our best for the Hume Community. We are proud and passionate about working towards better outcomes and expect that they are at the centre of everything we do. |

**WORK HEALTH & SAFETY (WHS)**

Employees are required to participate in the WHS process by:

* Following established safe working instructions, procedures and policies.
* Taking reasonable care for their own Work Health and Safety and that of others.
* Seeking assistance when unsure of practices, procedures and policies to perform a task.
* Reporting all incidents, injuries, near misses, damage to property and hazards as soon as practicable to their supervisor and the WHS Team.
* Actively participating and contributing to inspections, audits, team meetings and training.
* Ensure that relevant WHS legislation is complied with.

Managers, Coordinators, Team Leaders and Supervisors are required to participate in the WHS process by:

* Assist with the implementation of WHS policies, procedures, guidelines, work instructions and Control Plans.
* Consult with employees on WHS issues and support Health & Safety Representatives in their duties and/or requests.
* Discuss WHS issues as a part of team meetings.
* Conduct and document system reviews and inspections of employees and contractors with assistance from the WHS Team, manager(s), Health & Safety Representatives and/or employees.
* Ensure appropriate training and instruction is given to personnel allowing them to complete jobs safely and without risks to health and safety.
* Take appropriate action to alleviate any hazards, unsafe acts or omissions that are observed or brought to their attention and provide appropriate feedback and support.
* Conduct effective induction of all employees, followed by ongoing training to develop and maintain a high level of WHS awareness.
* Assist with the implementation of Return to Work Plans.
* Ensure that relevant WHS legislation is complied with.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

Contribute to a positive risk management culture by complying with the *Risk Management Policy*, assisting with the implementation of the Risk Management Strategy and reporting risk management concerns and improvements to their supervisors and/or managers.

Manage risks in area of responsibility by complying with the WHS Policy and Processes and implementing appropriate risk management strategies.

Demonstrate Council's commitment to implementing best practice risk management processes.

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

Hume City Council is a child safe organisation with zero tolerance for child abuse. Council adheres to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related legislation and Council acknowledges the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children, especially children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with a disability. As such, all staff must ensure that their behaviours and actions are consistent with these standards.

**SERVICE PLANNING & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

It is a requirement of the Service Performance Principles of the *Local Government Act 2020* for Councils to continuously improve service delivery and service performance. Managers and Coordinators are responsible for undertaking service planning and continuous improvement in their area/s of responsibility and ensuring implementation of service plan actions in accordance with Council’s Service Planning Framework.

**ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Staff are responsible for undertaking Asset Management functions in accordance with Council’s Asset Management Policy to ensure Council assets continue to be appropriately managed and maintained.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Hume City Council has a strong and enduring commitment to environmental sustainability and prides itself on its leadership on a range of environmental issues. Council’s Waste & Sustainable team and Climate Action Integration team lead Council activities in this area, however all Council departments have a direct responsibility for implementing environmental sustainability actions across all Council operations and services to the community.

Council’s *Live Green Work Green* employee behaviour change program encourages staff participation in reducing the environmental impact of Council operations. Staff are encouraged to join the environmental leadership team, the *Green Team*, which guides action in this area.

**HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION**

As a public authority Council is legislated to act in ways that are compatible with human rights. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) provides a framework to guide decision making, to manage risks and to ensure the business of government is carried out in a balanced, transparent, and accountable way. As an employee of a public authority consideration of the human rights of all who Council aims to serve facilitates the improved provision of services, polices and strategies.

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| **POLICE CHECK:**  The incumbent must have and maintain a current Police Check |  |
| **WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK:**  The incumbent must have and maintain a current Working with Children Check | YES  NO |
| **PRE-EMPLOYMENT MEDICAL CHECK**   * The incumbent must undergo a Pre-Employment Medical Check (including fitness for work and functional capacity assessments, muscular-skeletal screening and drug & alcohol test. May also include cognitive assessment.) * The incumbent must undergo a Pre-Employment Audio Test | YES  NO  YES  NO |
| **PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENT**  The incumbent must undergo a series of psychometric assessments (Psychometric testing can take various forms, such as numerical, mechanical, logical, verbal, or skills tests) to ensure suitability for the position | YES  NO |
| **OTHER DUTIES**  Responsibilities and duties included in this position description are subject to the *Multi‑skilling* provisions of the *Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement* as varied from time to time. | |

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND EXTENT OF AUTHORITY:**

The incumbent is responsible and accountable for:

* Displaying and promoting Our Hume Values & Guiding Behaviours
* Maintaining knowledge of and working within Organisation Policies and Procedures including WHS, EEO and Code of Conduct.
* Processing FOI applications in accordance with the FOI Act.
* Discussing issues with FOI applicants and OVIC.
* Providing specialist advice and direction in relation to FOI queries. The freedom to act is subject to regulations and policies. The effect of decisions and actions taken may be significant, but it is usually subject to appeal or review by the Coordinator Risk Management.
* Provide input into policy development and process improvement within the scope of the role. The work is usually of an investigative and analytical nature, with the freedom to act prescribed by the Coordinator Risk Management.

**JUDGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING:**

The incumbent is accountable for:

* Interpretation, assessment and advice and responding to all aspects of Freedom of Information legislation and requests.
* Processing FOI applications in accordance with the legislation and Professional Standards.
* Responsible for handling confidential information with the utmost discretion and sensitivity, ensuring compliance with data protection regulations.
* To use initiative in assessing risks, identifying alternatives, and selecting appropriate courses of action, considering the organisation's policies and legal requirements. Decisions in this nature are to be approved and discussed with the Coordinator Risk Management
* Managing internal and external relationships effectively to deliver desired outcomes.
* The work may involve improving and/or developing methods and techniques generally based on previous experience. Problem solving may involve the application of these techniques to new situations. Guidance and advice are usually available.

**SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:**

The following knowledge and skills are required to be utilised:

* Enhanced knowledge of the FOI Act, Professional Standards and OVIC practice notes.
* Enhanced understanding of the local government sector.
* High competency of the Microsoft applications and other Council key programs.
* Proficient in problem solving and escalating issues in a timely and effective manner.
* Demonstrated experience in the use of the Microsoft suite range of products to an intermediate or advanced level. Advanced use of Outlook productivity features or a willingness to attain this.
* Highly developed written and verbal communication skills including grammar and expression.
* Highly developed skills to communicate sensitively and sympathetically with internal and external stakeholders.
* Demonstrated ability to draft and prepare correspondence from templates and from scratch.
* Demonstrated ability to undertake creative problem solving and basic research skills.
* Understanding the long-term goals of the unit and of the relevant policies of both the unit and the wider organisation.
* Familiarity with relevant budgeting techniques.

**MANAGEMENT SKILLS:**

The following management skills are required to be utilised:

* Skills in managing time, setting priorities, planning and organising one's own work and where appropriate that of other employees to achieve specific and set objectives in the most efficient way possible within the resources available and within a set timetable.
* Ability to work with minimal supervision and to show initiative and effectiveness.
* Demonstrated ability to make decisions and problem solve in difficult situations.
* The ability to effectively utilise knowledge and resources to ensure the timely delivery in a changing environment, including the ability to effectively manage tasks of competing priority.

**INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:**

The following interpersonal skills are required to be demonstrated:

* Strong relationship-building abilities, fostering collaboration, cooperation, and partnership with colleagues, other departments of the organisation, and community members.
* Demonstrated skills in handling difficult customer situations and resolving conflicts, maintaining professionalism, and adhering to the organisation's guidelines.
* Skilled in active listening, empathy, and understanding diverse perspectives, enabling effective communication and service provision within the relevant context.
* High level writing skills and demonstrated capacity to research and prepare reports on complex and sensitive matters.
* The ability to recognise the implications of actions on the Council.
* Demonstrated ability to work in a team environment and positively contribute to the team.
* Ability to deliver customer focused options and solutions.
* Ability to maintain professionalism, integrity, and confidentiality.
* Ability to work with limited supervision and/or direction.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:**

The following qualifications and experience are required for the position:

* Demonstrated knowledge, understanding and experience in the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic).
* Experience in Freedom of Information administration.
* High level of competency with computer systems, in particular, Microsoft programs and other Council key applications such as Content Manager and experience with a customer request system.
* Excellent customer service skills.
* Current driver’s licence.

**TASK** **ANALYSIS**

In undertaking the inherent requirements of their duties, a person in this position may be expected to work in or be exposed to the following conditions or activities as marked.

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| **Condition/Activity** | **Constant** | | **Frequent** | | **Occasional** | | **N/A** | |
| Manual handling weights – above 10kgs |  |  | |  | |  | |
| – below 10kgs |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Manual handling frequency |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Repetitive manual work |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Repetitive bending/twisting |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Repetitive kneeling/squatting |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working with arms above head |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Lifting above shoulder height |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Using hand tools – vibration/powered |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Operating precision machinery |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Close inspection work |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Wearing hearing protection |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Wearing eye protection |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Wearing safety shoes/boots (steel cap) / gum boots |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Wearing other relevant PPE |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working in dusty conditions |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working in wet/slippery conditions |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working with chemicals/solvents/detergents |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Washing hands with soap (hygiene) |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working at heights |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working in confined spaces |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working in chillers (+4 degrees C) |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Performing clerical duties |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Working on a keyboard |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Driving cars and/or trucks |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Other (please specify) |  |  | |  | |  | |
| Other special features (e.g. nature of chemicals, travelling requirements etc): | | | | | | | |

**VARIATION TO CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT:**

These conditions of employment, your duties and your location may be varied by Council during the term of your employment.

The key responsibilities and duties in this position description are to be undertaken in accordance with the General Employee Handbook.

**AGREEMENT:**

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| I hereby accept and agree that by placing my electronic signature in the text box, this shall be considered as an original signature for accepting the duties in this position description. I understand that key responsibilities and duties in this position description will be undertaken in accordance with the Employee Handbook and I agree to abide by the terms and conditions stipulated therein. | |
| Name (Please print): | |
| Signature: | Date: |

**SELECTION CRITERIA:**

Selection will be based on the following selection criteria; however, reference will also be made to other listed skills, knowledge and attributes as required in the position description:

1. Demonstrated knowledge, understanding and experience in the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic).
2. Experience in Freedom of Information administration.
3. A high level of professionalism and discretion in dealing with confidential or sensitive information.
4. Excellent written and verbal communication skills and attention to detail, including ability to: provide advice on complex/sensitive issues; prepare complex correspondence; compile comprehensive and accurate records; and review/prepare procedures, guidelines and policies.
5. Excellent organisational and time management skills and the ability to work with changing priorities in a changing environment within strict timeframes in support of statutory requirements and appropriate organisational and team initiatives.
6. Excellent customer service skills and customer centric attitude.
7. Demonstrated ability to work as an effective member of a small, cohesive team including the ability to develop and input into team processes to achieve team/organisational goals.