

An Award-Winning Council



Where work-life balance is not just a slogan

Winning the Public Sector Employer of Choice award in 2006 has made Marrickville Council more determined to keep lifting its own bar in an effort to keep its great staff as it strives to provide quality services to the Marrickville community.

"It is excellent that our staff see us as a good employer but we have to continue to improve so that our citizens have the best services delivered by high-quality employees," General Manager, Candy Nay, says.

The Council is about to trial an innovative approach where teams can negotiate a range of flexible working arrangements that meet both their needs and maintain or improve standards of citizen service.

"We felt a one-size-fits-all was not going to satisfy the many differing needs staff have in balancing their work and personal lives," Nay says. "So, for example, we are open to arrangements of working hours that may allow a shorter week or fortnight, or differing combinations of working hours, as long as our service levels stay high. We value our staff and we know they value their time."

Nay says that there is tremendous potential for women and men to have a satisfying career and still be able to manage family responsibilities. "Skills shortages exist in local government, as in many industries. One of our challenges is to expand the pool of applicants by encouraging people outside local government to consider a job with us when they are career planning," she says.

"One of the ways we can do that is by emphasising quality of work-life balance and investing heavily in training and career development. We are constantly on the look-out for people from a range of backgrounds including environmental services, engineering, human resources, administration, town planning, building inspection, finance, IT, community services, libraries and civil works."

Indicators show that Marrickville Council is a leading-edge employer. One indicator was the astonishingly high 94 per

cent response rate to its 2006 staff survey. Another is that it is not uncommon for staff to leave Council at one point in their career and return at another.

"We can't provide uninterrupted career paths for all or even most employees," Nay says. "But what we can do is provide top-class training, an exceptional work environment and exposure to the sort of opportunities to develop that make our employees attractive to other employers.



"Our approach means our employees are highly productive and satisfied while they are with us. If they leave to further their careers we wish them well and may welcome them back at a few rungs higher after they have obtained experience elsewhere."

Marrickville Council, less than 10km from Sydney's CBD, draws its workforce of 550 from both local suburbs

and as far away as Newcastle and the Blue Mountains. Community surveys indicate high satisfaction with Council's performance. It has a reputation of placing a high priority on social justice programs. Council also actively celebrates cultural diversity with a rich annual program of community events, support for the arts and community support programs.

Council won the inaugural WorkCover Employer of the Year Award with its SAFE program – Safe and for the Environment – for its high-quality approach to safety in the workplace. It has also picked up other prestigious awards such as the A.R. Bluett Award (2004), which is the gold standard for awards in local government, and a range of awards for innovation and excellence in fields such as the environment, urban planning and management planning.

Job seekers will find a framework of support for their career development. All executives and many senior management are involved in the mentoring program; all staff have a Personal Development Plan; a leadership program develops staff who are not yet managers but who have the drive to develop their leadership capabilities; and a study leave and study assistance program caters for staff who want to pursue their education externally.

Staff can earn and learn in other ways. The Council takes on students who are partly qualified in building and health inspection, and will promote them to jobs requiring full qualifications once they complete their courses. Student Planner and Student Engineer positions can lead to a full-time job at the end of studies.

There are advantages in working for a council of Marrickville's scale. "Our staff often manage projects from concept to completion, working closely with the community and gaining the experience that will equip them to be leaders in their chosen field," Nay says. "I firmly believe that you can achieve a balance between the quality of your personal life and excellence in your professional life."

Serving a diverse, vibrant and innovative community

2006 Australian HR Award – Employer of Choice (Public Sector)

We are an Employer of Choice and aim to provide the best working conditions possible while striving for excellence in meeting our citizens' service needs.

For job opportunities, visit www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au or email jobs@marrickville.nsw.gov.au.

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