

SECONDMENT PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

LGMA Queensland is proud to introduce the Local Government Secondment Programme. The programme is one of many LGMA Qld initiatives aimed at keeping quality employees in the local government sector.

There are many factors which contribute to the current skills shortages in local government including general skilled labour shortages, competition from other sectors and isolation issues. The amalgamation of councils has also had a significant impact as it has created additional layers of management and reduced mobility between councils and, in fact, upwards within councils. Many local governments have identified quality staff that they are at risk of losing due to an inability to promote them or to offer other development opportunities (such as higher duties). In a recent LGMA Queensland member survey, the need for Queensland councils to offer inter-council secondments was regularly identified as a valuable enhancement to employment in local government. By facilitating the secondment of employees between councils, this programme aims to:

- broaden the skills and experience of local government officers in Queensland;
- provide short to medium term opportunities which may not be available to an officer within their own council;
- assist councils in filling short to medium term vacancies and access skills and competencies that may not be readily available within existing staff; and
- encourage skilled staff to stay in local government.

THE PROGRAMME

Secondments are an agreement between two councils whereby the home council 'lends' an employee to another council (the 'seconding' council) for a stated period of time.

The salary and conditions applicable to the employee may be different to those at their home council depending on the position. Any adjustments are at the cost of the seconding council but the process for recompense of these is by agreement between the two councils as suits.

Secondments can occur for an initial period of up to 12 months. Extensions beyond the initial 12 month period will be subject to further approval of both the home council and the seconding council.

Secondments will not be approved for more than a total of three (3) years.

To facilitate secondments between councils, LGMA Queensland will:

- promote secondment opportunities and coordinate the receipt of nominations for secondment; and
- provide participating councils with generic agreements for the secondment of officers.

To formalise the process the following procedures will need to occur.

Request for Secondment

A council employee must complete the Expression of Interest for an Advertised Secondment Position form if he/she wishes to be considered for a secondment opportunity. The completed form, endorsed by the Line Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the home council must be submitted to LGMA Queensland.

These forms will be forwarded by LGMA Queensland to the relevant council for consideration and/or recruitment and selection process.

Assessment of Request – Home Council

LGMA Queensland will not forward nominations for secondment unless the approval of the Chief Executive Officer of the officer's home council has been received. The decision to approve a secondment application is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. The needs of both councils and the employee must be considered.

In approving a secondment, the home council must provide the employee with information regarding the employee's ongoing entitlement to their substantive position or placement into a position of equivalent classification on completion of the secondment.

Following the decision by the home council on whether to support the application, written advice must be provided to the employee. If the employee is unable to be released due to organisational demands (i.e. workload demands within the organisation) or other reasons, it is recommended that clear justifiable reasons for denying the request be provided.

Where a secondment is to occur, written advice must be provided to the employee by the home council and must contain:

- Details of the period of secondment;
- Confirmation of continuity of service;
- Salary arrangements for the duration of the secondment, including standard deductions;
- Ongoing entitlements and conditions for leave/superannuation; and
- Information regarding the employee's substantive position or placement into a position of equivalent classification on completion of the secondment.

Assessment of Request – Seconding Council

LGMA Queensland will forward nominations for secondment only if the approval of the Chief Executive Officer of the officer's home council has been received. The Seconding Council will assess applications and determine a suitable application. The Seconding council will then provide advice to all unsuccessful nominees advising them of the outcome.

The decision to accept and application and take on a secondment is at the discretion of the Seconding Council.

In approving a secondment, the seconding council must provide the employee and the home council with written advice including:

- Details of the position in the seconding council;
- Period of secondment; and
- Salary arrangements for the duration of the secondment, including standard deductions;
- Entitlements and conditions for leave/superannuation

Arrangements for secondment will proceed only after agreement is reached between the home and seconding councils and the employee seeking secondment.

Administrative Requirements

The home council is responsible for liaising with the seconding council to determine salary arrangements, including deductions that are usually made from the employee's salary.

Two options are available for managing the payroll administration of the employee:

1. Responsibility will remain with the home council. A recoup process is then administered between the respective councils; or
2. Responsibility for payroll administration will transfer during the secondment period to the seconding council.

A secondment at a higher level than the employee's substantive classification will attract the remuneration and conditions applicable to the higher level position. These higher payments will cease when the employee completes the secondment and returns to his/her substantive position or level.

Annual leave should be reconciled at the end of the secondment period. Therefore all leave accrued during the secondment period should be taken either:

- during the secondment period; or
- reconciled between the home and the seconding council at the cessation of the secondment.

During the period of secondment the employee will remain an employee of the home council and will therefore be accorded the same rights as all other employees. In the event of any communication or consultation with home council staff, the seconded employee will be included as part of the process as if they were working in the council at the time, e.g. organisational restructuring. The seconded employee will also be entitled to be considered for any vacant positions as if they were working in the council.