Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy

Longreach Regional Council
Ilfracombe Isisford Longreach Yaraka

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Council manages workplace health and safety risks associated with alcohol and other drugs. It supports Council's commitment to maintaining a healthy and safe work environment for employees, contractors, members of the public and visitors, consistent with its obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011.*

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council employees, contractors and sub-contractors while they are performing work or work-related duties for Council. It applies during working hours, when attending Council functions or events, and when present on a Council worksite, location or facility for work-related purposes.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Alcohol	*Any beverage, substance or preparation containing ethanol that may affect a person's behaviour, judgement, coordination, concentration, reaction time, or ability to work safely.*
Other drugs	*Any substance, other than alcohol, which may affect a person's fitness for work, including illicit drugs, synthetic drugs, prescription medication, over-the-counter medication, and any substance used contrary to medical or manufacturer instructions.*
Illicit drugs	*Drugs or substances that are unlawful to possess, use, manufacture, sell or supply, including controlled drugs and substances used without lawful authority.*
Synthetic drugs	*Artificially produced substances designed to mimic the effects of illicit or controlled drugs, including substances sometimes marketed as legal highs or alternatives to prohibited drugs.*
Medication	*Prescription or over-the-counter medicine used for a medical purpose. Medication may affect fitness for work if it causes side effects such as drowsiness, reduced concentration, impaired coordination, or slowed reaction time.*
Fit for work	*Being physically, mentally, and behaviourally capable of performing work safely and effectively, without being adversely affected by alcohol, other drugs, fatigue, illness, injury, or medication.*
Council worksite	*Any Council workplace, office, depot, facility, plant, vehicle, site, public space, or other location where Council work is being performed or where a person is present for work-related purposes.*

Council function or event	*A Council-approved or work-related function, event, meeting, training activity, conference, social event, or community engagement activity where a person is attending in connection with Council duties or representation.*
Designated event	*A Council-approved special occasion, function, or event where responsible alcohol consumption has been expressly authorised by the Chief Executive Officer or an appropriately delegated Director.*
Safety-sensitive work	*Work where being affected by alcohol, other drugs, fatigue, illness, injury, or medication could create a significant risk to the health or safety of the person performing the work, other workers, contractors, visitors, the public, property, plant or the environment.*
Alcohol and other drug testing	*The use of approved testing methods to screen for, detect or confirm the presence of alcohol or other drugs in accordance with this policy, Council's testing procedure, and relevant Australian Standards.*
Positive test result	*A test result that indicates alcohol or another drug is present at or above the applicable Council limit or relevant confirmatory target concentration under the applicable Australian Standard.*
Non-negative result	*An initial screening result that indicates the possible presence of alcohol or another drug and may require confirmatory testing before further action is taken.*
Reasonable cause testing	*Testing undertaken where there is a reasonable basis to believe a person may be affected by alcohol or other drugs, including observed behaviour, appearance, odour, speech, coordination, work performance, a safety incident or other relevant information.*
Random testing	*Testing where individuals or work groups are selected without prior notice and without being targeted for a suspected breach, in accordance with Council's testing procedure.*
Post-incident testing	*Testing that may be required after a workplace health and safety incident, near miss, vehicle incident or other event where alcohol or other drugs may be a relevant factor.*
Self-disclosure	*When a person voluntarily tells Council that alcohol, other drugs, medication or another factor may affect their fitness for work or create a workplace health and safety risk.*
Employee Assistance Program	*A confidential support service available to eligible employees and, where applicable, their immediate family members to assist with personal, health, work-related or alcohol and other drug concerns.*
Support person	*A person chosen by an employee to provide support during a process under this policy or the testing procedure. A support person may be a union representative or another appropriate person who is not involved in the testing process.*
Contractor	*A person or organisation engaged by Council to perform work or provide services, including consultants, labour hire workers, subcontractors, and their employees.*

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Executive Leadership Team	• Provide and maintain a safe work environment by managing risks associated with alcohol and other drugs. • Ensure this policy is implemented within the organisation, communicated, monitored and reviewed. • Provide access to appropriate education, support services, and risk-management processes.
Safety team	• Lead the implementation of this policy from a workplace health and safety perspective. • Engage and coordinate external alcohol and other drug testing services. • Manage immediate workplace safety risks, including arranging safe transport, temporary removal from safety-sensitive duties or other risk controls where required. • Provide advice to managers, supervisors and employees about fitness for work, testing processes, medication-related risks and support options. • Maintain appropriate safety records, testing coordination records and risk-management documentation.
People and Culture team	• Manage employment-related matters arising under this policy, including investigations, complaints, disputes and disciplinary processes. • Provide advice on procedural fairness, privacy, confidentiality, industrial obligations and employment consequences. • Support managers to determine proportionate and evidence-based responses to suspected or confirmed breaches. • Maintain employment records relating to investigations, disputes, disciplinary outcomes and agreed support or return-to-work arrangements.
Managers and supervisors	• Apply this policy consistently within their work areas and promote clear expectations about fitness for work. • Act promptly where there are concerns that a person may be affected by alcohol, other drugs, or medication. • Contact the Safety team for immediate risk assessment, testing coordination, and safety controls. • Contact People and Culture where employment-related action, investigation, dispute management, or disciplinary advice may be required. • Maintain confidentiality and document relevant observations, decisions, and actions.
Employees, contractors, and Councillors	• Comply with this policy and ensure that they are fit for work when performing Council duties or attending Council worksites. • Not attend or remain at work if adversely affected by alcohol, other drugs, medication, or another factor that may create a safety risk.

	• Self-disclose any fitness-for-work concern or medication-related risk that may affect their ability to work safely. • Participate in testing, risk-management processes, education, or support arrangements where required under this policy and associated procedures. • Behave responsibly when representing Council, including at Council functions or events where alcohol may be available.
External testing provider	• Conduct alcohol and other drug testing in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards, Council's testing procedure and agreed service requirements. • Maintain testing integrity, chain of custody, privacy, and confidentiality. • Communicate test results only to authorised Council representatives in accordance with Council's procedure.

POLICY STATEMENT

Longreach Regional Council is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment for employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors. All employees are responsible for ensuring they are fit for work each workday.

This means attending work free from the adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs, being adequately rested, and being physically and mentally capable of performing their duties safely. Council recognises that alcohol, prescription medication and other drugs can affect a worker's fitness for work, as well as their own health and safety and the safety of others.

Employees must remain free from the adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs while performing work, attending Council worksites or locations, or carrying out duties on behalf of Council.

Council workplaces are alcohol and illicit drug-free environments, and alcohol or illicit drugs must not be present or consumed onsite. Where employees represent Council at externally hosted events outside the workplace, they must act responsibly and in accordance with Council's Employee Code of Conduct, including where alcohol is available or consumed.

PRINCIPLES

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Council will take reasonable steps to manage risks associated with alcohol and other drugs and support a safe, healthy and productive workplace.

Fitness for Work

Employees must ensure they are fit to safely perform their duties and must not attend work or undertake Council duties where; alcohol, drugs, fatigue or medication may impair their capacity to work safely.

Shared Responsibility

Maintaining an alcohol and drug-free workplace is a shared responsibility. Employees, supervisors and managers must act promptly and appropriately where there are concerns about fitness for work or workplace safety.

Prevention and Early Support

Council will encourage early reporting, guidance and support for employees who may be affected by alcohol or other drugs, including access to appropriate assistance where available.

Fair and Consistent Application

This policy will be applied fairly, consistently and confidentially, with decisions based on safety, evidence, procedural fairness and Council's obligations under relevant legislation and policy.

Responsible Representation

Employees representing Council must behave responsibly and uphold Council's standards of conduct, including at work-related events where alcohol may be available.

APPLICABLE ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS CUT-OFF LEVELS

To support a safe workplace and provide clear, consistent expectations, Council applies the following limits to all employees when they attend any Council worksite, location or office:

- **Alcohol:** a breath alcohol concentration (BrAC) of 0.000.
- **Other drugs:** confirmatory target concentrations must not exceed the levels specified in the Australian Standard AS 4760 for drug detection in oral fluid or urine specimens.

Requirements During the Workday

Once work has commenced, employees must not consume alcohol or other drugs during working hours, including during designated breaks. Alcohol and other drugs must not be consumed at Council worksites at any time, unless alcohol consumption has been expressly approved for a designated event.

Prohibited Conduct

Illicit or synthetic drugs must not be used, sold, purchased, supplied or brought into any Council workplace under any circumstances. Suspected breaches may be referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission or Queensland Police and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

GUIDELINES

1. Methods of Testing

Council will engage an external qualified testing agency to conduct alcohol and other drug screening on Council sites. The testing agency must be accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) and must conduct testing in accordance with applicable standards, including AS/NZS 4308:2008, AS/NZS 4760:2019 and AS 3547:2019 (or subsequent standards).

Council will maintain enough internally competent testers to conduct alcohol and other drug testing in emergency situations only. These testers will be Safety Business Partners and will be used only where external testing arrangements are not reasonably available or where immediate testing is required to manage workplace health and safety risks.

2. When Testing Occurs

Alcohol and other drug testing may occur at various stages during a person's employment or engagement with Council to identify, deter and manage associated workplace health and safety risks. Testing may include:

1. Pre-employment testing
2. Random or blanket testing
3. Post-incident testing
4. Reasonable cause or for-cause testing
5. Testing following self-disclosure

Further information is available in Council's Alcohol and Other Drugs Testing Procedure.

3. Designated Event

Approval of Designated Events

The Chief Executive Officer, or a Director with appropriate delegation, may approve special occasions, functions or events as designated events where responsible alcohol consumption is authorised. Examples may include Council-approved staff functions, such as the annual staff Christmas party.

Employee Conduct at Designated Events

Employees attending a designated event must maintain appropriate standards of behaviour, drink responsibly and always comply with Council's Employee Code of Conduct.

4. Legal Medication

Disclosure Requirements

Employees must advise their immediate supervisor if they are taking any prescription or over-the-counter medication that may affect their ability to perform their duties safely. Where relevant, employees must provide supporting information from their medical practitioner or pharmacist so Council can assess any workplace health and safety risks and put appropriate controls in place.

Employee Responsibilities

- Tell their medical practitioner or pharmacist about the type of work they perform before obtaining or using medication. *(Safety Business Partners can assist by providing a copy an employee's position description or summary of the position inherent requirements)*
- Seek advice about possible side effects, warnings or restrictions, including any impact on their ability to work safely.
- Take medication only as prescribed or instructed.
- Follow all warnings and instructions on medication packaging or labels.
- Notify their supervisor if medication may affect their fitness for work or create a safety risk.

5. Alcohol and Other Drugs Support Services

Council provides a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Changing Ways Psychology. The service is available free of charge to all employees and their immediate family members.

- Contact Dr Lisa Paterson-Kane from Changing Ways Psychology on 0427 260 580 to arrange an appointment.
- Ask a Safety Business Partner to arrange an appointment or help identify appropriate local services.

6. Confidentiality

Information obtained through alcohol and other drug testing will be used only for purposes consistent with this policy and the associated Alcohol and Other Drugs Testing Procedure. Access to testing information and results will be restricted to authorised persons who require it to perform their responsibilities.

7. Representation

An employee may request a support person at any stage of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Management and Testing Procedure. The support person may be a union representative or another appropriate person, provided they are not involved in the workplace testing process. The support person must be available within a reasonable timeframe, so their involvement does not unreasonably delay testing or affect the integrity of the testing process or results. Where a support person is present, either a second collector or the nominated representative must also be present.

8. Breach of Policy

Council may manage breaches of this policy through a structured response focused on workplace health and safety, education, early intervention and risk management. This approach recognises that alcohol and other drug matters should be managed in a way that is fair, evidence-based and proportionate to the circumstances, while maintaining Council's ability to take disciplinary action where appropriate. In determining an appropriate response, Council may consider:

- the nature, seriousness and frequency of the breach;
- whether the matter involved a positive test, refusal to participate in testing, possession or use of alcohol or illicit drugs, impairment, unsafe conduct, or failure to disclose relevant medication risks;
- the level of workplace health and safety risk, including whether the employee was performing safety-sensitive work or could affect the safety of others;
- whether the employee self-disclosed, cooperated with testing or participated in support, education or risk-control measures;
- any relevant explanation, medical information, mitigating factors, employment history or prior breaches; and
- the information reasonably available to Council at the time the decision is made.

Possible responses may include counselling, education or awareness training, referral to the Employee Assistance Program, temporary removal from safety-critical duties, re-testing, a fitness-for-work assessment, a documented risk-management plan, disciplinary action, or termination of

employment. Council will determine the appropriate response on a case-by-case basis and will not apply a predetermined outcome without considering the relevant circumstances.

9. Disputes

Complaints or disputes about alcohol and other drug testing must be reported to the Senior People and Culture Business Partner. Matters may relate to:

- the way testing was conducted;
- the confidentiality or handling of personal information; or
- a concern that this policy or the Alcohol and Other Drugs Management and Testing Procedure was not followed.

POLICY INFROMATION				
TITLE	*Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy*			
DOCUMENT NUMBER	*STR_017*			
TYPE	*Policy*			
CATEGORY	*Strategic*			
SUB-CATEGORY	*Administrative (Employment)*			
APPROVED	*Council Resolution*			
RESOLUTION	*Res-2026-09-275*			
APPROVAL DATE	*17/09/2026*			
REVIEW SCHEDULE (Years)	*Desktop*	*2*	*Comprehensive (Re-adoption)*	*4*
NEXT REVIEW	*17/09/2028*			
POLICY HOLDER	*Director of Organisational Services*			

RELATED DOCUMENTS	
LEGISLATION	*Industrial Relations Act 2016* *Information Privacy Act 2009* *Human Rights Act 2019* *Local Government Act 2009* *Local Government Regulation 2012* *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* *AS/NZS 4308:2008 (or subsequent standard)* *AS/NZS 4760:2019 (or subsequent standard)* *AS/NZS 3547:2019 (or subsequent standard)*
POLICY DOCUMENTS	Employee Code of Conduct Policy
PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES	Alcohol and Other Drugs Testing Procedure
CHECKLISTS/FORMS/REGISTERS	Alcohol and Other Drugs Observation Checklist

VERSION	**DATE**	**ACTION**
1.0	31/08/2026	Draft Policy
1.0	17/09/2026	Final