

**EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP
CITY OF COCKBURN
AND
SOUTH METROPOLITAN PERSONNEL**

The City of Cockburn is a Perth Metropolitan Council located approximately 20 kilometres south of the Perth CBD. It currently has a population of approximately 80,000 residents which is expected to grow to an ultimate population of 120,000. The municipality is approximately 65% developed.

Discussions were held in November 2002 at a sub committee meeting of the Disability Advisory Committee, on one of the key objectives of the Committees Terms of Reference ie "To improve the Universal Access and Inclusion for people with special needs". It was decided that one of the strategies would be "Encourage, inspire and include people with a disability to be involved with their local council / community" and that an ongoing goal could be to "utilise the skills of people with a disability within the Council in paid / unpaid capacities".

Discussions were held between Council and SMP throughout 2003 involving Social Services staff who sat on the DAC, HR staff and Parks Department. It was agreed that a budget proposal be put to Council for the 2004/2005 financial year.

A partnership between the City of Cockburn and South Metropolitan Personnel in 2003 initially resulted in six young people with varying abilities being employed in the Parks Services and the Administration Areas at the City. As at October there will be 4 work crews. There is also the contracted car valet team which services the vehicles at Cockburn Community Care.

- This project was initiated by the City of Cockburn's, Disability Advisory Committee after discussions with staff from South Metropolitan Personnel.
- The Advisory Committee put forward an initial proposal to Council to employ three young people with disabilities.
- Council doubled the requested funding enabling a total of six young people with varying abilities to be employed.
- Four of these young people resided in Cockburn and the City believing that their work environment should reflect the community did everything possible to ensure the success of the program.
- The third workcrew was also an initiative of the Disability Advisory Committee but the fourth workcrew was initiated by City of Cockburn staff and Council. This was due in the main to the high demand for the crews and the high level of satisfaction

The City of Cockburn supported workcrew employees work on a part time basis and enjoy the same employment conditions as their co-workers, the wages being award based. The employees are keen and motivated to work and have expressed their enthusiasm. Each crew of three employees has on the job support and training from a field coordinator from South Metropolitan Personnel to ensure that all the tasks are carried out to meet the City of Cockburn standards within the designated area.

As Shirley said, “it is all about matching abilities with interests resulting in loyalty and longevity of employment. This has proven to be an efficient and cost effective means of finding the best person for the job”.

Feedback from community members and co-workers has been extremely positive with acknowledgement of the achievements of the team.

The supported workcrew employees supported by their Supervisor have been extremely busy helping to maintain many sites such as Manning Park, Bibra Lake, Coolbellup Community Centre, Coogee Beach Access ramp and several external Council services in the City of Cockburn.

- Feedback from several patrons including a mothers group that access Manning Park stated that the facilities were always clean and tidy and that they were very happy with the regular raking of the sandpit as this was a safety concern.
- Family Day Care, Cockburn Community Care and the South Lake Out of School Care all commented on how great their gardens were looking and were also very impressed with the teams' willingness to help in other areas such as cleaning.
- Jim Bell, Caretaker stated that the team were now an integral part in the setting up and cleaning up of functions in the Civic Centre Hall and the Council Reception Area.
- Parks Manager said the teams had proved valuable to the Parks Services in that they enable a more immediate response to the intermittent inter service visit needs of the community.
- Letter from sister of one of the workcrew employees.

Dear Shirley

Working for the City of Cockburn has and continues to be a positive experience for Elizabeth. The position helps build her self-esteem and gives her a sense of responsibility. It extends her personal networks beyond the confines of her home and family and aides in the development and maintenance of her interpersonal skills. She also has the opportunity to experience and learn the value of teamwork and relations to others on a professional level. In addition, the income that she earns from the position helps her appreciate the link between work and money, and the value of the two.

It was mentioned several times in the feedback that work was done to a high standard and that the crews were very keen and willing to work. Their enthusiasm and their smiling faces were also noted. This partnership has enabled these young people to develop skills and self esteem through employment as they gain a valued status within the community. This employment is a win-win situation for all involved.

ADMINISTRATION / PROCESSES SUPPORTED WORK CREWS

- SMP source candidates and they have a 4 week work experience trial to ensure team works together well. (3 people per crew)
- SMP provide a supervisor and vehicle.
- COC provide all the equipment, tools and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Then the crews are put on our Payroll system on a yearly part time contract for 16 hours per fortnight. (4 days x 4 hours)
- They are classified under Level 1 of the Municipal Employees Award / COC's own EBA, under the Supported Wage clause.
- They receive sick leave, annual leave, long service leave and public holidays as per usual, on a pro rata basis for their part time hours.
- 12 weeks after commencing employment (after 4 week trial period), the crews are assessed as to their capacity to perform the regular duties of a parks attendant (a qualified assessor undertakes this). They are observed and timed as to how long they take to perform a duty that has previously been timed by a 'standard' parks attendant.
- Their salaries are then paid at the proportional percentage rate to their working capacity. However, it has to be a minimum of \$62.00/week as per the Award requirements. It cannot be any less than this figure, but it can be higher if their working capacity percentage calculates higher than \$62.00 (Obviously up to 100% of the Level 1 Adult rate under the Award/EBA).
- Employees are re-assessed on an annual basis to monitor improvements by the same certified assessor, and their salaries are reviewed / adjusted accordingly.
- Feedback is regularly received form members of the public and fellow colleagues regarding the Work Crews – very positive and well supported.
- SMP, the Crews Supervisor and COC liaise regularly and have very good communication and working relationships.
- Has been wonderful to see Crew members' confidence and abilities grow and develop over the time, and they have enjoyed the independence these opportunities provide to them.
- Due to the regular communication between the COC, SMP and the Assessor, all parties are always fully informed on situations, and the process is relatively easy to manage and administer, with the benefits evident for all parties. It is certainly a worthwhile project.

Good Morning

My name is David, I am an employee of the City of Cockburn. I work in the Parks and Administration Departments I've been employed at the City for over 2 years, on a part time basis.

I am supported on the job by Maurice, my Field Co-ordinator from SMP. His job is to slow me down, as in past jobs I have worked too quickly ending up doing everyone else's jobs, and this affected my well being.

All my work colleagues at the City are supportive and I've not experienced any discrimination. It's great to have a laugh and a joke with them and respected for my abilities. We receive lots of positive comments and feedback from the community and co-workers.

In Admin, we are responsible for setting up the function room for dinners, for Citizenship Awards, and other community functions and meetings. We maintain the Council Chambers, and set up for training days.

For Parks, we work at Yangebup Community Centre and the Cockburn Family Day Care Centre where we maintain their grounds. We also work at Bibra Lake, where we maintain the play equipment area so it remains a safe environment for the community. This includes reporting and documenting any vandalism or sharps found in the grounds.

While I'm here I'd like to publicly thank the City of Cockburn for the opportunity they have given me and the support I receive from SMP.

Thankyou.

DAVID GIBSON.