OBJECTIVE

To ensure the safe and timely return of injured employees to pre injury duties, considering the impacts of physical, psychological, social, vocational and economic factors.

POLICY STATEMENT

Maitland City Council recognises its obligations under the Workers Compensation Injury Management Act 1998, and is committed to returning injured employee’s to pre injury duties in a safe, timely and durable manner.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Council’s Workplace Return to Work Policy are to:

- Prevent reoccurrence of injury and illness by providing a safe and healthy working environment;
- Ensure that the return to work process commences as soon as possible after an injury/illness in a manner consistent with medical advice;
- Ensure that return to work as soon as possible after an injury/illness is a normal practice and expectation;
- Provide suitable duties consistent with the nature of the injury/illness, where practicable, for an injured employee, as an integral part of the Injury Management/Return to Work process;
- Consult with employees, Council’s OH&S Committee and, where applicable any industrial union to ensure that Return to Work programs operate effectively. This includes the provision of an interpreter for injured employees where English is a second language;
- Ensure that participation in a Return to Work Plan will not, in itself, prejudice an injured employee;
- Participate and co-operate with the insurer’s Injury Management Program and Injury Management Plans, which are established by the insurer for injured employees;
MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

- Comply with WorkCover guidelines if and when issued and maintain case records in line with WorkCover’s Confidentiality Guidelines;
- Treat injured employees with compassion and respect; and,
- Give consideration to the impacts of the physical, psychological and economic factors as they relate to Council’s workplace return to work program.

SCOPE
This policy and the associated Workplace Return to Work Program, applies to all Council employee’s including permanent, temporary and casual employees.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK
Workers Compensation Act (1987)
Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act (1998)
The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (2001)
Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW)
Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Cth)

ASSOCIATED WORKPLACE POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS
Occupational Health & Safety Policy (Reviewed 2008)
Workplace Return to Work Program (2008)

RESPONSIBILITY
Council, managers and employees have responsibilities for the prevention of injury and illness, and for the implementation of a Workplace Return to Work Program.

General Manager
- Ensure the policy framework promotes a timely return to work that is in the best interest of Council and it employees’ and for all other persons described within the scope of this policy;
- Ensure every employee is treated fairly within the scope of the policy;
- Ensure all employees comply with this policy; and,
- Ensure the implementation of Council’s Return to Work Program.

Managers and Supervisors
- Prevent injury and illness by providing a safe healthy working environment;
- Provide, where practicable and possible, suitable duties that are consistent with the nature of the injury/illness;
- Ensure the participation in a Return to Work Plan, will not in itself, prejudice an injured employee
- Treat injured employees with compassion and respect;
- Participate in and co-operate with the insurer’s Injury Management Program and Injury Management Plans, which are established by the insurer for injured employees; and,
- Comply with the obligations as described under the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998.
Employees

- Ensure behaviour complies with Council’s Workplace Return to Work Policy;
- Participate in the insurers Injury Management Plan as well as adhere to the obligations imposed by the insurer; and,
- Make all reasonable efforts to return to work as soon as possible.

Return to Work Coordinator

- Provide information to the injured employee on the rehabilitation process and workers’ compensation entitlements, where applicable;
- Adhere to the New South Wales WorkCover Authority’s Confidentiality of Rehabilitation Information: Guidelines for Employers, in relation to access to rehabilitation records and consent to release information;
- Act as the primary link between all principal parties involved in the injured employee’s rehabilitation;
- Participate as required, in assessing the needs of the injured employee and to coordinate services necessary to meet those needs;
- Nominate suitable duties that are relevant to the restrictions described on the workers compensation medical certificate in consultation with the employee and the relevant Manager, Coordinator or Team Leader;
- Ensure that employees returning to work on suitable duties have a written Return to Work Plan that is distributed to the following parties.
  - Injured employee
  - Nominated Treating Doctor
  - Manager or Coordinator
  - Accredited Rehabilitation Provider (where involved)
  - Treating health professional/ therapist
  - Insurer’s Case Manager
  - Union Representative (where requested by employee)

- Ensure that injured employees, who are likely to be incapacitated for a continuous period of more than seven (7) days, whether or not any of those days are work days and whether or not the incapacity is total or partial or a combination of both, have a written Injury Management Plan (Refer to Section 4.5 – Case Management Procedures of the Workplace Return to Work Program); and,
- Monitor the progress of the rehabilitation program at appropriate intervals.