**Review your HR policies and practices**

Human **Resources Self Assessment**

The management of human resources (HR) is important in all organisations.

The scope of HR includes:

* Having in place policies and practices that comply with legal requirements.
* Ensuring all employees have a safe workplace.
* Protecting the privacy of information about your employees.
* Confidence that all employees receive the pay and other benefits they are entitled to under the relevant Industrial Awards.
* Training and motivating your teams, and
* Building a strong and positive culture within the workplace.

The subtle differences in the employment and industrial relations laws at both Commonwealth and State level can add to the complexity of HR management. While some East Kimberley ACCOs fall under the Commonwealth Fair Work system, many fall under the Western Australia industrial system. If you are unsure which laws apply to your organisation talk to officers of the Commonwealth’s Fairwork Australia or Western Australia’s Labour Relations Department.

Regardless of which legislation that applies to your organisation, compliance with HR, workplace safety and industrial regulations is a core governance responsibility. Even if your organisation employs external providers for payroll and HR support, Directors and management should have a good overview and understanding of the organisation’s practices. The fines and penalties for not having proper records, for not having appropriate safety measures in place, or for mis-paying staff can be severe.

**Overview**

This Self-Assessment Checklist is designed to be used by a generalist manager. There is no need to be an HR specialist. The checklist will help identify the strengths and weaknesses in an organisation’s human resource policies and practices and identify where the organisation could make improvements. Working through the checklist may help you to:

* Clarify HR practices, duties, and responsibilities.
* Ensure compliance with legal obligations.
* Identify gaps between current practices and your organisation’s policy expectations.
* Encourage adaptive learning and improvement in HR practices.
* Promote professionalism among supervisors and managers.
* Increase workplace morale and confidence.

Industry-specific requirements may need to be added to the checklist. However, the items in the following checklist are relevant to almost all organisations and businesses with employees. You should confirm the presence of these policies and records, and also ensure that employees and leaders have signed off on them, are adhering to them, and that your policies and record systems meet with the current legal requirements.

Things to look out for are incomplete paperwork, missing forms, and processes that employees ignore or do not use. Take an open mind to any short comings you identify. For example, if a task or form is consistently neglected, consult with all relevant staff. There may have been be inadequate training provided, internal communication weaknesses, or impracticalities in the way the task or form is structured.

It is not uncommon for organisations to find shortcomings in areas such as

* Hiring, discipline and termination procedures.
* Misclassification of jobs as exempt from overtime or extra duties entitlements.
* Inadequate personnel files, including failing to keep written records, failure to document changes or informal, unclear or inconsistent documents.
* Failure to document WH&S matters and to ensure employees follow safety protocols.

If the review identifies serious concerns or shows that your organisation is not meeting minimum expectations it may be appropriate to engage an external HR service provider or auditor.

Fig 1: The Self Assessment review process

**Using the checklist**

Most organisations are able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and use this review as the start point for improvements.

Depending on your organisation, the Self-Assessment Checklist could be used by the CEO, a generalist manager or a HR manager. However, it is recommended that you form a HR review team that includes representatives of management, staff, and possibly a Board representative, to talk through the items listed, and discuss the improvements 6that might be made.

After completing the checklist, discuss where there are gaps or needs for improvement. In what ways do these areas need to be improved, and how this might be done? Rank or prioritise these initiatives in order of importance. Decide who in the organisation is best placed to take the lead with each of these activities. Consider if these changes can be achieved with existing resources or whether you need to budget for new equipment, processes or technical inputs. There is a [**planning template**](https://binarri.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/EVwOJc1gZSpCh5XkDMGKtJgBjUiihC_VklGb5ZVAmDbAsA) with the BBY organisation strengthening resources that you could use or adapt.

The end result should be an action plan setting priorities, identifying targets for improvement and detailing steps that will be taken to meet these targets. Work with your team to implement these improvements.

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|  | *Underperformance Best practice* | | | | | | |
|  | **5** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| **Policy** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Human Resource policy and Staff Manual. | No human resource policy or staff manual.  Human resource policy documents & staff manual have not been reviewed for 3 years or more; are not available to all staff; or are not referred to. |  |  |  |  |  | Human Resource policy documents and staff manual are reviewed and updated annually. Staff training ensures every employee understands and follows these policies. |
| HR Policies address   * Recruiting & hiring processes; * Staff appraisal systems; * Staff development and training; * Compensation and promotion; * Grievances, complaints and discipline processes; * Health and safety; * Use of social media; * Bullying * Safety in the workplace and protection of the vulnerable; * A confidential reporting and whistleblowing process. | None of these issues is addressed in the HR policy. |  |  |  |  |  | All of these issues are addressed in the HR policy or are in separate policy documents. |
| Formal procedures for lodging grievances, raising concerns about safety practices or whistleblowing. | Procedures are uncertain, not publicised or not trusted by staff. |  |  |  |  |  | Procedures are understood by all staff, advertised in the workplace and protect the privacy of those placing complaints or being investigated. |
| Workplace culture and team building. | Nothing is done to develop or embed a workplace culture. |  |  |  |  |  | We have a well promoted organisation culture and have team building activities several times a year. |
| **Industrial Relations** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Knowledge of the minimum employment standards that apply to your employees. | Managers are not all that sure of minimum employment standards. |  |  |  |  |  | Managers and the Board understand relevant State Industrial Awards, Fairwork & Modern Awards, and enterprise agreements. There are processes in place to gain specialised HR advice when needed. |
| There is a process to undertake internal or external checks or audits to ensure compliance. | Have not checked compliance. |  |  |  |  |  | Compliance checks or audits every 2 years with reports to Directors and follow-up actions to address shortcomings. |

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|  | *Underperformance Best practice* | | | | | | |
| **Record keeping** | **5** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** |
| Staff receive payslips (emailed or paper) that meet statutory requirements: employer details, pay period, pay date, gross and net amount, hourly rate for ordinary time (if applicable); details of penalty pay & loadings; value of deductions; and details of superannuation contributions. | Staff don’t always receive payslips, or payslips only show a small portion of this information. |  |  |  |  |  | Payslips are received within 1 day of payment. They show all mandatory information |
| Payroll records of staff hours and salaries and long service leave entitlements (usually kept electronically). | Complete records are not kept or documents are not secured for privacy purposes. |  |  |  |  |  | Payroll records of staff hours, salaries and entitlements are securely kept for 7 years.  Long service leave entitlements are kept for 7 years after employment ceases. |
| Personnel files. | Not all personnel matters are recorded on file. Files are not kept securely to protect private information. Files are destroyed when an employee leaves. |  |  |  |  |  | Personnel files and records are maintained and kept securely for at least 7 years after an employee has left the organisation. |
| Superannuation fund records. | Superannuation fund application records are neither kept for the mandatory time nor securely kept. |  |  |  |  |  | Employee superannuation fund application forms are kept for life. Contribution records and standard choice forms are kept for 5 years. Records are securely held. |
| Workers compensation records. | Workers’ compensation records are not kept. |  |  |  |  |  | Copies of workers compensation records are securely kept for 7 years after a claim is finalised. |
| **Managing employees** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Staff have position descriptions and there is a process through which these are reviewed and updated. | Some staff do not have position descriptions. Position descriptions have not been reviewed for 3 years or more. |  |  |  |  |  | All staff have position descriptions. These are reviewed and updated every 2 years. Staff, their supervisors and management participate in position description review. |
| Performance assessment, and staff development. | There is no process for reviewing staff performance and further building their capabilities and skills. |  |  |  |  |  | Staff work with their managers to set performance goals specific to the position, and routinely review progress. Staff take part in training and development opportunities to build their capabilities and skills. |

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|  | *Underperformance Best practice* | | | | | | | |
|  | **5** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **5** |
| Employee / management communication. | Communication between employees and managers are ad hoc and usually one directional – from managers to employees. |  |  |  |  |  |  | There are routine processes for communication between employees and their supervisors or managers. Employees feel safe and comfortable using these processes. |
| On boarding processes and records. | New staff are asked to complete an ATO declaration, superannuation fund and bank account forms. But not much else. |  |  |  |  |  |  | Onboarding records are kept. The process is comprehensive covering all relevant aspects of the workplace. There are processes in place for new employees to receive regular follow up. |
| **Workplace Health and Safety** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Consultation and engagement of all workers and managers on WHS matters. | No processes for WHS matters. |  |  |  |  |  |  | There is a consultation or committee process in place that routinely discusses risks and reviews safety processes. |
| Safety training and designated safety officers. | No designated safety officers. No training in WH&S processes and expectations. |  |  |  |  |  |  | Designated safety officers and reporting systems in place. Staff trained in the organisation’s WH&S expectations and processes. |
| Specific safety issues. | Risk assessments, safety equipment, incident report forms and accident report forms are not easily accessed or are not used. |  |  |  |  |  |  | Risk assessments are completed by staff and filed. Incident or risk report forms are routinely reviewed by management. Staff are familiar with the processes and can access reporting documents/files. All safety equipment is in place and routinely tested. Staff know how to use safety equipment. |
| Mental Health and Wellbeing. | No processes or training in place. |  |  |  |  |  |  | All supervisors receive training and are alert to staff wellbeing & mental health signs. They are trained to engage in basic discussions about staff well-being. |
| **Cross-cutting matters** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Compliance with Australian and Western Australia data protection requirements? | Managers are not sure about what is required. |  |  |  |  |  |  | The organisation meets the Australia data retention and privacy protection requirements. |

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| Ensuring the safety of others. | No policies on protecting the safety of children and vulnerable people. We don’t bother with police checks or working with children checks. |  |  |  |  |  |  | All staff who interact with vulnerable people and children have current working with children cards and police checks.  Our organisation has strong policies on client and public safety, with staff trained about our values and expectations. |
| Respecting indigenous culture. | Currently no provision for cultural leave. |  |  |  |  |  |  | Our organisation offers indigenous staff leave to attend and participate in cultural events. Indigenous staff request and access this leave. |