

# Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity Policy



## **Our Commitment**

Vertech Group is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity to ensure that employees receive fair and equal treatment in all aspects of their work and can work in an environment that is free from discrimination.

This policy provides guidelines about acceptable behaviour in the workplace and the responsibilities of everyone at Vertech Group to promote and uphold the principles of EEO and Diversity. It also seeks to ensure that Vertech Group attracts and retains the best people seeking and utilising employees with diverse views and experiences.

Vertech Group recognises that a diverse workforce adds to the company and employs principles of EEO to achieve that diversity. Vertech Group is an equal opportunity employer committed to treating all Employees on their merits without regard to race, age, gender or other personal characteristics.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Vertech Group Code of Conduct.

## **Coverage & Scope**

This policy applies to all Vertech Group employees and contractors who are operating under Vertech Group policies and procedures (referred to as “Employees”). It operates at all company premises and worksites, and other sites where the company conducts business, such as premises and sites operated by contractors, suppliers, and customers. It also applies to employees travelling in or using vehicles for business purposes.

This policy extends to conduct in any work-related context including outside of normal working hours and covers interactions with customers, suppliers and other third parties as well as colleagues.

## **Diversity**

Diversity is a term used to describe the uniqueness of and differences between people. This includes their skills, knowledge, experiences, and perspectives.

Diversity can refer to demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national or social origin and by personal characteristics such as disability, carer’s responsibilities, pregnancy, or potential pregnancy.

## **Guiding Principles**

The following guiding principles are aimed at promoting awareness and proactive management practices to achieve workforce diversity. These principles should be applied across all facets of Vertech Group businesses:

- ✔ A diverse workforce is a competitive advantage in retaining and attracting the best people to improve our business performance.
- ✔ It is everyone’s role at Vertech Group to promote a work environment that values seeking and utilising the contributions of Employees with diverse views and experiences.
- ✔ We want a skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of our customers and communities.
- ✔ A person’s experience at work should be inclusive and respectful of individual differences, including but not limited to, family responsibilities.

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- ✔ Awareness of the rights and responsibilities of individuals with regard to equity and respect for others is important for all Employees.
- ✔ We value practices that provide access to development and other opportunities based on merit.

## **What is unlawful discrimination?**

Unlawful discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person or group because of one or more of the attributes referred to in State and Federal legislation above.

Discrimination in the workplace can occur in the following contexts:

- ✔ Recruitment, appointment and promotion of employees and potential employees.
- ✔ Employment conditions, benefits and terms offered to employees.
- ✔ Access to training.
- ✔ The transfer, discipline, dismissal and retrenchment of employees.
- ✔ Discrimination can be either direct or indirect.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person treats a person unfavourably because of a protected attribute. For example, refusing to interview someone for a job because of their race or ethnic origin.

Indirect discrimination is focused on the impact of requirements, practices or policies that apply equally to everyone, but have a disproportionate impact on those with particular attributes. For example, requiring a minimum length of service for promotion or transfer. This could amount to indirect discrimination against younger workers who will have shorter service, unless it can be shown to be a reasonable requirement.

## **What is victimisation?**

Victimisation happens where an Employee is treated less favourably or subjected to a detriment because he or she has made or intends to make a complaint of discrimination.

Victimisation also happens if a person is subjected to a detriment because they have furnished information or evidence in connection to a complaint. Failing to take a complaint seriously can also be construed as victimisation.

Victimisation is unlawful under State and Federal laws and Vertech Group will not tolerate any Employee being subject to victimisation of any kind.

## **Racial Vilification**

It is unlawful to vilify someone because of their race or religion. Vilification is doing something in a public place (including a workplace) that encourages others to hate, disrespect, or abuse a person or group of people because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin.

Vertech Group values the rich diversity of its workforce and as such will not tolerate vilification.

## **Legal Obligations**

Discrimination can be unlawful and can result in legal liability (including penalties and orders to pay damages):

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- ✔ Personally, for an Employee if he or she engages in such unlawful behaviour; and
- ✔ for Vertech Group as the employer on the basis that Vertech Group is vicariously liable for the acts of Employees.

Laws prohibiting discrimination and victimisation in Australia are contained in both Federal and State legislation.

Federal	State
Racial Discrimination Act 1975	QLD – Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
Sex Discrimination Act 1984	NSW – Anti-discrimination Act 1977
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	VIC – Equal Opportunity Act 2010
Age Discrimination Act 2004	SA – Equal Opportunity Act 1984
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986	TAS – Anti-Discrimination Act 1998
Fair Work Act 2009	WA – Equal Opportunity Act 1984
Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012	ACT – Discrimination Act 1991
Racial Hatred Act (1995) (Commonwealth) (as amended)	WA- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA) (as amended)

These laws prohibit discrimination and victimisation in certain areas of public life – including the workplace – including where such actions are taken on the grounds of any of the following characteristics or attributes of a person:

- ✔ Age
- ✔ Gender identity and intersex status
- ✔ Political belief or activity
- ✔ Breastfeeding
- ✔ Disability or Impairment
- ✔ Pregnancy or potential pregnancy
- ✔ Religious belief or activity
- ✔ Career Status
- ✔ Marital status
- ✔ Race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, descent or ancestry)
- ✔ Personal association with anyone who has any of these characteristics
- ✔ Sex/gender
- ✔ Parental status
- ✔ Industrial activity
- ✔ Physical features
- ✔ Sexual orientation

Vertech Group has a legal duty to prevent discrimination and victimisation in the workplace. If it fails to do so it can be held liable for the behaviour of Employees.

Vertech Group will work to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eliminated from the workplace by:

- ✔ Assessing and removing policies and procedures that may be discriminatory.
- ✔ Training all employees in appropriate behaviour in the workplace.
- ✔ Responding appropriately and promptly to allegations of discriminatory behaviour.

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## Responsibilities

Vertech Group Business Services Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that:

- ✔ All managers, supervisors and employees are aware of their obligations, responsibilities, and rights in relation to EEO and Diversity.
- ✔ Matters which do not comply with the principles of EEO and Diversity are identified and addressed as promptly and sensitively as possible.
- ✔ Ongoing support and guidance is provided to all employees in relation to EEO and Diversity principles and practices.

Vertech Group Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring:

- ✔ They understand their obligations under legislation and this policy, are committed to the principles of EEO and Diversity and that they are applied in the workplace.
- ✔ All decisions relating to appointment, promotion and career development are made without regard to any matters, other than the individual's inherent ability to carry out the job.
- ✔ They provide an environment which encourages compliance with this policy and set an example by their own behaviour.
- ✔ All Employees are aware of the EEO and Diversity policy.

Employees and Contractors are responsible for ensuring:

- ✔ They comply with the EEO and Diversity Policy.
- ✔ They treat all colleagues and customers with respect and professionalism without regard to non-relevant criteria or distinctions.

## Making a Complaint

Vertech Group has a Dispute Resolution Procedure VER-HR-004 that can be found in *IGRIS-IMS-People and Capabilities*. Any person who feels that he or she has been subjected to any form of discrimination or victimisation should refer to the Dispute Resolution Procedure in the first instance to guide them on resolving the issue internally in an informal or formal manner (as appropriate).

## Further Contact Points for Assistance

Vertech Group Employee Assistance Program: PeopleSense - 08 1300 307 912;  
[reception@peoplesense.com.au](mailto:reception@peoplesense.com.au)

Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commission - 08 9216 3900; [eoc.wa.gov.au](http://eoc.wa.gov.au)

## Links and Interactions with Other Policies

- ✔ VP-QMS-001 Code of Conduct
- ✔ VER-HR-004 Dispute Resolution Procedure
- ✔ VP-QMS-019 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Opportunities Policy

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