

# Celebration of Difference Policy

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## PURPOSE

At the core, CRANES philosophy aims to celebrate difference in all that we do.

CRANES encourage our colleagues to bring their whole selves to work and for every individual to know that this is accepted. Awareness, we believe, is brought about by sharing.

This statement is written to declare that CRANES values the sense of belonging and the respecting of the differences and diversity amongst us and that we aim to adopt this view as a custom in the workplace.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, customers of CRANES, work placement students, board members, self-employed people, contractors, subcontractors and consultants.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Cultural diversity and cultural inclusion refers to creating and maintaining a workplace and culture that is respectful of all people. In particular this applies to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- People from diverse racial, religious or cultural backgrounds.
- People with a disability.
- Gay, Lesbian, Transgender/gender diverse, Bisexual or Intersex people.

The variation between people in terms of how they identify on a range of dimensions including ancestry, ethnicity, ethno-religiosity, language, national origin, race, and/or religion.

CRANES will arrange for interpreters (including sign language interpreters) in circumstances where customers are unable to communicate easily in English. On the request CRANES will also arrange for material such as brochures and service information in the preferred language of the customer.

# POLICY

## What are equity and diversity and can we promote them?

Equity is ensuring that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristics including areas of race, gender, disability religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all colleagues.

## How can we promote equity and diversity?

We can promote equity and diversity by:

- Treating all individuals fairly.
- Creating an inclusive culture for all individuals.
- Equipping individuals with the skills to challenge inequity and discrimination in their work environment.
- Ensuring that policies, procedures and processes don't discriminate but allow the attainment of an individual's full potential.

## Cultural Awareness

You may hear the terms 'cultural awareness', 'cultural safety', 'cultural respect' and 'cultural competence' used in Australia. The following definitions will help you to understand what they mean.

**Cultural awareness** is the sensitivity to the similarities and differences that exists between two different cultures and the use of this sensitivity in effective communication with members of another cultural group.

**Cultural safety** involves actions that recognise, respect and nurture the unique cultural identity of a person and safely meet their needs, expectations and rights. It means working from the cultural perspective of the other person, not from your own perspective.

**Cultural respect** can be defined as the recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of a particular culture.

**Cultural competence** means becoming aware of the cultural differences that exist, appreciating and having an understanding of those differences and accepting them. It also means being prepared to guard against accepting your own behaviours, beliefs and actions as the norm.

Personal cultural competence is the actions we personally take to expand our knowledge of other cultures and how we use that to shape service to those people.

## Celebration of Difference

CRANES welcome the opportunity to celebrate the diversity amongst all that make up our workplace.

Many people of different cultures and faiths around the world celebrate various days of significance, ranging from cultural festivals, religious holy days, important birthdates of world leaders and faith founders to commemorative dates. Each celebration has its unique traditions and they share many common themes including family and friends, lights and goodwill, food and drinks, gift-giving, prayers and respect and understanding.

# Learning from one Another

CRANES would like to explore simple ways that we can work together to raise such awareness. This may involve sharing details of religious holy days and festivals via notice boards, organisational calendar or even inviting other colleagues that are not of the same faith to share in certain events. An example of this would be for colleagues to share in Iftar - the evening meal that breaks the daily fast during the Islamic observance of Ramadan.

Some may wish to dress in a particular way for reasons related to their religion or belief including items of jewelry and markings which are traditional within some faiths.

Events such as a simple multicultural morning tea, the sharing of cultural foods and recipes, or a guest speaker to attend the workplace are other ways to expand our learning and respect for other cultures and religions practices. This creates an opportunity to think, talk about and recognise how our differences and our similarities make our workplace stronger.

## Religion, Faith, and Spirituality

Religion, faith and spirituality date back to the beginning of time. The distinguishing line between religion, faith and spirituality can become fuzzy and to many it is interchangeable.

What are the differences....

**Religion** could be described as any system of belief about a deity, often involving rituals, a code of ethics, a philosophy of life, and a world view. Religion can give a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded individuals who worship a Higher Power in the same way and refer to it by the same name.

**Faith** is our belief and trust in a Higher Power even when there is no empirical proof. It is believing in things that we cannot perceive through five senses, but which can be felt through a sixth sense: intuition. It could be said that our intuition tells us that there is something bigger than ourselves- and faith is our belief that this is true.

**Spirituality** traditionally, spirituality refers to a religious based process. In modern times, the emphasis is on subjective experience of a sacred dimension and the "deepest values and meanings by which people live," often in a context separate from organised religious institutions. Modern spirituality may include a belief in a supernatural realm, personal growth, a quest for an ultimate/sacred meaning, religious experience, or an encounter with one's own "inner dimension."

## Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Spiritual Observance

We recognise that the cultural diversity of CRANES workforce means that some colleagues may celebrate cultural or religious days of observance which do not coincide with existing public holidays.

CRANES are legally obliged to recognise holidays that relate to Christian calendar and other national public holidays. However, CRANES welcome our colleagues to honor the time or space needed on the days or times of observance for their belief and are encouraged to discuss with the CEO about exploring options for leave.

Many religions or beliefs have a special festival or spiritual observance days. Our colleagues may request a holiday in order to attend ceremonies and require time off to celebrate. The nature, duration and requirements will vary for colleagues depending upon the holy day or religious festival, and can also differ depending on the personal religious beliefs of an individual.

**How you can apply for leave:**

CRANES colleagues may apply for leave for religious or ceremonial purposes where they have a ritual obligation or ceremonial activity to participate in or to honor customary and/or traditional laws.

CRANES colleagues are eligible to seek 2 days paid leave for such purposes. This can be openly discussed with CEO at any time. Where it is demonstrated that the two days leave is not sufficient an individual may access an additional 2 days of unpaid leave with CEO approval.

Reasonable evidence may be required in support of such leave. As with all leave, granting of cultural leave is subject to the CEO approval and CRANES operational requirements.

## Religions, Faiths and Spirituality – Quick Facts

### First People Australia

**Beliefs:** Although indigenous beliefs and cultural practices vary according to region, all groups share in a common world-view that the land and other natural phenomena possess living souls. The collection of stories of these powerful beings and the repository of knowledge represented in these stories shapes Aboriginal law.

The Dreaming or Dreamtime is the English name given to the intimately connected but distinct strands of Aboriginal belief; they refer not to historical past but a fusion of identity and spiritual connection with the timeless present.

#### Key Beliefs:

- The earth is eternal, and so are the many ancestral figures / beings who inhabit it.
- They hold a strong connection to their land, to their groups and to their clans and tribal areas.
- These beings are often associated with particular animals, for example Kangaroo-men, Emu-men or Bowerbird-women.
- As they journeyed across the face of the Earth these powerful beings created human, plant and animal life; and they left traces of their journeys in the natural features of the land.
- They also connected particular groups of people with particular regions and languages.
- Some groups held belief in a supreme being.
- The Dreaming continues to control the natural world.

**Festivals:** Ritual ceremonies involving special sacred sites, song cycles accompanied by dance, and body painting, and even sports, invoke these mythic and living beings and continue to provide the means to access the spiritual powers of The Dreaming.

At important stages of men and women's lives, ceremonies are held to seek the assistance of spiritual beings. This makes them direct participants in the continuing process of the Dreaming.

Other ceremonies are known as increase rites, in which the willingness of ancestral beings to release the land's fertility depends upon humans continuing to perform certain rituals.

- National Sorry Day                      26 May
- National NAIDOC Week                First week in July

## **Islam**

**Beliefs:** One God (Allah in Arabic); the same God revealed (imperfectly) in the Jewish and Christian Bibles.

**Practices:** Observant Muslims are required to pray five times a day. Each prayer time takes about 15mins.

Five Pillars: Faith, Prayer, Alms, Pilgrimage, Fasting. Mosque services on Fridays. Cleansing before prayer is required. Holidays related to the pilgrimage and fast of Ramadan. Muslims are forbidden to eat any food which is derived from the pig, this includes lard which may be present in bread or even ice cream. In addition, they are forbidden to eat any food which is derived from a carnivorous animal. Meat that may be consumed must be slaughtered by the Halal method. Islam also forbids the consumption of alcohol which includes its presence in dishes such as risotto or fruit salad.

**Festivals:** The dates of festivals are reliant on a sighting of the new moon and will therefore vary from year to year. Whilst approximate dates will be known well in advance, it is not always possible to give a definitive date until much nearer to the time.

- Ramadan – Takes place in the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar, is a particularly significant time for Muslims. Fasting is required between dawn and sunset. Most Muslims will attend work in the normal way but in the winter they may wish to break fast with other Muslims at sunset. This could be seen as a delayed lunch break. For those working evening or night shifts, the opportunity to heat food at sunset and/or sunrise will be appreciated.
- Eid Al-Fitr – Three days to mark the end of Ramadan – most Muslims will only seek annual leave for the first of the three days.
- Eid al-Adha – Takes place two months and 10 days after Eid Al-Fitr and is a three day festival. Most Muslims will usually only seek leave for the first of the three days.
- All Muslims are required to make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime. Muslims may therefore seek one extended leave period in which to make such a pilgrimage.

## **Hinduism**

**Beliefs:** Yoga, meditation, devotional music and worship (puja), to a god or goddess, pilgrimage to holy cities, live according to one's dharma (purpose/ role). You do not have to be Hindu to partake in yoga or meditation.

**Practices:** Hindu women will often wear a bindi which is a red spot worn on the forehead as an indication that she is married. Ashes worn may be red/mustard/yellow on the forehead and this can also denote that she is of the Hindu faith. In addition, many married Hindu women wear a necklace (mangal sutra) which is placed around their necks during the marriage ceremony and is in addition to a wedding ring.

A few Orthodox Hindu men wear a small tuft of hair (shikha) similar to a ponytail but this is often hidden beneath the remaining hair. Some Orthodox Hindu men also wear a clay marking on their foreheads known as a tilak.

Most Hindus are vegetarian and will not eat meat, fish or eggs. None eat beef.

Main Holidays: Diwali (the festival of lights).

Festivals: Hinduism is a diverse religion and not all Hindus will celebrate the same festivals.

- Holi March
- Diwali (the festival of lights) Late October/early November
- Dushera (Vijayadashmi) September/October

## Christianity

Practices: In Catholic church law, there are a number of 'holy days of obligation' when Catholics may wish to attend a church service and request a late start to the working day, or early finish in order that they can attend their local church. In addition to Christmas and Easter, the Holy Days of Obligation are 15th August (Feast of the Assumption), 29th June (Saints Peter and Paul), and 1st November (All Saints).

Some Christians avoid alcohol. Some Christian churches forbid the use of cosmetics and require their female members to dress particularly modestly.

For some Christians, it is important to wear the symbol of the cross. This is commonly worn on a necklace or displayed on some part of their person. Some Christians may also wear the sign of a fish.

Main Holidays: Easter (Lent), Christmas, Saints' days.

Festivals: There are a wide variety of Christian Churches and organisations all of which have their own specific needs, rituals and observations.

- Ash Wednesday February/March
- Good Friday March/April
- Easter Sunday March/April
- All Saints Day March/April
- Christmas Eve 24 December
- Christmas Day 25 December

## Judaism

Beliefs: One God: Yahweh (YHVH), who chose the people of Israel and who requires worship, ethical behavior, and rituals. A Messiah will come.

Practices: Observant Jews are required to refrain from work on the Sabbath and Festivals, except where life is at risk. This includes travelling (except on foot), writing, carrying, switching on and off electricity, using a telephone and transactions of a commercial nature (that is buying and selling). Jews are required to eat only kosher food, which has been treated and prepared in a particular manner and has not been in contact with non-Kosher food or utensils. For an observant Jewish person, kosher food would need to be labelled and certified as such.

Main Holidays: Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, Purim.

- Festivals: There are the following:
- Passover March/ April
  - Pentecost May/June
  - New Year September/October
  - Day of Atonement September/October (1 day fasting)
  - Tabernacles September/October

## **Buddhism**

Beliefs: Varies: Theravada atheistic; Mahayana more polytheistic. Buddha taught nothing is permanent.

Practices: Most Buddhists are vegetarian reflecting their adherence to the precept of non-harm to self and others. Many would not want to prepare or serve meat for others. Buddhists upholding the precept to avoid intoxication may not wish to drink alcohol, or serve it. Meditation, mantras, devotion to deities (in some sects), mandalas (Tibetan). Many Buddhists would prefer to wear clothing which reflects their adherence to non-harm e.g. not wearing leather clothing and leather shoes.

Main Holidays: Vary by region, but often include Buddha's birthday, Buddha's enlightenment, lunar quarters. There are a number of different traditions in Buddhism arising from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Different traditions will celebrate different festivals. Some Buddhist traditions do not celebrate any festivals. Buddhist members of colleagues should be asked which festivals are important to them.

Festivals: Follow the lunar calendar and will therefore not take place on the same day each year:

- Saindran Memorial Day January
- Parinirvana February
- Magha Puja Day February/March
- Honen Memorial Day March
- Buddha Day May
- The Ploughing Festival May
- Buddhist New Year varies according to tradition
- Dhamma Day July
- Ancestor Day July
- Ulambana July
- Abhidhamma Day October
- The Elephant Festival November
- Lov Krathorg December Bodhi Day

## **Sikhism**

Beliefs: Sikhism is one of the youngest world religions in the Eastern world. It was established in 16th century India. At that time, the dominant religion of the country, Hinduism, was in conflict with one of the newest religions from the West, Islam. Sikhism developed as an alternate third path for Indians and eventually others around the world as well.

Festivals: Sacred days are a high priority in the Sikh faith. The most important holidays in Sikhism are gurburbs, festivals marking the birthday or martyrdom of a Guru.

Most Sikh holidays are celebrated with a ritual 48-hour reading of the entire Guru Granth Sahib, processions preaching, prayer, and congregational worship.

The following festivals as listed below:

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| • Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday         | January 5   |
| • Maghi                                | January 14  |
| • Hola Maholla                         | March 26    |
| • Vaisakhi                             | April 14    |
| • Martyrdom of Guru Arjan              | June 16     |
| • Celebration of the Guru Granth Sahib | September   |
| • Festival of Light (Diwali)           | Varies      |
| • Guru Nanak's Birthday                | November 15 |
| • Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur       | November 24 |

## **Confucianism**

**Beliefs:** Confucianism concerns itself primarily with ethical principles and does not address many traditional religious beliefs. These are generally provided by Chinese religion, Taoism, Buddhism, or other religion which Confucians follow. However, Confucius regarded Heaven (T'ien) as a positive and personal force in the universe; he was not, as some have supposed, an agnostic or a skeptic. He also taught a highly optimistic view of human nature and potential.

**Practices:** Aside from its important ethical principles, Confucianism does not prescribe any specific rituals or practices. These are filled by the practices of Chinese religion, Taoism, Buddhism, or other religion which Confucians follow.

**Main Holidays:** Confucians do not celebrate specific Holy Days for Confucianism and they practice days from other religions.

## **Shintoism**

**Beliefs:** Shinto (also Shintoism) is the term for the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of Japan. Shinto has no founder, no official sacred scriptures, and no fixed creeds, but it has preserved its main beliefs and rituals throughout the ages.

The word Shinto, which comes from the Chinese shin tao, meaning "the way of kami", came into use in order to distinguish indigenous Japanese beliefs from Buddhism, which had been introduced into Japan in the 6th century CE.

**Practices:** Shinto (together with Buddhism) is intimately tied to Japanese society and culture. Shinto's relationship with other religions in Japan are generally cooperative and harmonious.

Shintoists insist on maintaining their own characteristics and inner depth while working toward the peaceful coexistence of human beings.

**Rituals:** Shintoism does not usually follow any strict ritual ceremonies that members MUST undertake. Instead, they have many festivals and celebrations.

The main purpose of all rituals is to push away bad spirits and open themselves up to the good will of the Kami.

There are many festivals that acknowledge the seasons, such as Harumatsun for Spring, and Aki Matsuri for harvest.

Each Shinto shrine has several major festivals (matsuri) each year, including:

- Spring Festival January to May
- Divine Procession (Shinko-sai) April
- Harvest Festival (Aki Matsuri, or Niiname-sai) November
- Autumn or an Annual Festival (Rei-sai) Varying date

## **Paganism**

### **Beliefs:**

The spiritual or religious beliefs of Pagans are that deity is both imminent and transcendent. Deity is therefore a part of the fabric of our being, of our environment, and of that which is beyond anything we can imagine.

Deity is perceived as male, female and androgynous, depending upon the tradition. God is seen in many ways, and expressed as the male principle; Goddess is seen in many ways, and expresses the female principle. Some Pagans perceive a deity which is both male and female. All of these expressions of deity are acceptable within the broad parameters of Paganism.

### **Practices:**

Modern Pagans are people who have made a positive choice to follow a path of individual spiritual growth that is in harmony with the Earth upon which we live. Many people have become aware of a spiritual void in their lives, and have discovered, in Paganism, a religion of joy and love, which allows self-expression, but also encourages social and environmental responsibility.

The Pagan outlook can be seen as threefold. Its adherents venerate Nature and worship many deities, both goddesses and gods.

- Love for and Kinship with Nature. Reverence for the life force and its ever-renewing cycles of life and death.
- A positive morality, in which the individual is responsible for the discovery and development of their true nature in harmony with the outer world and community. This is often expressed as "Do what you will, as long as it harms none".
- Recognition of the Divine, which transcends gender, acknowledging both the female and male aspect of Deity.

### **Main Traditions:**

Please note: this is not an exhaustive list, simply a basic guide to the more popular paths.

- Asatru/Norse Paganism
- Celtic Paganism
- Dianic Witchcraft
- Druidry
- Environmental Paganism
- Ethnic Paganism
- Shamanism
- Wicca
- Witchcraft

To conclude, and in reference to the CRANES values; the thread of democracy is entwined throughout our reasoning, responses and purpose. We are one team made up of difference and we continue to learn and respect that. This is how we celebrate equity.

## LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Age Discrimination Act 2004

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987

Fair Work Act 2009

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986

Privacy Act 1988

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Anti Discrimination Act 1977

## DEFINITIONS

As outlined above.

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