

Position:	Planning Investigations Officer
Agreement:	Surf Coast Shire Council Enterprise Agreement 2022 – 2025
Award Classification:	Band 6
Division:	Place Making & Environment
Department:	Planning and Planning Compliance
Team:	Planning Compliance
Date Reviewed:	8 January 2025
Approved By:	General Manager/Manager
Current Incumbent:	Vacant

Surf Coast Shire Council Acknowledges the Wadawurrung People, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Eastern Maar nation as the Traditional Owners of the land we now call Surf Coast Shire. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of our Surf Coast Shire community.

Our purpose, direction and approach were developed collaboratively by our people for our people.

As an employee of the Surf Coast Shire Council, you are committing to work towards our purpose within our team by following our direction and living our approach.

Purpose, Direction and Approach

Council is committed to helping our community and environment to thrive. In order to do this we understand that we will be an innovative and flexible leader that values the strengths of others enabling our workplace to be a place where people can do their best and be proud of their achievements.

Our Approach guides us in the way that we work:

We Do What We Say

We set clear expectations.
We are accountable for our actions.
We get things done.

We See Opportunity

We look for better ways.
We are open minded.
We learn from our experiences.

We Work Together

We value strengths and differences.
We seek to work with others.
We help people to succeed.

We Make a Difference

We proudly represent Surf Coast Shire Council
We act with the future in mind.
We go the extra mile

OUR APPROACH

We do what we say We work together We see opportunity We make a difference

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Introduction of the work of the team

The Planning Compliance team primary function is to investigate alleged breaches of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Surf Coast Planning Scheme and to provide the community with information and education on the requirements of the Surf Coast Planning Scheme.

POSITION OBJECTIVES

- Investigate alleged breaches of Planning Legislation.
- To ensure compliance with Council's Planning Scheme to the satisfaction of Council.
- To work proactively at minimising the occurrence of breaches to Council's planning scheme and permit conditions.
- Undertake complex investigations including interviewing respondents & requestors and submitting comprehensive briefs of evidence for presentation in VCAT or court.
- Represent Council at case hearings in the Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction.

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to: Coordinator Planning Compliance

Supervises: NIL

Internal Relationships: All employees and Councillors

External Relationships: Landowners and occupiers, State and Federal Government departments and agencies, consultants and other professionals, Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Victoria Police.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Investigation of complaints to determine the degree of non-compliance occurring including site inspections and explore options for resolution of conflicts relative to this position including urgent onsite attendance when required to minimise impacts of works being conducted.
- Prepare high quality compliance documents and correspondence relating to investigations of alleged breaches.
- Issuing of Penalty Infringement Notices and Official Warnings, preparation of briefs of evidence and represent Council at legal proceedings as directed by the Co-Ordinator Planning Compliance.
- Liaise with members of staff, clients, agencies, government departments and community groups on matters relevant to this position.
- Provide telephone and counter advice related to the position.
- Liaise with Statutory and Strategic Planning Officers and recommend ways in which the planning process or Planning Scheme itself may be improved as a response to issues identified through the enforcement process.
- Liaise with Statutory Planning Officers with regards to ongoing investigations and planning applications.
- Review allocated investigations and prioritise workload according to risk, complexity, urgency and in line with community expectations.
- Participate in educative and proactive activities relating to Planning Compliance matters when required.
- Provide the Coordinator Planning Compliance and Manager of Planning and Planning Compliance with reports relating to ongoing investigations when required.
- This role will require occasional work outside regular office hours including weekday evenings and weekends to support case investigation and evidence gathering.

OUR APPROACH

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Position Description

Risk Management and Workplace Health & Safety

- Observe safe work processes in accordance with training and instruction given and report any risks to immediate supervisor. Risks arising in the workplace may be financial, safety, site, task or person-specific.
- Participate in the consultative processes provided by the organisation.

Record Keeping

- Understanding records management obligations and responsibilities.
- Making and keeping accurate and complete records of business activities and decision making.
- Creating records proactively including those resulting from telephone conversations, verbal decisions, meetings, emails and letters

ACCOUNTABILITY & EXTENT OF AUTHORITY

- Accountable for the provision of effective and pro-active compliance of the Council's Planning Scheme under the authority of the relevant legislation and policy.
- Freedom to act is subject to law, regulations, policy and guidelines.
- Regular consultation with the Coordinator Planning Compliance on compliance issues.
- Required to provide accurate and timely specialist advice to customers in relation to enforcement matters for resolution of conflict arising from enforcement issues.
- Collect and prepare evidence on enforcement matters and provide recommendations to Council or its delegate on enforcement matters.
- The ability to liaise with Council's legal representatives in relation to enforcement matters.
- Contribute towards the development and review of policies.

JUDGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING

- Make judgements based on knowledge of statutory processes and procedures and knowledge of the Planning and Environment Act, Surf Coast Planning Scheme and other relevant Acts relating to Compliance and Enforcement.
- Responsible for making decisions using existing procedures and applying those to new situations.
- Guidance and advice is usually available when making decisions.
- Use discretion in the provision of information to authorities and members of the public which may have legal ramifications and the potential to impact on the wider community.
- The ability to resolve complex problems.
- Ability to determine whether a use or development complies with legislative requirements.
- Make judgements about the relative urgency of a particular situation.
- Seek guidance from outside the organisation in relation to certain matters.

SPECIALIST SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Understanding of long-term unit goals and policies of the unit and wider organisation.
- Knowledge of the Planning and Environment Act, Planning Schemes, and associated statutory processes and procedures.
- Ability to research, analyse and interpret legislation and situations.
- Established problem solving skills.
- Demonstrated communication and customer service skills.
- Strong investigative skills including interviewing and mediation.
- Established writing skills, with an ability to write reports and correspondence.
- Knowledge of Local Government and its operations particularly in relation to town planning regulations.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Skills in managing time and projects, setting priorities, planning and organising one's own work and that of others to achieve set objectives in the most efficient way possible within time and within budget and despite conflicting priorities.
- Ability to provide guidance and direction to staff.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.
- Ability to adapt to changing priorities and make sound judgements in prioritising tasks.
- Well-developed organisation skills and a thorough and systematic approach to records keeping.
- Ability to initiate and facilitate meetings of parties to resolve disputes. This will often require the coordinating of internal and external resources to achieve the desired outcomes.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Ability to work as part of a team environment and support and assist other team members.
- Excellent listening and verbal communication skills, including a demonstrated ability to communicate information in a friendly and articulate way.
- Ability to mediate and resolve conflicts.
- Ability to problem solve creatively and be able to gain cooperation of employees, members of the public and property owners/occupiers.
- Ability to make sound judgements in prioritising time between urgent and important tasks.
- Well-developed organising skills and a thorough and systematic approach to keeping records.
- An ability to perform under pressure.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications and Experience

- A tertiary level qualification in town planning or investigations/statutory compliance or substantial experience working in a similar role.
- Proven ability to research, analyse and interpret legislation.
- Established problem solving skills.
- Established computer skills with ability to produce reports.
- Highly developed communication skills both written and verbal.
- Well-developed organisation and time management skills.
- The ability to work as part of a team environment and to support and assist other team members.
- Sound knowledge of Local Government and its operations particularly in relation to town planning.
- Prior experience in planning investigations or similar role.

Other requirements

- Current Victorian driver's licence.
- You have the Right to live and work in Australia.
- A current Working with Children Check (WWCC). All positions within Council are required to have a current WWCC. All prospective employees cannot commence work with Council until they have a valid WWCC.
- Police Check results that are suitable for this position. All prospective employees will be required to undertake a national and/or international criminal history check before commencing employment with Council. This check will be conducted and paid for by Council.

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Child Safe Standards	Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation where children and young people are protected, respected, and encouraged to reach their full potential. The Victorian Child Safe Standards are embedded across the organisation, our policies and procedures support the implementation of requirements under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.
Equal Opportunity	Surf Coast Shire Council is an equal opportunity employer. We ensure fair, equitable and non-discriminatory consideration is given to all applicants, regardless of age, gender, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, race, religious beliefs or other irrelevant factor. We recognise our proactive duty to ensure compliance with equal opportunity and other workplace-related legislation, and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.
Fraud and Corruption	To ensure Council's Fraud & Corruption policy and program are consistently observed and complied with, it is essential to apply sound fraud and corruption management practices within the workplace and community. Maintaining awareness through relevant training is crucial for all staff to meet their obligations and responsibilities related to fraud and corruption. Participation in the organisation's Fraud & Corruption training is a requirement to uphold these standards.
Record Keeping	Staff are required by legislation and internal policies to create full and accurate records that document official business activities of council.
Right to disconnect	In accordance with the new Australian right to disconnect legislation, this role acknowledges the importance of work-life balance and the employee's right to disconnect from work outside of regular working hours. However, and in addition to any obligations listed above, there may be occasional requirements to be available to take calls after hours or on weekends to address urgent matters or critical issues that arise.
Risk Management and Workplace Health & Safety	Ensure that work practices are conducted in line with Council's Workplace Health and Safety and Risk management policies, practices and relevant legislation. Observe safe work processes in accordance with training and instruction reporting any risks, hazards and incidents in a timely manner using the correct channels of communication.

To apply for this role please use the links on the 'Employment Opportunities' page of our website. To be considered for this opportunity candidates must address the Key Selection Criteria and follow the instructions listed in the Employment Application Guide.