

Policy Title: Equity & Access Policy

Classification: Community

Date Adopted by Council

10 August 2016

Council Minute Number

2016/08/10.14

Effective Date

10 August 2016

Review Date

10 August 2017

Responsible Officer

Manager Community and Libraries

Responsible Department

Community & Environment

Revokes:

Policy Number: POLC-CE-CD-002
Policy Name: Equity & Access Policy
Adopted: 18 January 2012

INTERNAL USE ONLY

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NOTE: This cover page is not to be included when submitting a report to a Council meeting

1. BACKGROUND AND PRINCIPLES

Council has considerable obligations under the various Commonwealth anti-*discrimination* Acts and the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)* to ensure that public facilities, open spaces, services, programs, activities and information are accessible and provide equitable access to all members of the community.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all facilities, services, programs, activities and information owned by or under the control of Whitsunday Regional Council. It is applicable to all Council employees, Councillors, contractors acting on Council's behalf or engaged in Council business, ratepayers, residents and visitors to the Region.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- articulate the commitments incorporated in Council's Corporate and Operational Plans; and
- comply with Commonwealth & State legislation.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

- 4.1 Whitsunday Regional Council acknowledges that equitable access reinforces the rights of all individuals and *organisations* and maximises the participation of all individuals and organisations in the use of its facilities and open spaces, and the access of services, programs, activities and information it provides.
- 4.2 Whitsunday Regional Council commits to taking the following principles into account during its decision making processes:
- (a) providing equitable access, wherever possible, to Council provided services, programs, activities, information, buildings and open spaces for all ratepayers, residents, employees, Councillors, contractors and visitors;
 - (b) the use of community engagement to improve decision-making; and
 - (c) a more *inclusive* community.
- 4.3 Council further commits to:
- (a) improving Council's planning, design and implementation processes to incorporate best practice access and *equity* principles in the provision of facilities, services, programs, activities, information and open spaces;
 - (b) proactive planning for equitable access for all individuals and organisations;
 - (c) increased utilisation of services, programs, activities, information, buildings and open spaces by all individuals and organisations; and
 - (d) strengthening, within legislative restrictions, Council's ability to pursue equitable access through development assessment.

5. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government (Operations) Regulation 2010

Building Act 1975 (Qld)

6. DEFINITIONS

Access means the practice of ensuring that all members of the community will have the opportunity to access facilities, open spaces, services, activities, programs and information regardless of individual circumstances, characteristics, abilities, culture or background.

Discrimination means the practice or act of treating an individual or organisation unfavourably because of certain prescribed attributes, or because of their association with an individual or organisation with those attributes. The attributes are described by State and Commonwealth discrimination legislation.

Equity/equitable means the practice or act of ensuring that facilities, open spaces, services, activities, programs and information are provided to the community in a fair manner regardless of individual circumstances, characteristics, abilities, culture or background.

Inclusive means the practice or act of creating an environment where individuals or organisations feel included regardless of individual circumstances, characteristics, abilities, culture or background.

Organisation/s refers to government organisations, community organisations and groups, not-for-profit organisations and service providers.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Whitsunday 2020 Corporate Plan 2014-2019

Whitsunday Regional Council's Operational Plan

8. DATE REVIEWED

10 August 2016

9. NEXT REVIEW

10 August 2017

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