



CUMBERLAND
COUNCIL

Access and Equity Policy

AUTHORISATION & VERSION CONTROL

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INTRODUCTION

Cumberland Council is committed to respecting the human rights of all residents, celebrating their diversity and promoting their participation in all aspects of community life.

This policy recognises that diversity is inclusive of, but not limited to:

- age
- gender
- physical, sensory or intellectual ability
- mental health
- income or educational level
- birthplace or cultural background
- religious or other beliefs
- sexual orientation, identity or status.

Understanding and responding to diversity leads to an inclusive community where all people experience equal rights and opportunities. However, many people continue to experience exclusion due to barriers relating to mobility, communication or self-care; limited financial means; lack of educational or employment opportunity; discrimination; limited family or social support; violence and abuse within the home or relationships; language and literacy; and other conditions.

Accordingly, inequity and disadvantage might not be redressed by treating all people the same, but by acknowledging differences among members of the community and adapting services, communication and facilities to meet their diverse needs. Council also recognises that being able to access, or having equal access to, a service, information or facility that does not meet a person's individual needs, does not equate to access and equity.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Enable the community to participate in Council programs and services;
- Enable the community to access Council facilities and information;
- Enable the community to contribute their voice to Council decisions which affect their lives;
- Ensure that Council meets its responsibilities in implementing the *Multiculturalism NSW Act 2000*;
- Ensure that Council meets its responsibilities in implementing the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council staff, contracted staff, volunteers and contractors.

It applies to Council service planning and delivery, the development and planning of infrastructure, engagement and consultation with residents and all other related Council functions.

Whilst this policy relates to all community members within Cumberland, there are a range of groups that may experience inequity and may require specific attention in order to participate in all aspects of

community life. These include but are not restricted to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- People with disability;
- Children and young people;
- People over 55 years;
- People of diverse genders and/or sexuality.

This policy also acknowledges that there are some circumstances where legislation may prescribe how Council must deliver specific services, such as regulatory, non-discriminatory, building, work health and safety and planning services. In these instances, Council will follow prescribed processes in order to fulfil its obligations.

DEFINITIONS

Access: means that Council services, programs and facilities should be available to all people in our diverse community.

Equity: means that Council services and programs should deliver outcomes for each individual or group that are equivalent to those that any other member of our community may expect to receive.

Equality: affirms that all human beings are born free and equal, having the same rights and entitled to the same level of respect.

PRINCIPLES

Council is committed to the principle of **non-discrimination** in the provision of Councils services, facilities and decision making processes. This means that:

- Council will not discriminate on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- Council will make every effort to ensure that factors such as disability, cultural background, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or caring responsibilities do not result in unequal treatment for residents.
- Council will actively seek the participation of residents who have lived experience and/or are directly impacted by Council decisions on matters which affect them.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy enables Council to:

- Identify and address discrimination and remove, where possible, barriers to ensure services and facilities are accessible to anyone who needs them;
- Promote inclusiveness and foster community participation in social, cultural, civic and economic life.

REQUIREMENTS

Promoting Participation:

1. Council will implement the Cumberland Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which will assist Council to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are recognised, respected and included in the planning and implementation of Council services, facilities, programs and decision making processes.
2. Council will undertake regular community consultation, and will implement a Community Engagement Strategy, along with ongoing monitoring and review processes to ensure that engagement methods and techniques are appropriate, responsive and tailored to the needs of the Cumberland community.
3. Council will communicate effectively with the community to enhance access to information, services and enable greater participation including publications in different languages and accessible formats.
4. Council will implement strategies to ensure equity of access for the diversity of Cumberland's population, including those who may face additional barriers to participation, at all phases of service development, planning, implementation, evaluation and decision making. This includes implementation of the Cumberland Disability Inclusion Access Plan and the Cumberland Youth Strategy.

Leadership and Organisational Competency:

5. Council will as far as practical cater for the diverse needs of the community.
6. Council will provide staff training which helps employees to be aware and professionally responsive to all residents of the LGA, in particular those from disadvantaged groups.
7. Council will have appropriate standards of data collection which will enable it to target, plan, develop and evaluate programs to support accessibility and equity for the community.
8. Due consideration will be given to the costs and benefits of implementing access and equity considerations such as translations, interpreters, transport, additional specialised staffing or disability access at any given time for any particular Council program, activity and facility.
9. Council will establish budgeting processes that ensures access and equity needs of disadvantaged people are considered and included in resource allocation.
10. Council will implement a Disability Inclusion Action Plan which will assist Council to identify and eliminate Council practices that may result in discrimination against people with disability and identify Council's priorities for improving the accessibility and appropriateness of the services and facilities it provides for people with disability.

Communication:

11. Council will as far as practical provide information on its services and activities to residents/ratepayers of the Cumberland Local Government Area in a format that is suitable for all, including those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and people with disability.
12. Council will provide information and community education on the role and responsibilities of Council to increase the awareness and access to Council services in the community.

Spaces and places:

13. Council will provide facilities that are adaptable (multipurpose) and accessible (utilising inclusive access principles).
14. All new facilities operated by Council will be designed to be fully accessible to persons with all types of disability as per the Australian Standards for Access.
15. Council shall actively enforce the relevant building regulations and Council requirements for the provision of access to new and existing buildings.

RELATED LEGISLATION

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999
- Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013
- Privacy Act 1988
- Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998 Commonwealth of Australia
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and Amendments (NSW)
- Carers Recognition Act 2010 (NSW)
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)
- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
- Multicultural NSW Act 2000

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND COUNCIL POLICY

- Community Engagement and Participation Strategy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Cumberland Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Cumberland Reconciliation Action Plan
- Cumberland Council Code of Conduct
- Cumberland Council Complaints Management Policy
- Cumberland Community Facilities Strategy
- Cumberland Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan
- Cumberland Youth Strategy