

Strategic Policy

Access and Inclusion

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Corporate Plan reference: | <p>A strong community</p> <p><i>In all our communities, people are included, treated with respect and opportunities are available for all.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe and healthy communities - People and places are connected <p>A healthy environment</p> <p><i>Maintaining and enhancing the region's natural assets, liveability and environmental credentials.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsive, accessible and well managed assets and infrastructure |
| Endorsed by Council on: | 5 October 2011 (OM11/235) |
| Policy owner: | Group Executive Economic and Community Development |

Policy purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the establishment and implementation of council practices about access and inclusion to ensure members of the community have access to local government programs, facilities, open space, services, resources and information. The policy also endeavours to promote social justice, social inclusion, identify and reduce barriers to civic and community participation.

This policy promotes compliance with council's obligations under relevant Queensland and Commonwealth legislation, in particular the *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*, *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*, thereby mitigating risks to council.

Policy outcome

The policy outcomes include:

- Improved access to council facilities, open space, programs, services, resources and information through identifying and reducing barriers;
- Improved access to council managed and owned sporting and recreational facilities to encourage active and healthy communities;
- Improved council planning practices and processes that promote universal design and access in the built environment; and
- Greater participation in and access to council decision-making processes for the region's diverse communities.

Policy scope

This policy applies to all councillors, council staff, contractors and others that act on council's behalf to highlight the need to comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*, *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991(Qld)* and the *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)* and other relevant legislation.

Policy statement

Improving access to council's programs, services, resources, information, and council-managed facilities and open space for diverse members of our community will promote civic participation, a sense of belonging and participation leading to stronger, and more cohesive and resilient communities.

Council has a strong commitment to social justice; social inclusion and building communities that respect and uphold the rights of all people. There may be barriers that inhibit participation in civic and community life, therefore council will take a planned and long-term strategic approach to improving access to council's services, facilities, open space and decision-making processes, to encourage an inclusive region.

Council is committed to improving access and inclusion across the region, however council faces many challenges due to the region's geographical and environmental constraints, growing population and budgetary considerations. Council will need to prioritise and plan projects strategically within these constraints and ensure that access and inclusion outcomes are delivered equitably to the community.

Issues of access and inclusion can affect any member of the community, including parents with prams and small children, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people with disabilities or older people. Improving access and inclusion in the region therefore benefits the whole community.

Guiding principles

The following principles underpin council's commitment to access and inclusion:

- **Access** – the right of residents and visitors to have reasonable access to council facilities, open space, programs, services, resources and information;
- **Inclusion** –working in partnership with the community, other levels of government, key agencies and the private sector to address the needs of residents and visitors to build an inclusive, cohesive and strong community;
- **Equity** – equity and opportunities for all;
- **Respect** – recognise and value the contribution of the region's diverse population and respect the right of people to an inclusive community;
- **Dignity** – the right of people to independent and dignified access;
- **Participation** – the right of residents and visitors to actively participate in civic and community life; and
- **Safety** – the right of residents and visitors to safe access and participation.

Roles and responsibilities

- **Councillors** set the strategic direction through creating the policy position
- **Chief Executive Officer** has the delegated authority to establish procedures and practices that ensure compliance with legislation e.g. creation and monitoring of a Access and Inclusion Plan
- **Council Officers** will implement policy, procedure and plans associated with access and inclusion (including the Access and Inclusion Plan)

- **Access and Equity Coordination Group** (internal) – identify council processes and systems that can be improved to deliver greater access and inclusion outcomes. This group also assist in monitoring the success of implementation activities

Measurement of success

The following measures of success will require the establishment of baseline data:

- Increased percentage of staff attending training that explains the *Access and Inclusion* training
- Increased percentage of staff with greater understanding of access and inclusion issues
- Reduction in complaints and litigation about access to council facilities, open space, programs, services, resources and information
- Reduction in physical barriers to council facilities, open space, programs, services, resources and information

Increase in funding to the region from state and federal government agencies for accessible infrastructure and/or programs

- Increased awareness and use of council's *Community Engagement Policy* and toolkit to increase participation in council decision-making processes

Definitions

Access (Universal Access): Regardless of individual circumstances, characteristics, disabilities, culture or background all members of the community will have equitable opportunity to access and utilise information, services, facilities and places.

Disability: According to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (S4), disability in relation to a person, means;

- a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- d) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- e) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- f) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perceptions of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- g) presently exists; or
- h) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- i) may exist in the future; or
- j) is imputed to a person

Diversity (social): A diverse community includes people from different cultures, ethnicities, religions, political viewpoints, socio-economic and familial or relationship backgrounds; people of all ages with differing skills, talents and abilities.

Inclusion (social): A socially inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community

Social justice: The fair distribution of advantages and disadvantages in society¹

Universal Design: Universal design is creating services, facilities, built environments and open spaces which can be utilised by all people operating under a wide range of possible conditions.

Related policies and legislation

(List relevant policies, state and federal legislation)

Legislation

- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991(Qld)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*

Standards

- Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010 (Cth)
- Queensland Disability Standards

Internal Documents (include)

- *Community Plan*
- *Corporate Plan 2009-2014*
- *Positive Ageing Strategy*
- *Youth Strategy*
- *Social Infrastructure Strategy*
- *Open Space Strategy*
- *Sustainable Transport Strategy*
- *Wellbeing Charter*
- *Events Policy*
- *Sport and Active Recreation Strategy*
- *Social Planning Framework*
- *Community Engagement Policy*
- *Economic Development Strategy*
- *Affordable Living Strategy*
- *Place Making Charter*
- *Aquatics Plan*
- *Skate and BMX Plan*

Version control:

| Version | Reason/ Trigger | Change (Y/N) | Endorsed/ Reviewed by | Date |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 1.0 | Created new | Y | Review | 01/09/2011 |
| 2.0 | Review (new) | Y | Council Resolution (OM11/235) | 05/10/2011 |
| 2.1 | Update Branding and Department names | N | Corporate Governance | 04/01/2017 |
| 2.2 | Updates as per new Organisation | | | 20/11/2017 |

© Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2009-current. Sunshine Coast Council™ is a registered trademark of Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

¹ Cappo 2002, VicHealth Research Summary.