

Respecting Community Diversity - Access and Equity Policy and Strategy

Salisbury Council will seek to improve accountability to and outcomes for all community members of the City of Salisbury

Definition

Access and Equity are two key concepts within a broad social justice framework, which aims toward the development of a socially just society.

Access

implies fair and equitable access to services in areas essential to achieving and maintaining social, cultural and economic well-being.

Equity

implies distribution of economic, social and political resources in ways that are not restricted by age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation or income.

Therefore, Access and Equity is concerned with the removal of barriers in the design and delivery of programs and services and endeavouring to ensure that all community members have the opportunities to enhance their overall social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

Key Principles

The following Key Principles will inform all Council decision-making.

Access and Equity as a Policy for the City of Salisbury seeks to ensure that all members of the Salisbury community who face barriers of language, race, culture, religion, income, gender, sexual orientation and disability have a right and opportunity to:

- be recognised as valuable citizens;
- have equitable access to all aspects of Council's services and programs;
- contribute to the economic, social, political and cultural life of the community; and
- have their needs recognised and participate in the planning and administration of relevant policies, programs and services.

Key Groups

All community members will benefit from the Access and Equity Strategy, but key groups within the Salisbury community requiring specific attention in order to participate in all aspects of community life include but are not restricted to:

- Indigenous community members.
- Community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Community members with a disability.

An Organisational Approach to Access and Equity

Access and Equity as an initiative for the public sector was implemented in 1985. The initiative has, since that time, undergone a number of reviews and extensive consultations with Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments. The most recent result is the Council of Australian Government's Policy (COAG) agreed to the National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020 as a response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the

Multicultural Access and Equity – *Respecting Diversity, Improving Responsiveness 2012.*

The City of Salisbury has developed two frameworks which align with the above; they are *Beyond the Ramp* – Strategic Inclusion Planning Framework, and the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The Strategic Inclusion Planning Framework is Council’s response to the aspirations and expressed needs of people with a disability living and working in the Salisbury Area. The framework links to the Salisbury City Plan *Sustainable Futures* and sets out goals and priority actions which will enable the City to respond in a manner consistent with the City’s core values of access and equity as part of a broader commitment to a diverse community.

The Reconciliation Action Plan further ensures that the principles concerning cultural diversity are acknowledged and the community is included in discussions regarding the development of services, facilities and programs. Reconciliation Action Plans are nationally recognised frameworks which are widely accepted within the Aboriginal community as a way of committing to Reconciliation and *Closing the Gap* on Indigenous disadvantage.

The Strategic Inclusion Framework - *Beyond the Ramp* sets out its obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act, the National Disability Strategy and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In addition the City of Salisbury has recognised the benefits of broader issue of diversity in the workplace and across the community. Council’s Diversity Management Strategy and an Action Plan are focusing on developing programs and policies that lead to the creation of business excellence, including the provision of better services to its diverse community base.

Goals and Actions

The framework for the City of Salisbury Access and Equity Strategy is based on inclusion, citizenship, participation and infrastructure.

Inclusion - Personhood

All of the City of Salisbury’s diverse population to have a valued sense of themselves and their potential have and exercise control over the decisions they make in their lives.

Citizenship

All of the City of Salisbury’s diverse population to be active citizens in the life of the wider community based on their inherent value and their responsibility as contributing citizens.

Participation – Capacity Building

All of the City of Salisbury’s diverse population are growing their capacity to move into lives characterised by personhood and citizenship. This also includes the wider community growing its capacity to be inclusive and supportive of diversity.

Infrastructure

Council’s planning and management of its infrastructure enable the City of Salisbury’s diverse population and visitors to participate in community life. This

will be achieved through short, medium and long term strategies to improve accessibility beyond minimum compliance requirements.

Diversity Management Strategy

The implementation and realisation of recommendations set out in the Diversity Management Report with on-going support including the allocation of necessary resources.

Access and Equity Policy Statement

1. The City of Salisbury will aim to ensure that all members of the community have equitable access to the services, facilities and programs operated by the City.
2. Strategies to ensure equity of access for the diversity of the City of Salisbury's population, including those who may face additional barriers to participation, will be considered at all phases of service development, planning and implementation. Each division will determine its own approach to facilitating equity of access.
3. As described in *Beyond the Ramp*, Strategic Inclusion Planning Framework, and the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) it is important that appropriate opportunities for participation in discussions about the City's services, facilities and programs are provided for the diversity of the City of Salisbury's community, including those who may face barriers to participation.
4. Both internal processes, such as training and development, and external processes, such as consultation, promotion and information, will operate within the *Beyond the Ramp* Strategic Inclusion Planning Framework the Reconciliation Action Plan, and the Diversity Management Strategy.

Legislation

1. *Age Discrimination Act, 2004*
2. *Equal Opportunities for Women in the Workplace Act, 1999*
3. *Local Government Act, SA 1999*
4. *Disability Discrimination Act, 1992*
5. *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act, 1986*
6. *Equal Opportunity Act, SA 1984*
7. *Sex Discrimination Act, 1984*
8. *Racial Discrimination Act, 1975*

*This list of relevant legislation is indicative and not exclusive.

References/Resources

1. *Beyond the Ramp; Strategic Inclusion Planning Framework (City of Salisbury 2012)*
2. *Reconciliation Action Plan (City of Salisbury 2013)*
3. *National Disability Strategy (COAG 2011)*
4. *Multicultural Access and Equity – Respecting Diversity, Improving Responsiveness 2012*
5. *Engaging Salisbury – Managing Diversity Project 2011*
6. *Salisbury Inclusion and Access sub committee*

