

Diversity, Access & Inclusion Policy

Version: 2

Date updated: 16 February 2016

Responsible Department: Community Strengthening

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide strategic direction to the ongoing development of Council and its community to strengthen and value diversity through an inclusive, equitable and accessible community, inclusive, equitable and accessible services and a Council that is inclusive and reflective of its community.

This policy is underpinned by the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Community Development Principles of inclusiveness, collaboration, capacity building, equity and responsiveness.

2. Definitions

Council	means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a Municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989.
Councillors	means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council.
Council Officer	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
Diversity	A definition of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect and means more than just acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. It means understanding that each individual is unique and understanding the importance of respect and recognition of differences and similarities in our community. Consideration of diversity in race, ethnicity, physical ability, socio-economic status, age, religious/faith beliefs, political beliefs, gender identity, sexual orientation is vital in Council's decision making and advocacy, service provision, built environments, workforce and community development.

Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy at www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.

Access	All residents are provided with equitable and fair access to Council's services and information, facilities, built environments, programs, employment opportunities. Council will create the necessary conditions so that individuals and organisations desiring to, and who are eligible to, use our services, facilities, works, programs and employment opportunities will have equitable access to them free of discrimination.
Inclusion	The process of equitable and fair treatment and systems in Council's decision making, service delivery, programs, workforce practice, built environments and community. Council will aim to create the necessary conditions and environments that enable people to have their aspirations met, feel valued and secure and have a sense of belonging and connectedness and will be encouraged to participate in citizen engagement opportunities and will be encouraged to actively participate in the planning and provision of Council services and activities.
Equity	An equitable and fair approach in the distribution and provision of Council services and resources according to residents and service client's needs, rights and eligibility.

3. Scope

In line with the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, this policy provides for a whole of Council approach. Council's approach to planning and providing for diversity is to ensure that the principles of access, equity and inclusion are incorporated into all areas of Council's decision making; communications and advocacy; service design; provision and delivery; employment practices; physical and built environments; workforce and community development.

This focus is consistent with Council's vision of being a "City of Choice to Live Work and Raise a Family" and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan's core priority of "A Socially Connected Community" where all people feel valued, their differences are respected and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity.

Therefore, this policy applies to:

- » All people who live, work and raise a family in the City of Casey;
- » All employees including any person directly employed by the City of Casey or employed through an agency on a contract basis and Council's volunteers.

4. Context

Through the delivery of its Council Plan, Council is committed to strengthening community and promoting inclusion. The City of Casey is Victoria's most populous municipality and will be home to over 450,000 residents by 2036. Rapid population growth impacts on the relationships and connections people have with others.

While the population in the City of Casey is one of the most rapidly growing in size, it is also rapidly growing in diversity. With a current population of over 280,000 residents, a rich diversity including, for example; over 150 cultures, more than 140 languages

spoken, and with more than 120 faiths represented, the Council has long been aware of the opportunities and challenges this presents¹. Under the Local Government Act 1989, Council plans for and delivers services and facilities that are accessible and equitable and meet the diverse needs of the community. Therefore, Council needs to acknowledge the differences among members of the community by adapting services and environments to address inequity and disadvantage when planning for the existing and future population and provide accessible and equitable (fair) services which are in the best interests of its local community.

Council has a significant leadership role to play in influencing and promoting the development of equitable and inclusive environments which promote diversity, access and inclusion both in the community and in the workforce that supports the community. Council also has a role to advocate in the best interests of the community and to build social cohesion.

5. Policy

This policy details Council's legislative requirement and Council's commitment to valuing diversity by promoting community, celebrating and planning for diversity in Council's decision making and promoting diversity and inclusion in the community and workforce. It provides for Council to continue to advocate on behalf of Casey's residents in a way that results in all people feeling valued, their differences are respected, and that they can participate equally.

This policy will inform strategic actions on diversity planning across the organisation and the community.

The City of Casey is committed to providing equitable and inclusive services, facilities, works, programs and employment practices thereby ensuring that within reason:

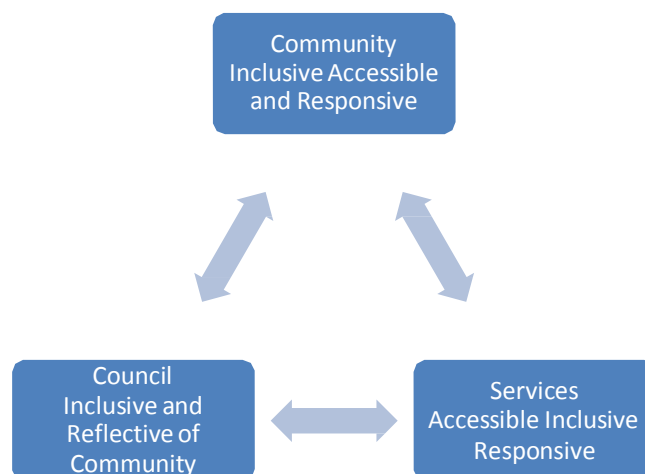
- » All people within the City of Casey can enjoy a secure and quality lifestyle, cultural and economic opportunities, and a sense of community.
- » People of all backgrounds and abilities have the opportunity to achieve their potential and participate fully in and at the City of Casey.
- » Council's planning and service delivery takes into account the needs of all people in the community.
- » All people gain access to quality services, opportunities and environments without discrimination.
- » All residents of the City of Casey feel supported and welcome to fully participate in Council services, programs and planning.

The City of Casey's commitment to Diversity, Access and Inclusion is reflected in the following themes which support Council in addressing and incorporating diversity, access and inclusion across the following three theme areas.

¹ 2011 Census data

Three – Community, Services and Council

The diagram shows the three themes of Community, Services and Council as connected and interrelated and also important and significant on their own.



Priority 1: Council – Inclusive and Reflective of the Community

This theme affirms and guides Council's commitment to building an inclusive organisation that values, recognises and respects the diversity of its community.

Key Aims

1. Support Council's decision makers to represent and reflect the diversity of the population and provide leadership in advocating in the best interests of the community.
2. Council will seek to promote the benefits of access and equity, while rejecting discrimination and prejudice and challenge racism and negative stereotyping.
3. Maintain compliance with legislation and uphold human rights.
4. Develop inclusive recruitment and employment strategies which support and develop a diverse workforce which is responsive to the community.
5. Develop a positive message to the community that Council values diversity and supports equal opportunity in the community and workforce.
6. Ensure that Council's external and internal communications i.e. imagery, language, messaging and signage is representative of the community.

Priority 2: Services – Accessible, Inclusive and Responsive

This theme affirms and guides Council's commitment to provide services that are planned, developed and delivered by well-equipped providers that meet the needs of a diverse community.

Key Aims

1. Maintain an efficient organisation that delivers accessible, inclusive and culturally safe services, which are effective in their responsiveness to the diverse needs of the community.

2. Develop its workforce and resources to be responsive and inclusive of the diverse population.
3. Promote engagement with the community which is inclusive of all residents.
4. Continue to provide and advocate for facilities, built environments and public open space to accessible and inclusive.

Priority 3: Community – Inclusive, Accessible and Cohesive

This theme affirms and guides Council's commitment to support meaningful participation of all local people in community life and to working with and advocating for community groups to build social cohesion.

Key Aims

1. To work in partnership with residents, agencies, community groups/organisations to promote and celebrate diversity, inclusive practice and develop social cohesion.
2. To advocate for equitable opportunities for all residents to participate fully in community life.

6. Legislative and Policy Context

Casey's Diversity, Access and Inclusion Policy is guided by the following Federal and State legislation and policies. The implementation of this policy will also ensure Council continues to meet its legal and policy obligations under Federal and State legislation.

Federal	State
» <i>Age Discrimination Act, 2004</i>	» <i>Carers Recognition Act, 2012</i>
» <i>Disability Discrimination Act, 1992</i>	» <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006</i>
» <i>Racial Discrimination Act, 1975</i>	» <i>Child, Youth and Families Act, 2005</i>
» <i>Racial Hatred Act, 1995</i>	» Commission for Children and Young People Act, 2012
» <i>Sex Discrimination Act, 1984</i>	» <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>
» <i>Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act, 2013</i>	» <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act, 2008</i>
» <i>The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act, 1986</i>	» <i>Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, 2001</i>
» <i>Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012</i>	» <i>Victorian Disability Act, 2006</i>
» Multicultural Access and Equity Policy: Respecting Diversity. Improving Responsiveness	» <i>Victorian Equal Opportunity Act, 2010</i>
» The People of Australia, 2011 - The Federal Government's Multicultural Policy	» <i>Victorian Multicultural Act, 2011</i>
» National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy 2011-2015	» Victoria's Advantage: Unity, Diversity, Opportunity, 2014 – Victoria's Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship Policy
» National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act, 2013 and National Disability Strategy 2010-2020	» Future Directions – Action agenda for young Victorians
	» Plan Melbourne, 2014
	» Priorities for Victorian Women's Health 2014-2018
	» The Victorian State Disability Plan 2013 -

» National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Ageing and Aged Care Strategy, 2012	2016
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7. Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council

8. Review

The next biennial review of this document is scheduled for completion by 28 February, 2020.