4 DRAFT SOCIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY POLICY 2019 - 2023

FILE REFERENCE INT1933106

RESPONSIBLE GENERAL MANAGER Tracey Parker

AUTHOR Glenda George

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the draft Social Justice and Equity Policy.

Attachments

1 Draft Social Justice & Equity Policy 2019- 2023 13 Pages
2 Community Engagement Plan Social Justice & Equity Policy 11 Pages

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The draft Social Justice and Equity Policy provides a framework to uphold the human rights of our diverse communities and promote the social justice principles of participation, access and equity in all aspects of community life. The cohorts represented in the policy include the First Peoples of our nation, people with a disability, people from migrants and refugees backgrounds and our LGBTIQ+ community. It aims to unite and strengthen some of council's existing policies and action plans by adopting an intersectional approach in addressing discrimination and promoting diversity and inclusion.

The policy will also go some way in assisting council to recognise the complexity of addressing discrimination for those who experience multiple disadvantage; encourage more efficient use of resources and provide for consistency in council's approach to inclusion and diversity.

Community and internal consultation sessions were held to inform the new policy. Key themes emerged from the community consultations that have been addressed initially through a new community engagement approach. The remaining feedback will inform the development of the action plans that align to the policy. A free online education program about the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities will also be available for staff to continue to support a workplace culture that addresses the social wellbeing of all of our residents.

BACKGROUND

Local government plays a critical role in encouraging and supporting active participation in civic life and ensuring that its delivery of services is accessible, equitable and inclusive to all residents. Two key objectives as stated in the Victorian Local Government Act 1989, are "to ensure that services and facilities provided by the council are accessible and equitable" [3C (2 e)]; and that council is "fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life" [3D (2f)] . Councils are also required to act consistently within the framework of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 and are bound by statutes relating to equal opportunity.

The premise of this policy recognises that an inclusive community that values social wellbeing is more resourceful and resilient. It supports a sense of belonging, participation in community and

civic activities and provides opportunities for people to reach their full potential. Not only is it a fundamental right of every individual to have the opportunity to participate, access facilities and feel included, but it is also in the best interest of the community that this is possible. Every person has strengths and skills that contribute to a community; they add value, enhance resilience and benefit everyone as a key element of a healthy, happy, connected and productive community.

This policy also recognises that we do not all have the same opportunities and that there are some groups who remain marginalised and isolated because of intergenerational trauma, race, ability and sexuality. It gives precedence to specific cohorts at greater risk of exclusion from social, economic and political life because of accessibility and discrimination. The policy also takes an intersectional approach to diversity and acknowledges that there are connections between structures that shape varied populations.

The policy will replace the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy 2017 and the Cultural Diversity Policy 2012 and be supported by a suite of action plans that focus on specific areas of diversity:

- Disability, Access and Inclusion Action Plan 2017 - 2021
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2015 - 19
- Cultural Diversity Action Plan 2015 – 19
- LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2019

In line with its social justice lens there are four guiding principles: equitable participation: enhanced accessibility; inclusive places and spaces and leadership and advocacy. These principles value and encourage people's participation in decision making about their lives and their community to realise the policy goals of meaningful participation, empowered communities and proudly diverse.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This new policy aligns to the international, federal and state government legislative obligations of Council:

International legislation

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The declaration has become a foundation document that has inspired numerous legally binding international human rights laws including:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Federal legislation and policies

The Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1988 and other legislation at a national level relevant to this policy include the:

- Racial Discrimination Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Closing the Gap Strategy 2008
- Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme 2013
- People of Australia – Australia's Multicultural Policy 2011
- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

State legislation and policies

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights Responsibilities 2006 contains 20 human rights to promote and protect the values of freedom, respect, equality and dignity. Specific rights that the Charter protects include that:

- Everyone is entitled to equal and effective protection against discrimination
- Everyone has the right to take part in public life
- People are entitled to be respected for their different family, religious or cultural backgrounds.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold distinct cultural rights,

Other relevant Victorian legislation includes:
- Victorian Racial & Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Disability Act 2006
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2011

Local government responsibilities
The Local Government Act 1989 provides the framework for the establishment and operation of Victorian councils. This includes the responsibility to serve communities for the good of all and states a number of objectives including:
- "to ensure that services and facilities provided by the Council are accessible and equitable" [3C (2 e)];
- "fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life" [3D (2f)]

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires Councils to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing in the community.

Victorian Disability Act 2006 - Section 38 of the Act requires councils to develop and report on Disability Action Plans that promote four key outcomes:
(i) Reduced barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services and facilities;
(ii) Reduced barriers to people with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment;
(iii) Greater inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

Creating the Future – Council Plan 2018 sets out a range of actions to meet Council's vision and the plan with a "key focus for Council is to reflect the views of its diverse communities in key decision making processes. Our community is changing both geographically and culturally. We are committed to strengthening our engagement with the community to provide valuable input that informs our decisions" (P.9)

Liveability Plan 2017 - 29 provides a clear framework for public health planning within the Shire. The Plan's vision is that Cardinia Shire is a liveable, resilient community where the environment flourishes and residents are healthy, included and connected. This policy aligns to the 'social equity' element within the framework, which strives to achieve social equity across the seven liveability domains of active travel, education, employment, food, health and social services, housing and open spaces and places. We know that greater equity across these domains can result in greater health and social outcomes for individuals and the community.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

A community engagement plan (see attached) was completed for the policy development, and consultations were held with internal staff and representatives from the four cohorts identified in the policy.

The internal consultations focussed on the parameters of a new policy and its influence overall within the organisation. The external consultations were held with:
- Cardinia Shire Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee

- B Ur Self program participants
- Multicultural women's community groups
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders residents

Participants were asked to provide feedback on access, participation and engagement in Council activities, venues, programs, services and information. A number of key themes emerged from the consultations:

- Access to facilities was reasonable however; symbols that represented marginalised group were seen as a positive approach to feeling welcomed, for example Aboriginal artwork, reception desks at wheelchair level, rainbow flags and interpreter signs were all noted.
- Participation in council activities was minimal, for example, the majority were not aware of and/or had never participated in broader community consultation sessions or did they access Council's website, Facebook or twitter for information.
- Feeling like you are part/or not of the community was noted, for example, Council publications were not seen to reflect our diverse communities.

In line with A New Local Government Act for Victoria 2017 and the feedback received during the policy development, councils community engagement planning tool has incorporated a new checklist to ensure these groups are considered and where appropriate included in consultation sessions carried out by council staff. This may require some time to ensure that those affected can participate in a meaningful way. It may also require making adjustments to remove barriers to participation and ensuring an inclusive approach.

The remaining feedback from the community consultations can be considered during the development of each of the action plans that align to the policy, and a free online education program about the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities will be available to support staff to continue building a workplace culture that recognises the importance of social justice and human rights.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Some resourcing was required during the policy development phase however no further financial implications have been identified for the adoption of the policy.

CONCLUSION

This new policy aims to unite and strengthen some of council's existing policies and action plans by adopting an intersectional approach in addressing discrimination and promoting diversity and inclusion. It also provides for a commitment to work towards an organisational culture that views social wellbeing as a priority; ensures everyone has access to council resources and services; includes all residents as equals, without discrimination and values and encourages people's participation in decision making about their lives and their community.

Council plays a vital and extensive role in delivering services, programs and information for the Shire's diverse communities and this new policy will align to the new Local Government Bill 2018, which provides for a greater emphasis on community engagement and residents participating in civic life.

Cardinia Shire Council

DRAFT Social Justice and Equity Policy 2019 – 2023

HPRM number	INT199515
Policy Owner	Community Strengthening Business Unit
Adopted by	
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Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges the Shire as being the land of the Traditional Owners, the Bunurong, the Boonwurrung and the Wurundjeri people. Council pays its respects to their elders both past and present.

Executive Summary

Vision

Cardinia Shire Council recognises the importance of supporting diversity in our vibrant and growing communities. Our diversity is highly valued and a source of great strength and resilience. Promoting an inclusive municipality that respects human rights, celebrates diversity and fosters participation in all aspects of community life is central to our goal of achieving better outcomes for every resident.

Purpose

Council's Social Justice and Equity Policy 2019 -2023 (the policy) provides a framework to uphold the human rights of our diverse communities and promote the social justice principles of participation, access and equity in all aspects of community life.

The policy also unifies the Disability Access & Inclusion Policy and the Cultural Diversity Policy and is supported by a suite of action plans that focus on specific areas of diversity:

- Disability, Access and Inclusion Action Plan 2017 - 2021
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2015 - 19
- Cultural Diversity Action Plan 2015 – 19
- LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2019

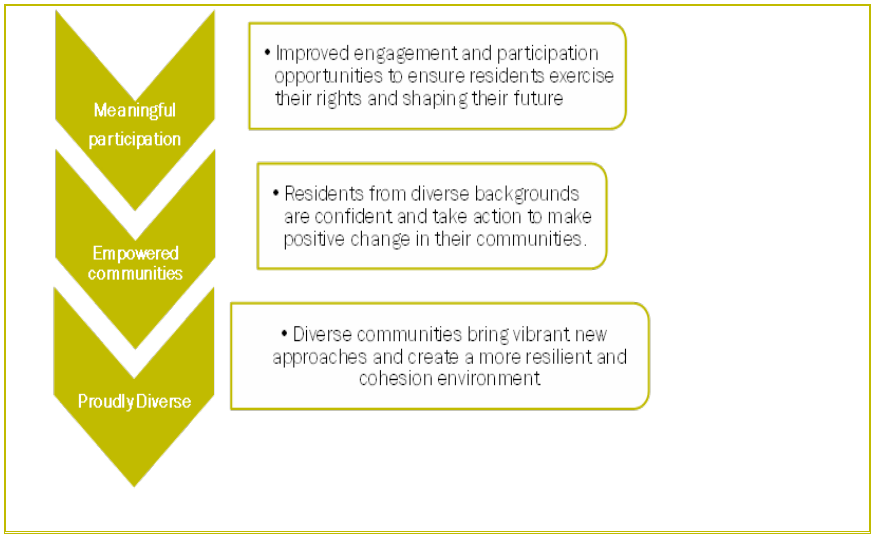
Guiding Principles

The principles listed below will guide the decisions taken and support the commitment of addressing social justice and equity during the life of this policy. Consideration should also be given to each of the principles in the day-to-day activities undertaken by council to ensure that our organisational culture is inclusive of all of our residents.

The principles include:

- Equitable participation
- Enhances accessibility
- Inclusive places & spaces
- Leadership & advocacy

Goals


Meaningful participation
• Improved engagement and participation opportunities to ensure residents exercise their rights and shaping their future
Empowered communities
• Residents from diverse backgrounds are confident and take action to make positive change in their communities.
Proudly Diverse
• Diverse communities bring vibrant new approaches and create a more resilient and cohesion environment

1. Vision

Cardinia Shire Council recognises the importance of supporting diversity in our vibrant and growing communities. Our diversity is highly valued and a source of great strength and resilience. Promoting an inclusive municipality that respects human rights, celebrates diversity and fosters participation in all aspects of community life is central to our goal of achieving better outcomes for every resident.

2. Purpose

Council's Social Justice and Equity Policy 2019 -2023 (the policy) provides a framework to uphold the human rights of our diverse communities and promote the social justice principles of participation, access and equity in all aspects of community life..

The policy recognises firstly that there are dimensions of structural disadvantage in our communities and that groups are discriminated against and marginalised because of race, ethnicity, (dis)ability and sexuality and secondly it gives precedence to specific cohorts who are at greater risk of exclusion from social, economic and political life because of accessibility and discrimination.

Underpinning this policy is a commitment to work towards an organisational culture that:

- views social wellbeing as a priority
- ensures everyone has access to council resources and services
- includes all residents as equals, without discrimination, and
- values and encourages people's participation in decision making about their lives and their community

The policy also unites and strengthens some of council's existing policies and action plans by adopting an intersectional approach in addressing discrimination and promoting diversity and inclusion. Intersectionality recognises that no aspect of a person's identity is experienced in isolation, but rather shaped by interactions between different personal attributes such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, migration status and disability.

The social justice and equity policy will:

- provide for consistency in council's approach to inclusion and diversity
- recognise the complexity of addressing discrimination for those who experience multiple disadvantage
- encourage more efficient use of resources by working collaboratively, both in and out of council on local, shared priorities across separate portfolio areas
- support areas of council to genuinely meet our human rights obligations

3. Scope

The policy acknowledges that communities are all different and that within our diverse communities there will be residents that have limited access to the resources and opportunities needed to participate fully in society. These groups more often than not, experience a complex mix of economic, social, health and early-life disadvantage and are at the greatest risk of being excluded from social, economic and political life.

This policy provides for diverse groups, with the aim to sustain council's existing commitments to overcome disadvantage and discrimination for residents from all ages and life stages within the cohorts below:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Council acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (A&TSI) peoples as First Australians and recognises their culture, history, diversity and their deep connection to the land. Dispossession of land, culture and language has created long-term systemic disadvantage for A&TSI communities and they experience high levels of racial discrimination.

- People from migrants, refugees and asylum seeker backgrounds

There are a number of barriers to participation for migrants and refugees including written and oral communication, recognition of skills and qualifications, lack of cultural awareness and racism discrimination. Trauma and torture experienced by refugees fleeing civil wars also creates barriers to participation.

- People with a disability

Approximately one in five residents has a disability and most people will experience some kind of disability during their lives. Disability discrimination is one of the most frequent subjects of inquiries and complaints reported to the Human Rights Commission, as it can prevent people from participating in community life and enjoying other human rights.

- LGBTIQ+ community

People in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and gender diverse (LGBTIQ) community continue to face discrimination and equality issues in many areas of life, despite decades of equal opportunity laws in Victoria. Prejudice and discrimination are major contributors to the development of stress-related psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, suicide and substance abuse among same-sex, intersex and transgender diverse people.

The policy is supported by a suite of action plans that focus on specific areas of diversity:

- Disability, Access and Inclusion Action Plan 2017 - 2021
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2015 - 19
- Cultural Diversity Action Plan 2015 – 19
- LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2019

4. Legislative context

International legislation

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948. The declaration has become a foundation document that has inspired numerous legally binding international human rights laws including:

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The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires Councils to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing in the community.

Victorian Disability Act 2006 - Section 38 of the Act requires councils to develop and report on Disability Action Plans that promote four key outcomes:

(i) Reduced barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services and facilities;
(ii) Reduced barriers to people with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment;
(iii) Greater inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community;
(iv) Tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with a disability.

Cardinia Shire Council

Creating the Future – Council Plan 2018 sets out a range of actions to meet Council's vision and plan with a "key focus for Council is to reflect the views of its diverse communities in key decision making processes. Our community is changing both geographically and culturally. We are committed to strengthening our engagement with the community to provide valuable input that informs our decisions" (P.9)

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across these domains can result in greater health and social outcomes for individuals and the community.

5. Guiding Principles

The principles listed below will guide the decisions taken and support the commitment of addressing social justice and equity during the life of this policy. Consideration should also be given to each of the principles in the day-to-day activities undertaken by council to ensure that our organisational culture is inclusive of all of our residents.

The action plans that relate to this policy will individually address these principles through initiatives that provide for greater participation, accessibility and inclusion at a personal and societal level.

5.1 Equitable participation

i) Engagement – a healthy community is an active and participatory one where people can engage in different ways and have genuine opportunity for meaningful input into shaping their own futures.

ii) Economic participation - supports workplace diversity by creating an inclusive environment that values and respects employee's individual differences and the varied experience and points of view they offer.

iii) Decision-making - ensures all residents have the opportunity to exercise their rights, while overall improved participation will allow everyone to better shape their own futures and that of their communities.

5.2 Enhanced accessibility

Ensuring information and services are provided in a way that all residents can access will increase residents participation in a range of activities and programs that could be improve their social connectedness and wellbeing.

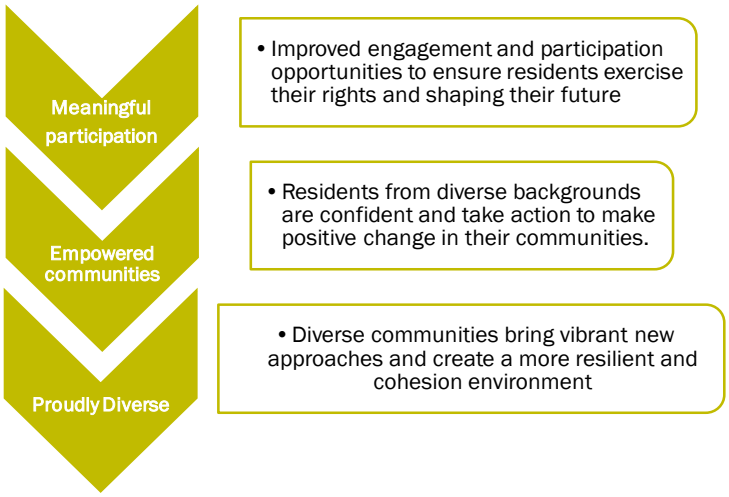
5.3 Inclusive places and spaces

Planning for and providing welcoming, safe and culturally appropriate places and spaces will encourage those from diverse backgrounds to access Council owned and managed public spaces.

5.4 Leadership and advocacy

As the closest government tier to community, council is well positioned to advocate for and promote social justice and wellbeing while addressing discrimination and marginalisation of its residents from diverse backgrounds.

6. Goals



The policy promotes social justice and equity by working towards three pivotal goals:

6.1 Meaningful participation

Facilitating processes for improved engagement and participation of all forms will ensure all of our residents have the opportunity to exercise their rights and participate meaningfully in shaping their own futures.

6.2 Empowered communities

Supporting an empowered community where residents from diverse backgrounds are confident and feel they have the ability to influence decisions, take action and make positive changes in their communities.

6.2 Proudly diverse

Bringing together people of various backgrounds and different life experiences generates new ideas, perspectives and practices. Together our different approaches make a stronger and more vibrant community and create an environment for greater social harmony and cohesion.

7. Monitoring evaluation and review

Community consultations were held to inform this policy. The feedback highlighted some key areas that will assist in improving the social wellbeing and sense of belonging of our diverse communities. These areas pertain to council's community engagement processes, information dissemination, imagery that reflects diversity and welcoming and accessible facilities. To date a new community engagement planning tool has been developed and the remaining key areas listed above will be addressed in the action plans that support this policy.

Each of the four action plans will be evaluated against the policy goals (and desired outcomes) to measure its success in relation to improved access to information and

participation in Council's decision making processes. The policy will be reviewed on a four-year basis in line with the Community Strengthening Business Unit policy protocol.

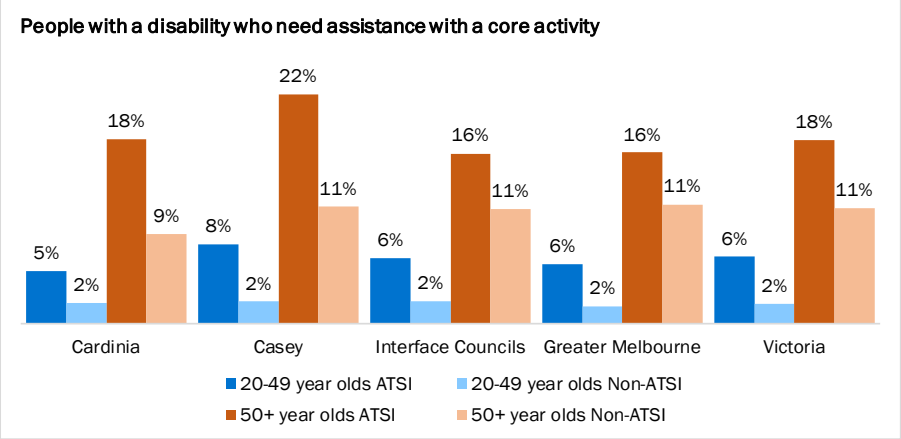
Appendix 1

Community Profiles

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (A&TSI) now make up almost 1 percent of Cardinia Shire's population, which is double the proportion recorded 10 years ago. Latest census data (2016) reports that there were 782 A&TSI people living in Cardinia Shire. Over the last ten years, there has also been a significant increase of A&TSI people aged 50+ age group that the census recorded as 105 or 13 percent of the Shire's total population of A&TSI residents.

Across Cardinia Shire, the City of Casey and comparison regions, there is a consistently higher incidence of A&TSI residents who have a disability for which they require assistance with a core activity.



People from migrant, refugees and asylum seeker background

The census data (2016) recorded 17,839 residents who were living in Cardinia Shire were born overseas and 14 percent arrived in Australia within five years prior to 2016. Since the previous census in 2011 there has been notably high increases in residents who were born in Southern and Central Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa; more so than Southern and Eastern Europe. From 2006 to 2016, there were notable increases in residents from the following ancestries:

Ancestry	Population 2006	Population 2016	Percentage change
Indian	207	2,117	923%
Sinhalese	198	1,212	512%
Chinese	242	1,065	340%
Filipino	171	852	398%
Mauritian	158	638	304%
Sudanese	15	565	3,667%

Approximately 20 percent of 18+year old Cardinia Shire residents speak languages other than English in their homes and of those 34 percent or just over one third speak English not well or not at all.

LGBTIQ+ community

While LGBTIQ+ people are as diverse as the rest of the population, Australian society has generally regarded heterosexuality as the most acceptable sexual orientation. This means that LGBTIQ+ people have historically been marginalised and discriminated against. For many this discrimination has resulted in isolation, loss of employment, family and friends and reduced access to services. Many older LGBTIQ+ Australians have lived through a time when disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity resulted in imprisonment and forced medical 'cures'.

The strong correlation and causal relationship between the discrimination of sexual minorities and poorer mental health outcomes is well documented.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found homosexual/bisexual people are:

- Twice as likely to have a high/very high level of psychological distress (18.2% vs. 9.2%).
- Almost three times as likely to have had suicidal thoughts (34.7% vs. 12.9%).
- Five times as likely to have had suicidal plans (17.1% vs. 3.7%).
- Four times as likely to have attempted suicide (12.6% vs. 3.1%).
- Twice as likely to have no contact with family or no family to rely on for serious problems (11.8% vs. 5.9%).
- Four times more likely to have ever been homeless (12% homosexual/bisexual vs. 2.9% heterosexual).
- More likely to be a current cigarette smoker (35.7% vs. 22%)
- More likely to have had a chronic condition in the last 12-months (51.3% vs. 46.9%)

People with a disability

Despite people with a disability contributing productively in society, Victorians with a disability are more likely to experience discrimination and stigma, live in poverty, have poorer health, lower levels of educational attainment and be unemployed. As a result, people with a disability are less likely to reach their full potential, and or, be actively involved in social, economic and civic life.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) estimated that 4.2 million Australians, 18.5% of the population live with a disability, the incidence of disability increasing with age. A disability is generally defined as a condition that may restrict a person's mobility, sensory or mental functions to undertake or perform a task in the same way as a person who does not have a disability.

Disabilities affect people in different ways. While many people associate 'disability' with someone who uses a wheelchair, the application of disability is much broader. The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) identifies and defines the following categories of disability:

- Physical – affects a person's mobility or dexterity
- Intellectual – affects a person's ability to learn
- Psychiatric – affects a person's thinking processes and behaviours
- Sensory – affects a person's ability to hear or see
- Neurological including ABI – results in the loss of some mental or bodily functions

- Physical disfigurement
- Learning disability
- Immunological – the presence of organisms causing disease in the body

While some people are born with a disability, many people acquire a disability, approaching or as part of adult life, because of an accident, illness, genetic condition or as part of the aging process. Along with different disability 'types' it is also acknowledged that disability may be experienced alongside other barriers to participation, such as gender, age, sexuality, language and culture.

It is predicted that Cardinia Shire will continue to experience significant population growth over the next twenty years. Cardinia Shire's current population (2017) is estimated to be 99,192, of which approximately 17 percent, or 16,465 of all residents report living with a disability. By 2036, Cardinia Shire's population is estimated to reach 180,308, an overall increase of 82 percent. Reflecting this trend will be a corresponding increase in the number of our residents living with a disability.

Appendix 2

Policy definitions

Intersectional Approach

Individuals are complex and are shaped by interactions between different personal attributes such as race, class, sexuality, disability, migration status and religion. These interactions occur within a context of connected systems and power structures such as policies, governments, and the media.

An intersectional approach assists us to understand the connections between structures that shape diverse populations. It also enables a more effective and efficient response than a 'one-size fits all' approach for solving social inequities. People can experience both privilege and oppression, depending on what specific situation or context they are in. Individuals are also members of different groups at once that often overlap, and may face exclusion on the basis of one or more characteristic or identity. By adopting an intersectional approach, we can respond more appropriately to these experiences.

Accessibility

Within this policy context, accessibility refers to council services, programs, information and facilities being available to all of our residents. It also refers specifically to the design of services, products or environments for people regardless of ability, language or socio economic status. Accessibility also includes the concept of *Universal Design*, which is the process of creating products or environments that are usable by people with the widest possible range of abilities, operating in the widest possible range of situations.

Diversity

Diversity refers to the variety of differences between people. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. Harnessing the potential of our diversity requires acceptance and respect. It is based on an understanding that each individual is unique, and recognition of our individual differences.

Equality

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

Equity

Equity means that council services and programs should deliver outcomes for diverse communities on par with those that other members of our community can expect to receive.

Human Rights

Human rights are universal and affirm the inherent right of all people to be treated with respect, equality and dignity. Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that people are entitled to simply because they are human beings. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)* recognises that 'the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'. It declares that human rights are universal – to be enjoyed by all people, no matter who they are or where they live. The Universal Declaration includes civil and political rights, like the right to life, liberty, free speech and privacy. It also includes economic, social and cultural rights (including religion), like the right to social security, health and education.

Victorian local governments are obliged to comply with the *Victoria Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*. The Charter requires the Victorian Government, public servants, local councils, Victoria Police and other public authorities) to act compatibly with human rights, and to consider human rights when developing policies, making laws, delivering services and making decisions. Therefore, no matter which state or local government agency the community is dealing with, the same human rights apply.

Inclusion

An inclusive society is based on the fundamental values of equity, equality, social justice, human rights and freedom, as well as on the principles of respect and acceptance of difference. An individual who experiences inclusion has access to resources, opportunities and capabilities to learn, work (including paid, voluntary or family/carer responsibilities), engage and have a voice in decisions that affect them.

Participation

Participation is about meaningful engagement with the community to enable people from the identified priority groups to genuinely participate in shaping their own futures. Community participation relies on Council having a good knowledge of people living in the municipality, communicating effectively and responding appropriately to individuals and communities.

Social Justice

Social justice recognises that everyone should have the opportunity to experience the same economic, political and social rights, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender or other characteristics. A socially just community is one in which there is:

- Access (greater equality of access to information and services)
- Equity (overcoming unfairness caused by unequal access to economic resources and power)
- Rights (equal effective legal, industrial and political rights)
- Participation (expanded opportunities for real participation in the decisions that govern their lives).

Community engagement plan for:

Social Justice and Equity Policy

Plan developed by: Mark Carter
Engagement period: Start: 17 October 2018
End: 18 December 2018

Project overview

This policy is being developed to support Cardinia Shire Council embed the values of participation, access and inclusion into all of Council's services, programs and projects. It provides for a whole of Council approach to promoting diversity, equality and dignity through communication, programs, services and decision-making processes and it gives precedence to specific cohorts who are recognised as being at greater risk of exclusion from social, economic and political life because of accessibility and discrimination.

The policy will assist to;

- support all areas of Council to genuinely meet our human rights obligations
- recognise the complexity of addressing discrimination for those who experience multiple disadvantage
- encourage more efficient use of resources by working collaboratively, both in and out of Council on local, shared priorities across separate portfolio areas.
- provide for consistency in Council's approach to inclusion and diversity

The following cohorts will be the main focus of the policy;

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Migrants and Refugees
- People with disabilities
- LGBTIQ community

A suite of action plans that focus on specific areas of diversity support the policy;

- Disability, Access and Inclusion Action Plan 20–17 – 2021
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2015 - 19
- Cultural Diversity Action Plan 2015 – 19
  LGBTIQ Action Plan 2019 (internal)

The policy will replace the following Council policies:

- Cardinia Shire Council Access and Inclusion Policy 2013 -17
- Cardinia Shire Council Cultural Diversity Policy 2012 - 16

Consult with community groups – each target group individually

Checklist developed with input from the external community members –

What is within our influence?
Council facilities and infrastructure – footpaths, playgrounds, seating, open spaces,
Council services and programs - Maternal & child health, youth programs
Employment – recruitment processes
Information via publications, website, social media
Procurement

Engagement overview and purpose

Engagement overview:
The policy consultation process includes both internal and external sessions as a means of further input, determining the priority areas that the policy addresses and trialling a new procedure to maximise the policy's reach.

The following will be undertaken as part of the process;

- **An information session** with Safe & Inclusive Communities team.
- **Individual meetings** with representatives from each of the priority groups listed above.
- **An internal workshop** with staff to discuss consultation findings

Aim: To develop the Social Justice and Equity Policy and have consultations findings addressed.

Engagement Activities	Key Indicators/Outcomes	Target
Information session with Safe & Inclusive Communities team	The team understands the importance of the new overarching policy and where it sits in the hierarchy of documents	N/A
External meetings with representatives from each of the priority groups listed above.	Have met with representatives from each priority group	Minimum of two representative from each target cohort
Internal workshop with staff who oversee community engagement and action plans that sit under the policy	Representation from each team that would be affected by the policy and/or would be expected to refer to the checklist created.	Minimum of one representative per business unit affected.

Key messages

What do you want the community to know about the project/issue and engagement opportunity?

Community members / target cohorts – This is your opportunity to shape a new Council policy and provide input into practical measures that can be utilised by council staff when sharing information implementing services and planning projects.

Internal business units – A new policy has been developed which will influence the way you engage with and view our community. We are interested in hearing your feedback to ensure council staff are able to support the policy in their everyday activities.

Political Issues

There has been a range of discussions internally in relation to the cohorts represented in the policy and the extent of the policy's influence. The groups listed in the policy are recognised as cohorts most at risk of being excluded from mainstream activities, Council community consultations, services and programs.

In developing this policy there has also been a distinction made between population groups/cohorts and social issues. This policy aims to address the marginalisation of specific population groups. It does not extend to social issues such as financial hardship and/or homelessness. Council has other mechanisms in place to address these social issues.

Negotiables/non-negotiables

Negotiables	Non-negotiables
Community members / target cohorts – Participants will have the chance to review the policy principles and identify desired outcomes for each of the priority areas. They will also have the opportunity to identify the target areas that will made up the Checklist to be utilised by council staff when implementing services and projects.	They will not have the 'final say' on what is included / omitted from the policy and checklist. The final decision on these will take into account a variety of opinions and will go through an internal approval process including adoption by councillors and senior management.
Internal stakeholders – Council staff that [participate in the workshop sessions will be able to provide feedback on the checklist that has been developed and what could be changed / added to make it more relevant and useful for their teams.	They will not have the 'final say' on what is included / omitted from the checklist. The final decision will take into account a variety of opinions and will go through an internal approval process including adoption by councillors and senior management.

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Stakeholders/target audience

What segments of the community will you target; (please tick all relevant)

Under 12 ☐ 12-25 ☐ 25-50 ☐ Families ☐ Seniors ☐ CALD ✔
Indigenous ✔ Disability ✔ LGBTIQ ✔

Other/s: (please list)
Internal departments

Identify your external stakeholders:
Representatives from the stakeholder list above:
Disability Access & Inclusion Committee
B Ur Self program participants
Multicultural womens community group
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander residents

Internal stakeholders/collaborators

Identify your internal stakeholders:
Safe & Inclusive Communities
Strategic Planners
Community development

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Existing data and concurrent engagement opportunities

Funding information/budget

Activity	Funding source	Cost	Total
Half day/per week for 9 weeks	Community Strengthening budget		

Risk considerations

Complete the table to provide details of identified or potential risks and how these will be mitigated.
Refer to section 6.1.10 of the Community engagement handbook for further information.

Identified risk	Risk mitigation strategy	Stakeholders involved	Responsibility
Community members / services / organisations or council staff complain they did not have the opportunity to provide feedback	Ensure the invitation to participate is extended to all main organisations / services or prominent community members. With this be clear about what the meeting is about and what it will achieve. With internal staff, offering participation to all of council to provide feedback, but then targeting the most relevant business units to get them to attend will mean everyone was made aware of the option to contribute. Again, be clear about what the session is for and what will be achieved.	Community members Internal business units	Glenda
Community members / services / organisations or council staff complain that their feedback was not listened to or	Ensure that all participants are aware that all feedback is taken into consideration however a range of	Community members. Internal business units	Glenda

implemented	factors will determine the final decision and there is an extensive approval process. This will be articulated through the meetings /workshop session.		
There is contention around the target cohorts that are included in the Social Justice and Equity Policy and why they receive additional focus and support	Being equipped with the evidence to support each cohorts inclusion in the policy and why others have been excluded will be enough to address this risk. This may include statistics, research papers, evidence of funding provided to council etc..	Community members Internal Business units	Glenda
Any others?			

Note: you can add more table rows by putting your cursor in the last cell on the right and hitting the tab key.

Engagement and communications action plan

1. **Community engagement activity:** Information session with Safe & Inclusive Communities team

From: 6 September 2018 **To:** 13 September 2018

Stakeholders/target audience: Safe and Inclusive communities' team

Activity description and format:
Information will be provided to the Safe and Inclusive Communities Team in relation to the new Social Justice and Equity Policy, including;

1) Presentation of the background paper
2) Explaining where the document fits in the hierarchy of council documents
3) Running through the on the ground use of the policy and checklist by council staff
4) Gaining feedback from the team regarding who they believe should be included in the internal and external workshops to be delivered

Evaluation: Observation will be used as the main evaluation method in this session to gauge the level of understanding of team members in relation to the policy purpose.

Feedback Mechanism/s: The team will be provided with an update on the policy after the external workshop has been delivered and the checklist developed. They will then gain a further update after the internal workshop when the checklist is finalised.

Engagement activity key tasks / milestones	Due date	Responsible person/s
Collate presentation material for team meeting		Glenda
Present at team meeting and collect suggested stakeholders		Glenda / Team
Deliver initial community meeting / develop checklist		Glenda / external stakeholders
Provide an update to the team about the community meeting / develop checklist		Glenda
Deliver internal stakeholders meeting / refine checklist		Glenda / internal stakeholders
Provide an update to the team about the internal stakeholders meeting and finalised checklist		Glenda

Communication / Marketing tools	Distribution method / promotional channels;
N/A	

2. **Community engagement activity:** **External meetings**

From: TBC **To:** N/A

Stakeholders/target audience: Identified target cohort group representatives

Activity description and format:
These meetings will review the policy principles and identify desired outcomes for each of the four areas of;

- **Equitable participation**
  This requires maximising community consultation, engagement and civic participation to ensure all residents have the opportunity to exercise their rights. Improved participation will allow people from the priority groups to better shape their own futures and that of their communities.

- **Accessible services**
  Council has a legal obligation to ensure that all residents can access all of its services. Ensuring Council's communication methods and services are accessible to people from the priority groups will improve wellbeing and enhance community life.

- **Inclusive places and spaces**
  Providing welcoming, safe and culturally appropriate places and spaces will encourage more residents from the priority groups to access Council's owned and managed public spaces. Respecting and valuing difference creates an environment for greater social harmony and cohesion.

- **Leadership and advocacy**
  As the closest government tier to community, Council is well positioned to advocate for and promote human rights while addressing discrimination and marginalisation of its residents.

The representatives will assist in identifying the target areas that make up the Policy Checklist to be completed by council staff when implementing services / projects.

Proposed format of meetings;

Duration	Activity
5 mins	Introducing the policy and principle areas
30 to 40 mins	Ask the representative to provide comment on what council could implement under each policy principal area to assist the cohort they are representing, run through them one by one. During this discussion as the ideas come out see which of them can be directly transferred into the policy checklist (not all of them will fit neatly or at all)
5 mins	Wrap up – Where to from here. Thank them for contributing and let them know about the process for this point and how they will be kept informed.

Evaluation of method: Feedback can be obtained from the identified representatives via emails. This can be undertaken after the checklist and policy has been finalised to gain their sentiment on the consultation process and the resulting documents adopted by council.

Feedback Mechanism/s: The email / correspondence sent out to gain feedback about the process and the resulting documents is a way of closing the loop around what their contribution led to whilst gaining some feedback on the process.

Engagement activity key tasks / milestones	Due date	Responsible person/s
Contact identified representatives and organise meetings		Glenda
Undertake meetings		Glenda
Feed information into the development of the checklist for council staff and policy		Glenda
Send follow up email asking for feedback on the resulting checklist and policy and the engagement process.		Glenda

Communication / Marketing tools	Distribution method / promotional channels;

Contact with identified representatives	Email / phone / letters

3. Community engagement activity: Internal Workshop

4 January 2019

Stakeholders/target audience: Identified internal departments

Activity description and format:
A workshop will be help with internal departments that have ben identified will need to comply with the new Human Right and Equity Policy and use the policy checklist when implementing services and projects. The workshop will be delivered in the following format;

Duration	Activity
5 mins	Introduction of the session and its purpose
15 mins	Presentation of the policy and its principals and Explaining where the document fits in the hierarchy of council documents.
10 mins	Presenting the policy checklist and explaining how it was devised
25 mins	Activity: Applying the checklist to your work – what works for you, what doesn't
5 mins	Conclusion – thank participant, where to from here (including proposed implementation date)

Evaluation: The session itself is an evaluation / test run of the checklist and the feedback provided from the teams will assist in refining it for use

Feedback Mechanism/s: The participants will be provided with the final policy and checklist when it is ready for use and thanked for their participation.

Engagement activity key tasks / milestones	Due date	Responsible person/s
Develop checklist based on consultation with target cohort representatives.		Glenda
Invite identified internal departments to workshop session		Glenda

Develop / collect workshop materials		Glenda
Deliver workshop		Glenda
Update checklist and finalise policy, once approved send out to all participants		Glenda

Communication / Marketing tools	Distribution method / promotional channels;
N/A	

Evaluation

Refer to section 6.3 of the Community engagement handbook for further information on how to complete the evaluation.

Key indicators / Outcomes [Did you achieve expected objective, outcomes and targets, were there any other unintended positive outcomes]	**Did you experience any barriers / negatives, before or during the engagement process?** [Also include if there were any ways you overcame these]	**Number Engaged**
Activity 1: **Disability Access & Inclusion Committee**	**No**	**10**
Activity 2: **B Ru Self participants**	No	**15**
Activity 3: **Multicultural womens community group**	**No**	**33**
Activity 4: **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander residents**	**No**	**2**

Feedback from participants [What feedback was collected from participants in relation to the consultation / engagement process?] See consultation feedback in TRIM	
Engagement Activity [or whole process if relevant]	**Feedback provided from participants** [Include how feedback was collected, if a survey was completed, list the main points and link to TRIM for full data report]

Suggested improvements that could be made to individual engagement activities and/or the overall engagement process and delivery? [What would others undertaking a similar engagement activity next time, this may include communication promotion, facilitation, target group selection, partnerships etc…]

Please provide links to any report / outcomes, consultation data or recommendation the engagement informed	*{Please Insert Title and TRIM link]*