

Access and Equity Policy

# Introduction

In dealing with people we will treat them as we would like them to treat us. We will not discriminate against any person or group irrespective of their age, gender, nationality, religion, level of education, income, physical or mental disabilities, social status or sexual preferences.

We will conduct our business in a manner, which reflects our commitment to social justice principles:

**Equity**: a fairer distribution of economic resources and power.

**Access**: ensuring fair and equal access for all people to those services that are important for their quality of life.

**Participation**: maximising the opportunities for people to participate in the circumstances which affect their lives.

# Purpose

This policy sets out the access and equity principles under which the neighbourhood house will operate.

### Principles

It is the policy of this neighbourhood house to ensure that people have access to the planning, decision-making, programs and services of the House on a non-discriminatory basis. Strategies will be put in place to ensure fair and equal opportunities for all participants to achieve their own goals. Strategies will include:

* Working in such a way as to promote equity, access, participation and the rights of people within the community.
* Seeking to include those sections of the community that are under-represented at the House and are disadvantaged.
* Making a specific commitment to those people who are most disadvantaged, for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people on low incomes, sole parents, people with non-English speaking backgrounds, people with a disability, those without access to education, and young people.
* Developing an understanding of what disadvantage is, why people are disadvantaged and who is disadvantaged in the local community.
* Recognising and responding to specific issues of language and culture, gender, sexual preference, disability, financial disadvantage, social and geographic isolation.
* Planning and undertaking special measures to ensure the inclusion of disadvantaged groups within their community.

### Special measures may include:

* promotion of programs in relevant languages and styles and through relevant media
* ensuring that targeted groups have a say in the development of programs and in management processes
* seeking to assist disadvantaged groups to establish programs which they own and control if this is preferred
* advocating on behalf of disadvantaged people with government
* ensuring that the management committee represents a diversity of opinion and is accessible to all members through open and accountable practices