

POLICY NO: 3.10.2

ACCESS AND EQUITY

OBJECTIVES

The Access and Equity Policy aims to ensure that the City of Vincent responds to the needs of all residents and customers in an equitable and non-discriminatory way. The policy provides the mechanism to ensure that the needs of different groups are recognised and addressed.

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Vincent strives to improve the quality of life for people by providing equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities and equity in participation. The City of Vincent is committed to establishing access to buildings, facilities, and services, opportunities to participate in all Council activities including community consultations and raising community awareness.

All members of the community, whatever their age, ability, cultural background, sexuality or socio-economic status have the right to an inclusive environment that eliminates barriers and accommodates our diverse community.

Date Adopted:	25 June 2002
Date Amended:	-
Date Reviewed:	26 October 2004, 1 February 2010
Date of Next Review:	February 2015

GUIDELINES AND POLICY PROCEDURES FOR ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY NO. 3.10.2

The Access and Equity Policy aims to ensure that standards are set regarding inclusion of different groups in the community to ensure equity of provision and opportunities for participation. It recognises that the different needs of different members of the community must be acknowledged and appropriate provision made to ensure that all members of the community are able to fully participate in the activities in the City.

The City supports and adheres to the following legislation in its application to its operational administration, strategic planning and provision of services:

- Racial Discrimination Act (1975)
- the Racial Hatred Act (1995)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- the Western Australian Disability Services Act (1993)
- The Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (amended 1988)

1. Physical Inclusion

- Recognise that certain groups in the community have specific needs and, therefore, may allocate resources according to need to reduce inequalities amongst residents.
- Ensures builders/contractors are aware of Building Code Australia 1996, as amended, and the Australian Standards 1428 Part 1 (1993), Part 2, and Part 4 (1992) and the Australian Standards 2890, Part 1 and Part 5 (1993).
- Ensures the City's Building Surveyors approve plans only when access has been provided according to the Building Code of Australia 1996 and the Australian Standards 1428 Part 1 (1993), Part 2 and Part 4 (1992) and Australian Standards 2890, Part 1 and Part 5 (1993).
- Ensures that builders/contractors and the City's Building Surveyors are aware of their responsibility under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Western Australian Disability Services Act (1993).
- Encourages and supports local area needs based planning with reflected community needs and priorities.
- When planning for social, physical and economic infrastructure supports a design approach which reflects community diversity.
- Advocates for the inclusion of social justice principles into its strategic plan and all other planning and development processes and activities.

- Ensures that all Council projects, whether it be new works or modifying existing, provides access for all users in accordance with the relevant standards and codes.

2. Community Inclusion and Participation

- Encourage and enable all members of the community to participate in activities which will in turn lead to improvements in the well being of people within the City.
- Implements strategies to ensure access into buildings, services and facilities is available to all members of the community.
- Supports maintaining a diverse community and supports the concept that our community is derived of people of all abilities, from a variety of backgrounds.
- Endeavour to offer services that are designed and delivered in ways which meet a range of needs and therefore enable all members of the community to participate.
- Encourage all people to participate in life in the general community, by minimising the physical, cultural, attitudinal, social, economic and institutional barriers that prevent participation.
- Encourage and enable all of the community to become involved in activities on a Council level.
- Recognition of different cultural and religious commemoration and significant events.
- Recognition of people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander descent being the traditional owners and custodians of the land.

3. Information Dissemination

- Endeavours to provide information that is accessible to all members of the community regardless of culture, language, gender, sexuality or ability.
- When providing information in languages other than English, translations and interpreters are to be, at a minimum, NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters) accredited level 3.
- Deaf Interpreters are to be, at a minimum, NAATI accredited level 2. Except for legal or court matters where they are required to be NAATI accredited level 3.
- Braille translations to be undertaken by Association for the Blind.
- Provide information regarding town planning processes, Council meetings and complaints procedures in a clear and concise language.

- An audio loop is installed in the Council chambers which will be used at all Council meetings to ensure that people with a hearing impairment are able to participate in meetings. Where formal meetings are held at different venues a portable audio loop will be used.
- Ensures that all information produced is offered in alternative formats upon request to people with specific requirements and staff are aware of appropriate processes.
- Publicises, on written material in languages other than English, within the community the availability of information in different formats and how this can be accessed.
- The standard phrase: “People with specific requirements can request this brochure in Braille, a language other than English, large print, on computer disk or audiotape” is used on brochures, promotional material and letters where appropriate.
- Ensure that people with disabilities and people from culturally diverse backgrounds are aware of how they can have input into the decision making processes and the direction of council.
- Endeavours to advertise all Council activities in local and alternative media that allows all residents, as potential consumers, to know of their existence.
- Supports community education about the role of Local Government and electoral procedures for residents and ratepayers.

4. Decision Making Processes, Grievance Mechanisms and Public Consultations

- Provide information in clear and concise language on how residents can participate in decision making processes, public consultations, and grievance mechanisms.
- Promote the Council facilities as accessible to people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in order to provide an inclusive environment for community consultation, decision making and complaints.
- Provide a user-friendly process that encourages feedback from all members of the community with regards to the level of access and equitable provision of services.

5. Training and Development

- Encourage and enable Council representatives at all levels to be aware of community diversity and the subsequent implications for policy formation, programme design and service delivery.

- Provide specific training to all Customer Services Officers in disability and cultural diversity awareness and the process required in order to provide information in alternative formats.
- Provide disability and cultural diversity awareness information and appropriate training on an annual basis to all Council Staff to encourage knowledge and understanding of people with disabilities, people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the barriers that they face in the community.
- Disseminate information throughout Council pertaining to people with disabilities, people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to raise awareness amongst the Staff.
- Promote the need for inclusion with regards to people with disabilities, people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and people from different racial, cultural and ethnic groups within the City when developing policies, programs and the delivery of services.
- Support the development of guidelines for the use of accredited translating and interpreting services, and availability of materials in various formats, both internal and external, to assist staff in communicating with all residents.

6. Employment

- Committed to providing work experience to people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, people with disabilities and people from different racial and cultural backgrounds to enhance possibilities of future permanent positions in competitive employment.
- Committed to ensuring that the work environment is accessible to people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, people with disabilities and people from different racial and cultural backgrounds and making the necessary changes to enable a person to do their job effectively.

7. Community Development

Supports the need to promote harmonious community relations and is committed to working towards eliminating all forms of discrimination within the community which may prevent harmony.

Is committed to promoting self-development of residents by creating and enhancing opportunities for independence, choice and self-determination aimed at maintaining and improving quality of life.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are based on definitions provided by State and Federal Government Departments and the Western Australian Municipal Association.

1. Access

Equal opportunity for all residents to participate in Council activities. This includes access to services, programs, facilities, decision- making processes, and entitlements.

2. Equity

Fair and equal distribution of resources (according to need), opportunities, and access to decision-making processes.

3. Participation

Participation in decision-making about matters affecting people's lives.

4. Rights

Relates to the entitlement to justice for all individuals and includes freedom of assembly, speech, beliefs, and information.

5. Community Relations

Is concerned with how people interact and relate to each other as individuals and as a community.

6. Culture

Ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences which influence the way in which people behave and relate.

7. Social Justice

Refers to the right of all people to equality of treatment and opportunity and the removal of barriers preventing access equity.

Four main principles underpin the concept of Social Justice. These are:

- Access
- Equity
- Participation
- Rights