

Social Inclusion Policy

Corangamite Shire

August 2023



**CORANGAMITE
SHIRE**

Council Policy



Social Inclusion Policy

Introduction

Social inclusion is based on an understanding of intersectionality and the integrated nature of many social issues, such as the links between socio-economic status, health and wellbeing and the need for a coordinated approach. Social inclusion ensures opportunity for people to participate fully in economic and community life, form and foster healthy, meaningful relationships, develop their full potential and be treated with dignity and respect. Corangamite Shire Council recognises there are often cross-overs (intersectionality) in disadvantage that create further vulnerability, e.g. women experiencing poverty, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people with disabilities and lgbtqia+ communities. Corangamite Shire Council acknowledges its responsibility and role in strengthening community wellbeing and reducing the causes of disadvantage. This policy confirms Corangamite Shire Council's commitment to social inclusion.

Purpose

The purpose of the Social Inclusion Policy is to provide guiding principles for Council to support equitable decisions and actions, particularly for individuals and groups that face barriers in accessing resources and opportunities. Local government has a key role to play in creating a sustainable socially inclusive community and is the logical leader to coordinate place-based community planning. Given that all communities have their own characteristics; Council can identify and provide for Corangamite Shire's local needs. This will be achieved most effectively in partnership with all levels of government and the community sector.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers and Councillors at Corangamite Shire Council.

Definitions

LGBTQIA+

is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more

Intersectionality

refers to the structural inequality and discrimination experienced by diverse communities and individuals, and the impact of these creating barriers to service access and further marginalisation. Intersectionality is the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of identity-based structural inequality and discrimination (for example; racism, sexism, ableism and classism) combine, compound, overlap or intersect in the experiences of individuals or communities. Aspects of identity can include gender, ethnicity and cultural background, language, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, geographic location or visa status.

References

- National Human Rights Action Plan (2012)
- Australian Human Rights Framework (2010)
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Disability Services Act 2006*
- Corangamite Shire Council Plan
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Policy Detail

By applying the following Social Inclusion principles, opportunities to improve wellbeing and quality of life are created for those individuals and groups that experience disadvantage and exclusion.

- **Person Centred Practice** – Council is committed to ensuring all services delivered to the community are delivered by staff following a person-centred approach which enables service users to be empowered.
- **Access** – Council is committed to providing and advocating for services and facilities that are available to all regardless of background, ability or capacity. Inclusive language will be used in all council documents and regular auditing processes will be implemented to identify any gaps in inclusive service provision.
- **Equity** – Council is committed to fairness in providing services, making decisions and distributing resources particularly for those in need, so all members of the community benefit.
- **Participation and partnership** – Council recognises the rights of people to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and is committed to supporting opportunities for engaging in planning and decision making. Council recognises that working together with others produces better outcomes. This aligns with Corangamite Shire’s Community Engagement Policy, Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan and Disability Access & Inclusion Plan.
- **Human Rights** – Council recognises and supports the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. This includes civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and the right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination.
- **Sustainability** – Council is committed to assessing social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts of its decisions and actions on people today and on future generations.
- **Community strengths** – Council recognises that all communities have strengths. Council acknowledges and values the benefits of strengths like diversity and community connections in building strong communities. Council recognises the value of promoting a strong and positive view of the local community rather than focusing on community deficits.
- **Safe and healthy communities** – Council is committed to creating a Shire wide community which is safe and healthy and recognises that safe and healthy communities create improved wellbeing for all.
- **Evidence based approach** – Council recognises the importance of evidence based solutions. It is committed to being informed about what does and doesn’t work, based on best practice principles. Council is also committed to monitoring and evaluating actions and strategies to ensure continuous improvement and effective and efficient service delivery.

- **Intersectionality** – Council is committed to applying a lens of intersectionality to identify and guard against instances of increasing discrimination.

Reference to linked Procedure or Guidelines, if applicable

Community Engagement Policy – ECM 1226931

Review Date

August 2027

It is considered that this Policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Gender Impact Assessment undertaken – no changes to policy required

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires Council to undertake Gender Impact Assessments when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service which has a direct and significant impact on the public. A Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken and it is considered that the policy meets the needs of people of different genders, addresses gender inequality, and promotes gender equality.