

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES</b>
Policy Subject:	Community Engagement
Policy No:	#931733v9 – CP041
Directorate:	Development & Community
Department:	Community & Culture
Section:	Community Development & Engagement
Responsible Officer:	Executive Manager - Community & Economy
Authorised by:	Director Community & Development
Adopted Date:	02/09/2009
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Amended Date:	12/05/2017
Risk Assessment:	Low

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**OBJECTIVE:**

Fraser Coast Regional Council embraces the principles of building inclusive communities. This policy aims to ensure that a planned approach to building inclusive communities across the region is addressed in a fair and equitable manner.

Building inclusive communities is about opening up opportunities and removing barriers. It endeavours to:

- provide a framework for Council to work towards the provision of accessible and equitable services in all areas;
- assist Council to meet its legislative requirements under the various acts for the State and Federal government (refer Related Documents);
- promote participation and inclusiveness in our community; and
- recognise and celebrate diversity in our community.

**POLICY:**

- (a) Fraser Coast Regional Council will work to improve the inclusive nature of services, facilities, resources and information within the Local Government Area which meet community needs and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors of the Fraser Coast.
  - (b) Fraser Coast Regional Council is committed to supporting events, programs and services that encourage and enhance local community diversity, participation and wellbeing.
  - (c) Fraser Coast Regional Council is committed to the principle of equity in service provision and will work to ensure that program development and service delivery incorporates this principle.
  - (d) Fraser Coast Regional Council acknowledges the legal obligations under State and Federal Equal Opportunity Law.
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**Philosophy**

Council is committed to the social justice principles of fairness, equity and participation, which underpin this Policy. It also recognises that community wellbeing is intrinsically linked to community participation, sense of belonging and acknowledgement and celebration of diversity.

The Fraser Coast community is characterised by higher than state average numbers of seniors, as well as residents and visitors from overseas and people who are geographically or otherwise socially isolated, and others who may experience barriers to access and participation. So it is particularly important that a planned approach to overcoming these various barriers is embedded in Council Policy.

**Authorities & Responsibilities**

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that barriers to access and participation are identified and strategies developed to overcome them and that all programs, services and capital works are implemented in a manner consistent with this policy.

All Council Representatives are responsible for ensuring that they understand and implement the policy and behave in a courteous and non-discriminatory manner having regard to the sensitivities and spirit of this policy.

**Scope & Activities**

Fraser Coast Regional Council recognises the unique contributions individuals make to community life. We support the inclusion of all members and accept that this diversity must include a recognition and celebration of the range of talents and abilities; between urban and rural life and between people's ethnic and cultural heritage.

Fraser Coast Regional Council's Corporate Plan identifies that, through Community Development, we will encourage and promote healthy lifestyle choices for the wellbeing of the community and foster connections and networks between people, communities, facilities and services. The "Healthy" aspirations state that we will be a liveable, healthy and happy community which will be achieved by:

- providing a diverse range of cultural experiences that promote community inclusiveness, participation and enjoyment;
- providing opportunities for a diverse range of active and passive recreational, sporting and learning facilities to enable youth, seniors and volunteers to engage in our community;
- promoting an environment in which residents and visitors feel safe and have equal access to services and facilities;
- promoting the Fraser Coast lifestyle as a balance between work, family, physical and mental wellbeing; and
- encouraging the community to value and protect its heritage and understand, respect and actively celebrate the region's diverse culture.

Council will continue to work in partnership with the Fraser Coast Inclusive Communities Advisory Team to identify barriers preventing accessibility in Council services and programs and develop responses to remove these barriers.

**Reporting Standards**

Report to Council on a quarterly basis through the relevant Councillor Portfolio.

**RELATED LEGISLATION:****The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth) ("DDA")**

The DDA applies to all Local Governments in Australia, as well as most companies and other service providers.

The aim of the DDA is to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against individuals.

The DDA makes it unlawful for a person who provides goods or services or makes facilities available, to discriminate against another person on the ground of the other person's disability or a disability of any of that other person's associates:

- by refusing to provide the other person with those goods or services or to make those facilities available to the other person;
- in the manner in which the first-mentioned person provides the other person with those goods or services or makes those facilities available to the other person; or
- in the terms and conditions on which the first-mentioned person provides those goods or services or makes those facilities available to the other.

Discrimination can occur whether the service is provided for payment or not.

The provisions of the Act that are relevant to Local Governments are:

- accommodation
- provision of information
- employment
- access to premises used by the public
- provision of goods, services and facilities
- transport infrastructure
- administration of Commonwealth Laws and programs

The DDA Provides that it is unlawful for a person to discriminate against another person on the ground of that other person's disability or a disability of any of that other person's associates:

- by refusing to allow the other person access to, or the use of, any premises that the public or a section of the public is entitled to enter or use;
- in the terms or conditions on which the first-mentioned person is prepared to allow the other person access to, or the use of any such premises;
- in relation to the provision of means of access to such premises;
- by refusing to allow the other person the use of any facilities in such premises that the public or a section of the public is entitled to use;

- in the terms or conditions on which the first-mentioned person is prepared to allow the other person the use of any such facilities; or
- by requiring the other person to leave such premises or cease to use such facilities. Premises is defined to include:
  - (a) a structure, building, aircraft or vessel;
  - (b) a place (whether enclosed or built on or not); and
  - (c) a part of premises (including premises of a kind referred to in (a) or (b)).

The DDA enables "service providers" to prepare and implement Action Plans. An Action Plan must include provisions relating to the devising of policies and programs to achieve the objects of the DDA may be lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

### **The Anti Discrimination Act 1991 ("ADA")**

Discrimination may occur in the following ways:

- failing to supply the goods or services;
- terms on which the goods or services are supplied;
- the way in which the goods or services are supplied; and
- by treating the other person unfavourably in any way in connection with the supply of goods or services.

The definition of 'services' includes access to and use of any place, vehicle or facilities that members of the public are permitted to use. Recreation including entertainment, sports, tourism and the arts, the supply of refreshments, services connected with transport and travel, services provided by a public or local authority and the provision of scholarships, prizes or rewards.

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

- Fraser Coast Regional Council Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 2015 - 2017
- Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Act 2002
- Disability Services Act (QLD) 2006
- Equal Opportunities Act 2010
- The Local Government Act 2009

### **ATTACHMENT TO POLICY:**

**Nil**

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Access:** Regardless of individual circumstances, characteristics, disabilities, culture or background all members of the community will have equitable opportunity to access and utilise information, services, facilities and places.

**Equity:** Individual circumstances, characteristics, disabilities, culture and background will be taken into account to ensure that information; services, facilities and places are free from discriminatory practices and are provided to all members of the community on a fair and equitable basis.

**Discrimination:** Is the practice or act of treating a person unfavourably because of certain prescribed attributes or association with, or relation to a person with those attributes. The attributes are prescribed by State and Federal discrimination legislation and include the following:

- sex
- disability
- marital status
- impairment
- pregnancy
- religion
- parental status
- political belief or activity
- family responsibilities
- lawful sexual activity
- breastfeeding
- sexuality
- age
- gender identity
- race

**Disability:** A loss or reduction of functional ability that results in impairment. Disabilities may be physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, learning based or disease causing organisms.

**Inclusive:** Creating an environment where all people regardless of race, religion, ability (physically, mentally, financial, language) feel included as a part of the community and access to facilities and services are inclusive of all.

#### **HISTORY:**

The Fraser Coast Regional Council was formed through the amalgamation in 2008 of the four local government areas of Hervey Bay, Maryborough, part of Tiaro and Woocoo.

For a number of years, each of these entities has worked to create and improve accessible services and facilities for visitors and residents.

Both Hervey Bay & Maryborough initiated Access Advisory Teams who assisted and supported the two councils in their endeavours to address access and equity issues.

Since amalgamating Council considered a format to amalgamate these two teams so that it was representative of the new geographical area of coverage for the council. It was decided to form a new team known as the Fraser Coast Inclusive Communities Advisory Team. This name change better reflected what was trying to be achieved (see definitions -Inclusive)

Expressions of Interest were called to establish the Fraser Coast Inclusive Communities Advisory Team, which included community members who represented various groups within the community who may experience barriers to equal access. The team is also represented on a geographical basis ensuring representation of the former Woocoo and Tiaro Shires

Council has worked in partnership with this Team, and the community, to develop this Policy.