



SOUTHERN  
MIDLANDS  
COUNCIL



# Disability Access & Inclusion Policy

October 2012

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SOUTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL VISION STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SOUTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SOUTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL GUIDING PRINCIPLES STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>POLICY OBJECTIVE.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>POLICY AIMS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>IMPACT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>POLICY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>6</b>

## **SOUTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL VISION STATEMENT**

The following vision for the Southern Midlands municipal area was developed by Councillors on the basis of the information and advice provided at Community meetings.

- A Community spirit based on friendliness, co-operation and self help;
- An environment which encourages local creativity, enterprise and self help;
- A diversified local economy creating employment opportunities through sustainable agriculture, heritage tourism, forestry, and viable historic villages/service centres;
- Development based on the proper management of local resources and the physical environment;
- A range and standard of services within the Southern Midlands which meet local needs and are affordable as well as efficient.

## **SOUTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission for the corporation of Council identifies the roles and purpose of the Council. The Council in partnership with the Community will:

- Work for the benefit of the Community;
- Be forward looking and provide leadership;
- Operate as a team of Councillors and staff focused upon performance;
- Be financially responsible.

## **SOUTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL GUIDING PRINCIPLES STATEMENT**

The following principles / philosophies represent the beliefs and values which will guide the culture of the organisation and underpin its work towards achieving the Vision and Mission. Council and staff will:

- Consult and listen to our customers and employees by maintaining open communication;
- Treat people with respect and courtesy;
- Give advice to the best of our professional ability;
- Be sensitive to the needs of residents;
- Respond promptly to customers concerns and requests;

- Be fair, equitable and consistent in decisions and conduct;
- Fully utilise the expertise and resources available to Council within the organisation and the Community;
- Develop the full potential of Councillors and staff
- Operate in accordance with the “Code of Conduct” adopted by Council.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this policy is to state the Council’s position in regards to the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* along with its leadership obligation in the Community.

## **POLICY AIMS**

- Demonstrate the Council’s commitment to ensuring that the Community is accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities, their families, carers and the broader Community;
- Provide direction to all Council staff and elected members;
- To adapt existing services to ensure that they meet the needs of people with disabilities;
- To improve access to buildings and facilities; and
- Recognise and respect current workload and budget limits when staging the implementation of the operational strategy.

## **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services or facilities, against people on the basis that they have, or may have, a disability. It is a legal requirement of the Council to respond to issues and complaints that are raised relating to services under the control of the Council.

The main objective of the DDA is to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability. It is designed to ensure that people with disabilities are not deprived of equal opportunity by stereotype, prejudice or misconception, or by unnecessary barriers or restrictions.

The DDA requires that a person’s disability should be taken into account only where it is relevant and fair to do so.

## **IMPACT**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* has a particular relevance to a number of the Council's operations, namely:

- Access to Council owned and/or operated facilities used by the Community;
- The provision of Council services;
- The purchase, sale and usage of Council land;
- Council employment (including volunteers);
- Council contractor management;
- The provision of Council information to the Community; and
- The development of Council policies and procedures.

## **POLICY**

The Southern Midlands Council is committed to ensuring, as far as is practicable, that the Community is accessible for people with disabilities, their families and carers.

The Council interprets an accessible Community as one in which all Council functions facilities and services are open and available to people with disabilities providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the Community, where it is relevant and fair to do so.

The Council recognises that people with disabilities are valued members of the Community who make a variety of contributions to social, economic and cultural life within the Southern Midlands area. The Council believes that a Community that recognises its diversity and supports the participation of all its members makes for a richer Community life.

## **OUTCOMES**

The Council is required, under the DDA, to work towards providing equity of access to services and facilities to all sectors of the Community, including people with disabilities.

The Council also recognises that full compliance with the intent of the DDA comes at a financial cost that cannot be easily achieved in the short term.

The Council is committed to implementing the spirit and intent of the legislation by:

- Promoting a positive image of people with disabilities;

- Ensuring the needs of people with disabilities are recognised in the development, planning and delivery of Council services and facilities;
- Providing facilities, services and assets that, as far as is practicable, comply with Australian Standards and Codes and objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act;
- Ensuring that all Councillors, staff and volunteers are aware of and understand the needs of people with disabilities;
- Acknowledging the right of people with disabilities to contribute to the social, political, economic and cultural life of the Community;
- Ensuring, as far as is practicable, that the Council's relevant policies and procedures address the needs of people with disabilities, in accordance with the principles outlined in the DDA and this policy; and
- Establishing and maintaining a Disabilities Access & Inclusion Plan DAIP under the direction of the General Manager which will be reviewed and revised in line with the Council's Strategic Plan review every five years.

## **OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**

**Disability Access & Inclusion Plan**

**Disability Access & Inclusion Checklist**