



SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

ACCESS & EQUITY POLICY

RATIONALE

Sussex Neighbourhood House has a strong commitment to ensuring that *Neighbourhood Houses are for Everyone.*

An outworking of this involves:-

- making every effort to ensure that no person(s) experiences discrimination on the basis of age, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socio economic status, health issues taking affirmative action to support and include unrepresented groups.
- the empowerment of others

Sussex Neighbourhood House has a commitment to the following four 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 to the quality of life.
- **Participation:** maximising the opportunities for people to participate in the circumstances, which affect their lives, their personal development and their local principles for government to come to grips with.
- **Rights:** developing fairer, more comprehensive rights that are equally enforceable by all people regardless of their income and social background. This includes more than just civil and political rights but also the broader definition, including industrial and social and economic rights as well.

PRINCIPLES

It is the policy of Neighbourhood Houses in general, and Sussex Neighbourhood House specifically, to ensure that people have access to the programs, planning, decision-making, and services of the Houses in such a way that they experience no barriers or discrimination.

Strategies must be in place to ensure fair and equal opportunities for all participants to achieve their own goals.

All members of the community have the right to access programs and opportunities, which will provide them with quality outcomes.

PROCEDURES

- All staff, volunteers and committee of management members will work in such a way as to promote equity, access, participation and quality outcomes within the House environment. Seeking to include those sections of the community that are under represented as participants and experience disadvantaged.
- Making a specific commitment to those people who are most disadvantaged, for example people on low incomes, with low levels of education or no formal qualifications, sole parents, people with non-English speaking backgrounds, people with a disability, those with limited access to education, and young people.
- Staff, volunteers and committee of management members will seek to develop an understanding of what disadvantage is, why people are disadvantaged and who is disadvantaged within the local community.
- Staff, volunteers and committee of management members will seek to recognise and respond to specific issues of language and culture, gender, sexual preference, disability, financial disadvantage, social and geographic isolation.
- Within the House planning processes attention will be paid to ensuring the inclusion of disadvantaged groups within the community.
- The participation of socially isolated individuals will be promoted wherever possible.
- Whenever practicable staff and management will assist disadvantaged groups to establish programs of their own and control the direction of the each of these programs themselves.
- The neighbourhood house will advocate on behalf of disadvantaged people with government bodies, such as the Department of Human Services, Centrelink etc.
- Staff and management will ensure that targeted groups have a say in the development of programs and in management processes.
- Staff, management and committee of management will encourage a diversity of opinion and accessibility to all members through open and accountable practices.