



SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE Inc.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY POLICY

RATIONALE

A culturally diverse community is one made up of people from a wide range of backgrounds with a variety of beliefs, values and practices. Such a community offers the people living in it a larger variety of cultural possibilities [eg: different life styles, cultural activities and living arrangements]. In order to maintain harmony, diverse communities rely on mutual respect - respect for the cultural perspectives and allegiances of the individuals, families and groups who makeup the community.

Harmonious communities work to ensure that being from a particular cultural or ethnic group does not mean that you are disadvantaged or that others are prejudiced against you.

It is Sussex Neighbourhood House policy to, wherever possible, provide culturally appropriate services. The House acknowledges however, that funding for community organisations is limited. Within this context the House is committed to providing practical and equitable outcomes for all participants.

Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and goals of this organisation in respect to ensuring the participation of people from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds in the activities, planning and decision making of this centre.

Responsibilities

This House is required by Commonwealth and State legislation to ensure that it does not discriminate in the provision of services. The legislation relevant to these policies are:

Federal

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and 1983
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

State

- Equal Opportunity Act 1984

PRINCIPLES

All services, programs and processes undertaken by the House will be guided by the following key principles:

- All services and programs provided will be accessible to people from any cultural, linguistic and religious background.
- Participants from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds should not experience barriers to access and participation.
- Staff and management will recognise and respond to specific issues of age, race, gender, culture, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, socio economic status, health issues.

- Within the limits of the House's resources, information will be readily accessible, and in people's first language as much as possible, particularly where requested or necessary.
- Service provision will reflect sensitivity, relevance and awareness to different cultural and religious practices.
- There will be a fair allocation of resources based on need.
- All participants will have the right to contribute to decision-making processes and to express views without suffering any prejudice.

PROCEDURES

The House will aim to make these principles a reality by:

- Providing appropriate and effective language services
- Taking into account the diverse cultural and linguistic information needs of Program participants, in the design and delivery of any information, including promotional material.
- Utilising appropriate data collection methods to enable the House to target, plan, develop and evaluate all programs and services in a way that is relevant, equitable and accessible.
- Developing employment and volunteer selection processes which are equitable and assist to develop diversity in the staff and volunteer team.
- Ensuring active participation by members of diverse cultural, linguistic and religious communities in all aspects of decision making within the organisation's structures.
- Providing appropriate and high quality cross-cultural training for all staff, volunteers and Management.

These are the specific processes that the House will endeavour to put in place to make these guidelines a reality:

Language services

- Have all relevant information in relation to the organisation and the services it provides, made available in languages and ways which can be understood by everyone in the community, including people who are illiterate.

This may include:

- Translation into relevant community languages
- The use of pictures for presentation of information, eg posters.
- The development of a marketing strategy that takes into account the needs of people from different cultural & linguistic backgrounds. This strategy would incorporate the needs of existing and potential House participants.
- When developing new information the House consults members of the relevant ethnic community organisations to ensure that it is appropriate.
- Checking that the information the House provides is reaching the right people and being used and understood effectively (eg. participant feedback).

Data Collection

The House will

- Collect data on the people attending programs offered by the House.

- Evaluate the data collected and develop strategies to address any problems identified.
- Collect and analyze data on who lives in our community. [Census data is available at Public Libraries or from some Local Councils].