



Hawkesbury City Council

Attachment 1
to
item 266

Draft Access and Inclusion Policy.

date of meeting: 29 November 2011
location: council chambers
time: 6:30 p.m.



Hawkesbury City Council

Hawkesbury City Council
Policy

DRAFT

Access and Inclusion
Policy

(Version 1)

Adopted by Council at the
Ordinary Meeting Held on
<<insert date when adopted>>



Table of Contents

1.0	PURPOSE.....	6
2.0	SCOPE.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.0	DEFINITIONS.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Heading 2.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Heading 2.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.0	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
6.0	RELATED SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENTS (SWMS).....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7.0	TRAINING REQUIRED	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8.0	AMENDMENTS.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9.0	PROCEDURE	Error! Bookmark not defined.

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1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To broadly define Hawkesbury City Council's approach to the elimination of barriers which may prevent residents and visitors from participating fully in community and civic life.
- 1.2 To establish a framework to assist Council to work with the community and business sector to identify and implement strategies to ensure that residents and visitors are not restricted from accessing services and facilities or participating in community and civic events.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to establish guidelines to support the practical application of the core human rights principles of access and inclusion as set down in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1992). The Policy has been enacted to;
 - (a) provide the opportunity for people, regardless of their personal circumstances, to enjoy the same opportunities, rights, responsibilities and entitlements as enjoyed by all other people in the community;
 - (b) clarify the obligations of Council, community groups, and the business sector who may be involved the provision, operation or management services and facilities for the public;
 - (c) promote the application of 'good practice' access and inclusion principles as they apply to the design of buildings and public spaces, and the delivery of community and civic events;
 - (d) raise community awareness and understanding of the importance of creating an accessible built environment and an inclusive civil society.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Hawkesbury City Council recognises the importance of accessible services, facilities and communities. This includes the capacity for everyone to participate in the social, cultural and political life of the community. Access is fundamental to creating healthy and cohesive communities.
- 3.2 A significant proportion of the population of the Hawkesbury will have a disability that restricts their everyday activities and consequently their ability to access services and facilities available to the rest of the community. People may also face barriers in finding out about these services and facilities and how to access and use them.
- 3.3 Access and Inclusion refers to the opportunity for all people to participate in and engage independently with the environment and community. The basic requirement for good access is that communities and environments are barrier free. In practice, this means that all people have the right to equitable access to resources, decision-making, expertise, experience, connections, information and opportunities through solutions that match their needs.
- 3.4 The NSW and Federal Parliaments have passed legislation which recognise the right of people to equality before the law and which make discrimination based on disability, gender, nationality, age, marital status, religious affiliation or sexuality, unlawful. The removal of obstacles to the equal participation of people in the social, cultural and political life of the community is an important leadership and policy goal for local government.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Disability - this policy employs the broad, legal definition of the term 'disability' as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and refers to any impairment of a physical, intellectual, psychiatric, neurological, or sensory nature including individuals with a visual or auditory



impairment. The term 'disability' also refers to people who have a medical condition, short-term or temporary disability, or learning difficulty

- 4.2 Access - the term 'access' is used in this plan to refer to any outcome that is achieved by the removal of 'barriers' or obstacles that may impede an individual's rights to engage in a chosen activity in a manner that is equitable and dignified. 'Barriers' can include obstacles in the built environment as well as communication or attitudinal obstacles in the social environment.
- 4.3 Inclusion – the term 'inclusion' refers to an environment where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. A socially inclusive society is one which recognises and supports the intrinsic value of all human beings by creating and sustaining conditions that foster equity, empowerment, awareness, competence and the integration of a person into the community.

5.0 PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 Hawkesbury City Council is committed to the principles of access and inclusion and their observance in the way that Council does business, delivers service and programs, and engages with the community.
- 5.2 This policy specifically identifies the needs, participation and rights of people with disabilities through an integrated approach to the provision of programs and services, facilities and governance. Council recognises that the practical implementation of this policy will require an understanding of access and inclusion principles and how they can be applied to Council's operations. Table 1 outlines in broad terms Council's understanding of the application of access and inclusion principles to its operations.
- 5.3 Council will endeavour to operate in a manner which is consistent with the following core access and inclusion principles;
- 5.3.1 People will experience Council's public buildings, venues and outdoor spaces as accessible, people friendly and welcoming spaces.
- 5.3.2 People can move around the city using a pedestrian pathway and road network that is linked to public transport
- 5.3.3 People have the opportunity to participate in planning an accessible and growing city and can enjoy a well designed built environment
- 5.3.4 People experience the Hawkesbury as a socially cohesive and connected community which supports them to play an active part in the life of the city.
- 5.3.5 People can participate in an inclusive democracy and have their say on issues that affect them.
- 5.3.6 People can easily communicate and do business with Council.
- 5.3.7 People can have confidence in their dealings with Council staff.
- 5.3.8 People have the opportunity to source information about improving access and inclusion.
- 5.3.9 People can compete for employment opportunities at Council on equitable terms



HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL POLICY

DRAFT Access and Inclusion Policy

access and inclusion principles	implementation	actions and guidelines
Principle 1: People will experience Council's public buildings, venues and outdoor spaces as accessible, people friendly and welcoming spaces.	Council Managers and Council's delegated managing agents should ensure that access and inclusion are considered in the development of business plans and operating procedures for their respective areas of responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ complete accessibility audits of community facilities and outdoor spaces ▪ work towards compliance with accessibility guidelines and standards ▪ identification and scheduling of buildings/spaces requiring accessibility upgrades ▪ training to enable staff & managing agents to identify access and inclusion issues
Principle 2: People can move around the city using a pedestrian pathway and road network that is linked to public transport	The design, construction & maintenance of roadways, verges, footpaths & pathways, parking and pedestrian infrastructure should be coordinated to deliver an accessible, connected and safe pedestrian and transport network on which all people can get to the places they want to go.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ implement Mobility Plan to inform decision-making for improved pedestrian infrastructure ▪ co-ordinate pathway, kerb ramp & bus stop design to provide seamless access ▪ provide appropriate level of accessible car parking for people with a disability ▪ plant shade trees and install facilities to make shared pathways user-friendly
Principle 3: People have the opportunity to participate in planning an accessible and growing city and can enjoy a well designed built environment.	Planning, development assessment & infrastructure programs will provide the opportunity for residents, including those who live with disabilities or impairments, to have their say in planning a future Hawkesbury that supports an accessible and inclusive built environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ incorporate provisions in planning instruments that encourage universal design ▪ DA standards reflect good practice in providing for accessible & inclusive built environment ▪ consult with people with disabilities to inform planning & design of new civic infrastructure ▪ provide draft plans and community consultation materials in accessible formats
Principle 4: People experience the Hawkesbury as a socially cohesive and connected community which supports them to play an active part in the life of the city.	Council Managers and Council's delegated managing agents should ensure that there are no physical, language, informational or technological barriers which may prevent people from participating in Council programs and activities, and that the design of programs and activities acknowledge and reflect the diversity of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify and overcome barriers preventing people from accessing Council information ▪ acknowledging indigenous heritage and traditional custodians of land at civic events ▪ continue with events celebrating the experiences and contributions of different groups ▪ provide opportunities for people of all abilities to join sporting & recreation programs ▪ support inclusive centre-based, outreach and online life-long learning opportunities
Principle 5: People can participate in an inclusive democracy and have their say on issues that affect them.	Meetings of Councils and its Advisory Committees will be held in accessible venues with appropriate facilities. Council will eliminate barriers which may prevent people with disabilities from participating on its Advisory Committees or in its community engagement processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ complete and implement Access and Inclusion Plan ▪ complete accessibility audit of Council chambers and, if required, plan to improve access ▪ develop tools for enhancing access and inclusion in community engagement processes ▪ work with Disability Advisory Cttee. to increase representation by people with disabilities
Principle 6: People can easily communicate and do business with Council.	Council Managers and Council's delegated managing agents should review operations to identify and minimise barriers that make it hard for people to communicate and do business with Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ achieve compliance with <i>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2</i> ▪ promote day-to-day use of Telephone Interpreter Services (TIS) ▪ achieve good practice in publishing accessible and inclusive information materials
Principle 7: People can have confidence in their dealings with Council staff.	Council staff are provided with the information and training to increase their understanding of access and inclusion issues and the practical application of tools and resources to promote barrier free access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training to support 'in-house' accessibility assessments and DDA requirements ▪ develop and apply audit tools to facilitate identification and removal of access barriers ▪ conduct regular disability and cultural awareness training refresher courses
Principle 8: People have the opportunity to source information about improving access and inclusion.	Council will provide civic leadership and implement strategies to raise public awareness of access and inclusion issues and administer laws and regulation to support accessible and inclusive services and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ make information available to business & developers on designs for access and inclusion ▪ raise awareness of the impacts of blocked footpaths and other access barriers ▪ support initiatives that contribute towards an accessible and inclusive Hawkesbury
Principle 9: People can compete for employment opportunities at Council on equitable terms	Council is committed to building an adaptable and capable work force by attracting, developing and retaining skilled, enthusiastic, and well trained employees who reflect the diversity within our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide accessible work environments and present Council as EEO employer ▪ implement barrier-free recruitment practices ▪ continue to implement and review <i>Reasonable Adjustment</i> HR Provisions.

Table 1 - Application of access and inclusion principle to Council operations



6.0 APPLICATION

- 6.1 This Policy provides a framework by which Council and its delegated managing agents can identify and implement appropriate actions which reflect the nine access and inclusion principles that Council has adopted to guide its operations.
- 6.2. This Policy is also intended to provide guidance to community groups and the business sector on the practical implementation of strategies to promote access and inclusion and non-discriminatory practices in the provision of services and the operation of facilities for the benefit of residents and visitors to the Hawkesbury.
- 6.3 This Policy recognises that Council is in a position to positively influence the planning and design of infrastructure and the built environment and their day to day operations through its development assessment and development control responsibilities. Council can also influence events, services or programs which are held on Council property, are hosted by Council or financially sponsored by Council. In this context Council will work with developers, the business sector and community groups to achieve outcomes consistent with the access and inclusion principles outlined in this Policy. Council accepts however that such outcomes are best achieved through a partnership approach which supports innovation and the identification and application of a range of solutions to best provide for access and inclusion.
- 6.4 Council will implement this Policy in its governance, policy development, community planning, infrastructure development, business planning, project development, community engagement and workforce planning processes. The Policy will be observed at all levels within the organisation. Council recognises however that its capacity to achieve the goal of universal access will be dependant on the availability of resources and that access and inclusion improvements can only be realised over time as resources allow.

7.0 DELEGATIONS

- 7.1 The delegations and responsibilities of Council staff in relation to the implementation of this Policy will be as determined by the General Manager.

References and Governing Policies & Documents.

1. *NSW Disability Services Act 1993*
2. *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
3. *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*
4. *Local Government Act 1993*

