

	<b>ACCESS, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY</b>	
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	<b>Approved by Committee of Governance on:</b>	
	<b>Next Review:</b>	

## POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all Committee members, staff, volunteers and membership of Network West Incorporated.

### PURPOSE

This document will outline Network West's commitment to access and equity in terms of service provision and internal organisational processes.

Network West has a strong commitment to promoting the philosophies of the Neighbourhood House sector and making sure ***Neighbourhood Houses are for everyone***. Network West aspires to model best practice and acknowledges that its legal and moral responsibilities cover the areas of:

- access in the provision of services offered
- access in employment
- access in the provision of information offered
- access to any training and development offered
- access to events facilitated by Network West

### DEFINITIONS

**Access** - Network West will make services available to everyone who is entitled to them, free of any form of discrimination on the basis of a person's country of birth, language, culture, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability or health.

**Equity** - Network West will develop and deliver services on the basis of fair treatment of all stakeholders who are eligible to receive them.

**Diversity** - Recognize and value individual differences.

### LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

***All Victorian organizations, including Network West, must comply with Commonwealth and State legislation and directions such as:***

Disability Discrimination Act 1992  
 Racial Discrimination Act 1975  
 Racial Hatred Act 1995  
 Sex Discrimination Act 1984  
 Age Discrimination Act 2004  
 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)  
 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)  
 Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)  
 Multicultural Victorian Act 2004 VIC

# PROCEDURES

## 1. PROVISION OF SERVICES

### *All services delivered by Network West:*

- Are accessible to people from all cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds including Australian indigenous culture.
- Recognise and respond to specific issues of ethnicity, gender, disability, financial disadvantage, sexual orientation, social, cultural and geographic isolation.
- Reflect sensitivity, relevance and awareness of different cultural and religious practices.
- Ensure that participants have the opportunity to contribute to decision-making and to express views without suffering any prejudice.
- Use appropriate data collection methods to enable Network West to target, plan, develop and evaluate all services in a way that is relevant, equitable and accessible.
- Shall promote diversity in the membership of its boards, committees and working groups.

## 2. PROVISION OF INFORMATION

### *Network West will:*

- Promote and advertise services so that they are readily accessible by all members of the Network and stakeholders
- Consider cultural diversity issues in the design and delivery of any training programs it provides.
- Offer staff, where necessary, ongoing cultural diversity training so that they develop knowledge and skills to work effectively from a cultural framework.
- Protect the privacy of individual clients when collecting specific data on ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, disability. Consideration will be given to:
  - Only collect data essential to the service delivery or evaluation purpose;
  - Guarantee anonymity, where appropriate
  - Ensure all data collection proposals are non-intrusive.

## 3. EMPLOYMENT

### *Network West's recruitment process will include the following:*

- Ensure all people have equal access to advertised positions, interviews, equipment, office accommodation, staff training and promotion.
- Provide appropriate, high quality cross-cultural training for all employees where the need is identified

## POSITION DESCRIPTION & JOB ADVERTISEMENTS

- Include a diversity statement in the job description that encourages people from different backgrounds to apply, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and people with disabilities.
- Any job advertisements are written in a way that does not discourage some people from applying or imply that only certain applicants will be considered. For example, using phrases like 'join a dynamic team' or 'seeking mature, experienced professional' suggests that you will only consider applicants of a certain age.
- Ensure the advertisement does not include words, phrases or euphemisms that could be seen as restrictive or discriminatory.

## **SHORT LISTING APPLICANTS**

- When short listing applicants, Network West will not allow personal bias, myths or stereotypes to influence the decision. Applicants will be shortlisted according to the requirements of the job using a checklist that evaluates applicants based on selection criteria.

## **INTERVIEWS**

- Network West will ensure all applicants have an equal opportunity to participate in their interview. The interview will be conducted at a venue that is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Network West will ask the interview candidate if they need any special assistance to participate in the interview.
- Interview questions will be developed that focus on skills and abilities needed to do the job. When seeking further information, or asking supplementary questions to particular applicants, the interview panel will be mindful of questions that may be invasive or potentially discriminatory.

## **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

- Network West can refuse to employ a person based on a criminal record only where the applicant's criminal record is directly related to perform the *inherent requirements* of a particular job. This will be determined on a case by case basis, according to the nature of the job and the nature of the criminal record.

## **INDUCTION**

Employees do not have to disclose any pre-existing injury or illness unless it directly relates to the requirements of the job or if any modifications need to be made.

## **Other relevant documents**

Network West Privacy Policy