



Access and Equity Policy

Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre at Mitchell House Inc. (WNC) is a non-profit, charitable organisation, based on community development principles, whose purpose it is to:

- *Provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where people can meet to learn and share ideas, friendship, skills and information and improve social health and well-being.*

This central and fundamental purpose informs policy development and is reflected in all WNC policy documentation.

Purpose

Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre at Mitchell House (WNC) acknowledges that its legal and moral responsibilities cover the areas of:

- access in the provision of services offered by WNC
- access in employment by WNC
- access in the provision of information offered by WNC
- access to any training and development offered by WNC
- access to events hosted by WNC

Policy

Access

As a Neighbourhood House, WNC will make services available to everyone, free of any form of discrimination on the basis of a person's country of birth, language, gender, culture, race or religion.

Equity

As a Neighbourhood House, WNC will develop and deliver services on the basis of fair treatment of all those community members who are eligible to receive them.

Communication

As a Neighbourhood House, WNC will use all necessary strategies to inform eligible community members of the services available, their entitlements, and how they can obtain them. Providers shall also consult with their participants regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of services.

Responsiveness

As a Neighbourhood House, WNC will be sensitive to the needs and requirements of community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and be responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals.

Effectiveness

As a Neighbourhood House, WNC will be focused on meeting the needs of community members from all backgrounds.

Efficiency

As a Neighbourhood House, WNC will optimise the use of available resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery that meets the needs of community members.

Accountability

As a Neighbourhood House, WNC will have a reporting mechanism in place which ensures it is accountable for implementing access and equity objectives for community members.

Access and Equity Procedures

Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the Centre Manager to implement this policy and to report to the Committee of Management (COM) annually on its progress.

Procedures

- All Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre at Mitchell House (WNC) staff and volunteers shall, wherever feasible, have adequate support and training to provide services and information accessible to all people.
- WNC will ensure its programs are designed and constructed to provide equal access for all users.
- WNC, in its role as an employer, will ensure all people have equal access to advertised positions, interviews, equipment, office accommodation, staff training and promotion.
- WNC shall, wherever feasible, for any new (or substantially revised) policies or program initiatives have a communication strategy developed and sufficiently resourced to inform people from relevant cultural and linguistic backgrounds of these changes.
- WNC shall provide resources so that publicly available and accessible information on its policies and programs is where necessary communicated appropriately to people from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and especially to those identified as having a high level of non-compliance.
- WNC shall institute complaints mechanisms that enable people (regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds) to address issues and raise concerns about its performance.
- WNC shall require that any agents, contractors, or partners of WNC deliver outcomes consistent with this policy, and shall, in bidding for tenders or contracts, budget, where appropriate, for special provision for linguistic and cultural diversity.
- WNC shall, where necessary and feasible, provide for the special needs of community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds by providing language assistance through the use of interpreters or facilitators.
- WNC shall consider cultural diversity issues in the design and delivery of any training programs it provides.
- WNC staff and volunteers shall, where necessary, receive ongoing cultural diversity training so that they develop knowledge and skills to work effectively from a cultural framework.
- WNC shall, where necessary and feasible, provide information in languages other than English, and through print, electronic media, and disability-appropriate methods of communication.
- WNC shall, where appropriate, consult with other providers and government agencies to ensure co-ordination of services appropriate to needs of participants.
- WNC shall promote diversity in the membership of its boards, committees and working groups.