

Title:	Community Participation, Access and Inclusion
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Version	Decision Number	Adoption Date	History
1	20\2501	23/02/2010	Adopted
2	Administrative amendment by CEO	01/09/2011	Adopted by Chief Officers Group
3	21\479	25/09/2012	Amendment Adopted
4	21\3351	26/05/2015	Adopted

1 Policy Summary

City of Darwin is committed to supporting a resilient community by celebrating diversity, providing equality of access and building the capacity of all community members. Council recognises that the delivery of diverse, inclusive and focussed programs enables Council to be responsive to its community's needs.

This policy provides the framework for the provision of key community services, facilities and programs that support a connected and resilient community. The policy describes Council's approach to facilitating and providing programs that respond and contribute effectively in the following key community areas;

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Disability - Equitable Access for Everyone
- Families and Children
- Seniors
- Culturally and linguistically diverse groups
- Community Capacity Building
- Young people

2 Policy Objectives

- To provide context for Council's commitment to supporting a collaborative, inclusive and connected community.
- To support strategic directions that will guide Council's approach to increasing community capacity through the support and provision of effective and responsive programs, facilities and services
- To recognise goals and approaches to support a resilient community.

3 Background

City of Darwin has an important and active role in the community and cultural development. This policy has been developed within the context of Council's Strategic Plan *Evolving Darwin Towards 2020*. The Strategic Plan identifies the directions needed to improve the quality of life for the people of Darwin. Whilst this policy encapsulates the entire vision of the Strategic Plan, it specifically supports Goal 1: Collaborative, inclusive and connected community.

4 Policy Statement

Council is committed to encouraging social inclusion, enabling individuals to stay connected through activities that support and promote community harmony and build community capacity.

Council recognises that the delivery of diverse, practical and focussed programs, as well as equitable access to facilities, will contribute to the development of a strong community and enable Council to be responsive to local needs.

Council will be guided by best practice principles, community need and feedback in its delivery of high quality services. Council will continue to develop collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders that encourage service coordination and integration.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Council recognises the unique contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will develop and maintain partnerships with relevant groups and individuals to celebrate their historical, cultural and environmental importance within the city. We will work with the custodians to manage and preserve sacred and significant places.

Council formally endorses the Australian Local Government Association National Agenda policy acknowledging Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders as original occupants of Australia by incorporating the following wording into statements on significant occasions:

"In the spirit of reconciliation we acknowledge that we are meeting on the country for which the Larrakia people and their forebears have been custodians for many centuries and on which Indigenous Australians have performed age old ceremonies"

Disability - Equitable Access for Everyone

Council is committed to ensuring equitable access to its services, facilities and programs by people of all ages and abilities. The City of Darwin will;

- Maintain and implement a Community Access Plan which describes actions to be undertaken to facilitate access and inclusion for all members of our community.
- Continue to convene a Disability Advisory Committee to inform and advise Council in relation to its responsibilities to ensure equity of access to people with disability in the application of City of Darwin procedures and the provision of services and facilities.
- Assist with coordination, promotion and connection to the disability sector through resource production and dissemination.
- Coordinate and sponsor the annual Disability Awareness Week program to raise awareness of disability services and programs, advocate for the rights of people with disability and celebrate the contribution that people with disability make to our community.

Families and Children

Council promotes the active participation of children in community activities, and supports equitable access to opportunities, resources, and services that foster positive health, wellbeing and education for families.

Council supports programs and services that benefit families and children throughout the municipality, including;

- provision of Fun Bus and Fun in the Parks holiday programs,
- advocacy and support for programs in the community, and
- participation in and support for key community events.

Childcare Centres

Council operates in a landlord capacity for Council owned community based childcare centre buildings. Volunteer management committees oversee the planning, management and decision-making of each centre, with guidance from Council.

Council supports the centres by way of peppercorn leasing arrangements and Council's own capital contributions programmed each year on a priority needs basis. Council provides advisory and networking support to the centres to support the provision of high quality services

Seniors

Council is committed to the provision of services, facilities and programs for Darwin's seniors population that promote equitable access, healthy lifestyle opportunities and a positive image of ageing. The City of Darwin will;

- Deliver programs for seniors which promote healthy lifestyle choices, lifelong learning opportunities and promote a positive image of ageing.
- Deliver library services which allow for active participation by seniors.
- Provide opportunities for seniors to stay connected to their community and to contribute their expertise and skills to Council and the community through volunteering opportunities.
- Assist with coordination, promotion and connection to the seniors sector through resource production and dissemination.
- Maximise partnership opportunities, where appropriate, in the planning and delivery of services, programs and events with seniors organisations and government agencies.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups

Council recognises and supports the diverse population of Darwin acknowledging the important role diversity plays in all areas of life within the municipality.

Council identifies its programs should provide appropriate and equitable access to diverse populations through respectful practice, taking into account language, religion, ethnicity and other specific cultural elements and sensitivities.

Council will support programs and events that celebrate and promote cultural diversity and social cohesion.

Building Community Capacity

Council celebrates the knowledge, assets and skills held by community members. Council will work with community members to identify and develop their capabilities to enable the community to be agents of positive sustainable change in their community.

The contributions of community members and groups will be valued, respected and acknowledged.

Community Grants Program

Council's Community Grants Program is aimed at supporting and assisting community organisations with the development of activities and or services that benefit a broad cross section of the community.

The Community Grants Program consists of two funding streams; Community Projects and Climate Change and Environment Projects.

The Community Grants Program Guidelines outline the program objectives, eligibility criteria and assessment criteria. Applications are approved by the City of Darwin's City Life Committee which will determine its annual priorities and how it will support the community.

In Kind support

In addition to the structured Grants Program and sponsorship program, Council responds to in kind support request from community and not for profit groups throughout the year.

Darwin Entertainment Centre (DEC)

The Darwin Entertainment Centre is leased from Council on a long term basis by a company limited by guarantee, the Darwin Performing Arts Centre, trading as Darwin Entertainment Centre. The Centre is managed in accordance with the objectives of the Articles and Memorandum of Association of the Darwin Performing Arts Centre Company and the ongoing funding agreement between Council, the Northern Territory Government and the Centre.

Council's contribution to the annual operating costs of the Centre is equal to the matched amount provided by the Northern Territory Government for this purpose. The company reports to Council in accordance with the schedule identified in the funding agreement.

Council maintains the building in accordance with the asset management plan and allocates funding annually to a long term maintenance reserve and an air conditioning replacement reserve.

Young People

Council understands that a strong and connected network of young people greatly contributes to a safe a resilient community. Council is committed to:

- Engaging young people in Council and community decision making processes.
- Ensuring the suite of Council's programs and facilities are designed inclusively and are youth friendly.
- Fostering partnerships to initiate programs to respond to changing needs of young people.
- Supporting and resourcing youth-led initiatives.
- Providing employment and volunteering opportunities to young people.

Youth Advisory Group

Council's Youth Advisory group is made up of a maximum of 15 young people aged 12-25 and delivers the following functions:

- Provide a vehicle for genuine and regular talks between young people and Council.
- Be actively involved in Council's decision making processes.
- Represent diversity of local youth and communicate youth specific-comment on a range of community projects and issues.
- Assist council to implement key actions outlined in City of Darwin's Youth Strategy and to check on its progress each year.
- Support young people to gain a good understanding of the responsibilities of City of Darwin and its many roles.

LAUNCH

Council is committed to LAUNCH as the flagship youth participation model for service delivery.

- LAUNCH identifies all of Council's youth services, including events, projects, subsidies, publications, employment, training and holiday programs.
- LAUNCH is a flexible delivery model which is able to be adapted to community needs.
- LAUNCH platforms youth led initiatives to develop community engagement, social inclusion and youth focused drug and alcohol free entertainment.
- LAUNCH includes provision of the Gig Gear resource to support youth & community events.
- LAUNCH integrates youth training and employment opportunities into event and program delivery.

5 Legislation, terminology and references

The Local Government Act establishes the roles, functions and objectives of Councils which provide the basis for City of Darwin's active role in community, cultural and social development (Part 2.3).

6 Implementation and delegation

This policy will be directly implemented by the relevant officers largely within the City Life Department; however it is also an expectation that all Council departments review the policy when undertaking work with the community to guide their engagement approach.

7 Evaluation and review

Policy to be reviewed in accordance with *Policy 032 – Policy and Procedures Framework*, clause 5.3 - Reviewing Existing Policies and may be amended at any time as approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Further review to this policy should occur within a strong community development and engagement best practice frameworks.