



# SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY

*A PLACE FOR PEOPLE – BUILDING A FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE LIVERPOOL*

Adopted: 23 May 2011

## DEFINITIONS

Social justice is about building a society that is based on the principle of fairness for all, that understands and values human rights, and that recognises the dignity of every person.

Social inclusion is the opportunity for people to participate fully in economic and community life, to form and foster healthy, meaningful relationships and to develop their full potential and be treated with dignity and respect.

Social sustainability is about communities that are equitable, diverse, connected and democratic, and which actively support the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy and livable communities.

## RELATED LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Local Government Act 1993

NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

Age Discrimination Act 2004

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

NSW Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Social Justice Policy is to provide guiding principles for Council to support integrated and equitable decisions and actions, particularly for individuals and groups that face barriers in accessing resources and opportunities.

## BACKGROUND

There are many factors that impact on wellbeing and quality of life. Some individuals and groups face disadvantage and do not enjoy the same opportunity as others. Some factors that may cause this disadvantage include:

- § Race, ethnicity and religion
- § Age, gender and sexuality
- § Physical and psychological ability
- § Addiction and health
- § Education and employment
- § Housing and transport
- § Personal and community safety
- § Isolation and community networks

For example, as people get older they may find it more difficult to get around independently or they may need more assistance in their homes. Or migrants may find it harder to get health and employment services as a result of language or cultural barriers.

National and international research shows that specific groups in the community are more likely to experience these factors of disadvantage and may have special needs. The Planning and Reporting Guidelines for Local Government state that these groups include:

- § Children
- § Young people
- § People with a disability
- § Older people
- § Women
- § Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- § People of diverse sexualities
- § People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

By applying social justice principles, opportunities are created for individuals and groups who experience disadvantage to improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

Compared to the Sydney metropolitan area overall, the Liverpool local government area has a higher proportion of people who:

- § Are young and aged under 24 years
- § Were born overseas and speak a language other than English at home
- § Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- § Have a lower income but similar housing repayments
- § Do not attend university or hold higher qualifications
- § Are on the age pension
- § Experience domestic related assault
- § Live in one parent families
- § Are unemployed
- § Live in public housing
- § Are on a disability support pension

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Local government has a key role to play in creating a socially just, inclusive and sustainable community. This responsibility is shared with the federal and state governments, the non-government sector, the business community and the general community. Creating a socially just, inclusive and sustainable community is one of the key components of what is commonly referred to as the triple bottom line.

Local governments use social justice principles to shape their work and allocate resources within their control, in a way which supports social sustainability and social inclusion. Liverpool City Council has a long and rich history of actively working with the community towards social justice. Some of this work has been done directly, and some through advocacy and lobbying other levels of government.

The Social Justice Policy assists Council to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993. The Act states that Council's long term community strategic plans must be based on social justice principles and address social issues along with civic leadership, environmental and economic issues.

The Social Justice Policy also assists Council to support the application of a range of other state and federal legislative requirements, such as the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, Age Discrimination Act 2004, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and the NSW Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES**

Nine principles underpin Council's approach to social justice and are applied in its activities. The nine principles inform Council's actions to ensure they support the community, facilitate access to opportunities and build a fair and sustainable Liverpool.

### **1. Access**

Council is committed to providing and advocating for services and facilities that are available to all regardless of background, ability or capacity.

### **2. Equity**

Council is committed to fairness in providing services, making decisions and distributing resources particularly for those in need, so all members of the community benefit.

### **3. Participation and partnership**

Council recognises the rights of people to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and is committed to supporting opportunities for engaging in planning and decision making. Council recognises that working together with others produces better outcomes.

### **4. Human rights**

Council recognises and supports the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. This includes civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and the right to be treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination.

### **5. Recognition of Aboriginal Australians**

Council recognises and acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which Liverpool now stands and pays respects to Elders both past and present. It supports and celebrates the rich culture and strong community values of the Aboriginal community.

#### **6. Sustainability**

Council is committed to assessing social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts of its decisions and actions on people today and on future generations.

#### **7. Community strengths**

Council recognises that all communities have strengths. Council values and sees the benefits of strengths like diversity and community connections in building strong communities. Council recognises the value of promoting a strong and positive view of the local community rather than focusing on community deficits.

#### **8. Safe and healthy communities**

Council is committed to creating a city which is safe and healthy and recognises that a safe and healthy community improves wellbeing for all.

#### **9. Evidence based approach**

Council recognises the importance of evidence based solutions. It is committed to being informed about what does and doesn't work, based on research and the experiences of others. Council is also committed to monitoring and evaluating actions and strategies to ensure continuous improvement and effective and efficient service delivery.

## **APPLICATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES**

### ***Applying the social justice principles universally***

Social justice is included in Council's sustainability principles, and particularly supports social sustainability as part of the triple bottom line.

The social justice principles are used when preparing and delivering *Growing Liverpool 2021*, the 10 year community strategic plan for Liverpool, and when preparing other council strategic and action plans.

The social justice principles are applied when delivering all services to the community. For example, Council assesses social impacts as part of all relevant development applications; Council provides information about waste services in different languages to local residents; and Council ensures there is community consultation as part of its road infrastructure and land use projects.

Council applies the social justice principles through the Social Justice Principles Checklist.

### Social Justice Principles Checklist

- ❑ Community members, groups and organisations have been engaged as required
- ❑ Strategies have been put in place to provide access for:
  - Children
  - Young people
  - Older people
  - People with a disability
  - People from culturally diverse backgrounds
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
  - People of diverse sexualities
  - Women
- ❑ The initiative does not disadvantage individuals because of their background, ability or capacity
- ❑ Opportunities are available for people to contribute their views
- ❑ Internal and external partners have been invited to participate where relevant
- ❑ The traditional owners of the land have been recognised and acknowledged
- ❑ The rights of citizens have been upheld
- ❑ The short and long term social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts have been considered and addressed
- ❑ Strengths in the community have been considered and encouraged
- ❑ Community diversity and community connections have been promoted
- ❑ Personal and community safety has been addressed
- ❑ Physical and psychological health is protected and promoted
- ❑ There is evidence that the initiative is likely to produce a fair and just outcome
- ❑ Strategies for monitoring and evaluation are in place

### *Applying the social justice principles through specific programs and services*

Council delivers targeted programs and services that directly seek to improve wellbeing and quality of life for all, and particularly for people who may face barriers in accessing opportunities. These are described below.

#### *1. Community engagement*

- § Community engagement strategy undertaken every four years
- § Community forums
- § Advisory committees
- § Community engagement toolkit and procedures
- § Environment volunteer groups

#### *2. Community development and programs*

- § Youth program
- § Aboriginal program
- § Ageing and disability program
- § Community grants program
- § Community safety program
- § Culturally and linguistically diverse program
- § Living Streets community cultural development program
- § Community 2168 initiative in partnership with the NSW Housing and NSW Health

#### *3. Community planning and policy*

- § Social issues and social impact assessment and planning
- § Recreation and open space planning
- § Community and cultural facilities planning
- § Community services planning

#### *4. Services to the community*

- § Community events
- § Community directories
- § Liverpool City Library
- § Library services
- § Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
- § Liverpool Regional Museum
- § Early childhood programs
- § Community centres
- § Parks and sportsgrounds
- § Recreation centres
- § Language aide program
- § Translated information
- § Pensioner rate rebate

**AUTHORISED BY**  
Council

**EFFECTIVE FROM**  
23 May 2011

**DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE**  
General Manager through City Services

**REVIEW DATE**

The Social Justice Policy will be reviewed and achievements reported every four years in line with the review of *Growing Liverpool 2021*, the 10 year community strategic plan for Liverpool. This will include a report on the progress of social indicators in Liverpool and Council actions that work towards a socially just, inclusive and sustainable community.

The reporting and monitoring process ensures the social justice policy is integrated into Council's overall planning and reporting approach and informs future directions for Liverpool.



## **CONSULTATION**

Liverpool City Council Community and Recreation Panel  
Community Sector Managers Group  
Community and government human services agencies and networks  
Integrated Planning and Reporting Steering Committee  
Community Services  
Recreation Services  
Library Services  
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre  
Strategic Planning  
Financial Services  
Sustainable Environment  
Corporate Services

## **TRIM REFERENCE**

2007/1452. 034883.2012

## **REFERENCES**

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