



SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY

Adopted: 25 July 2018

TRIM: 180128.2018



SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY

1. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

There are several Acts related to the Social Justice Policy (Policy) that governs councils in providing services in an accessible and equitable manner, particularly to groups that may experience disadvantage within the community. A full list of these can be found at Appendix 1.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide a foundation and guiding principles for Liverpool City Council's (Council) commitment and actions to protect human rights and promote key social justice values of freedom, respect, equity and dignity for all people in the Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA). The Policy is an overarching commitment to Council's effort to redress the impact of social and economic inequalities both on the people experiencing it and on the wider community.

2.2 Council will promote a community that has high levels of social capital and that values diversity and ensures people are not discriminated against regardless of race, faith, ability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or economic status. Council will meet these commitments through the principles outlined in this document, ensuring all members of the community have appropriate and equitable opportunities in accessing Council's full range of services, activities and information.

3 DEFINITIONS

3.1 **Social justice:** In its simplest form, social justice is the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, in which outside factors that categorise people are irrelevant. It 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.

3.2 **Social inclusion:** Diversity is seen as a core strength of the community. 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.

3.3 **Social sustainability:** Communities that are equitable, diverse, connected and democratic, and which actively support the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy and liveable communities.

3.4 **Social infrastructure:** Processes, programs, events, services, networks and activities that support individuals and families to meet their social and personal needs.

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- 3.5 **Social capital:** Social relations that have productive benefits for the community. It is an outcome of community engagement and community capacity building processes. Elevated levels of social capital assists in the creation of social cohesion and reduce inequalities in communities.
- 3.6 **Human rights:** Derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by United Nations in 1948. It is about recognising the inherent dignity of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Human rights are universal, to be enjoyed by all people, no matter who they are or where they live.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Acknowledgment

- 4.1.1 The City of Liverpool is welcoming of Indigenous people and intends to continue its support and celebration of their people and culture.
- 4.1.2 Council recognises and deeply appreciates their historic connection to this place, and recognise the contributions of the Darug, Tharawal and other local Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community, our state and country as a whole.

4.2 Why do we need a Social Justice Policy?

- 4.2.1 Social justice is, in fact, the old Australian egalitarian ideal - the "*fair go*" translated into a more modern and perhaps less well understood term. Liverpool is one of the fastest growing Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Australia which consists of a high proportion of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. This is recognised as a unique strength for our community, however, our city as a fast-growing municipality faces challenges such as but not limited to:
- a) Responding to social disadvantage in the context of rapid growth;
 - b) Managing geographically large areas, both urban and rural;
 - c) The need for capacity building in pockets of significant socio-economic disadvantage;
 - d) Addressing issues around ageing social and physical infrastructure in established areas and providing for requirements of new social and physical infrastructure in the rapidly developing locations; and
 - e) High rates of youth unemployment.
- 4.2.2 There is increasing recognition for better ways to account for the social, economic and environmental values that results from our activities. This Policy aims to establish the systemic and structural social arrangements to improve equality of opportunity, as a core

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social value in our city. Simply put, it involves finding the optimum balance between our joint responsibilities as a community and as individuals to foster social inclusion, strengthen the local community and increase opportunities for people who may experience barriers.

4.3 Who does this policy specifically support?

- 4.3.1 Council recognises that the community of Liverpool is a very diverse group and that there are several groups within our community who may be categorised as disadvantaged and/or at considerable risk due to different circumstances. These circumstances may have led to issues around social isolation, financial difficulties, access and representation.
- 4.3.2 Council acknowledges and seeks to support adequate delivery of programs, services, information and opportunities to these groups. A full list of these groups can be found at Appendix 2.

4.4 Social Justice Principles

- 4.4.1 The following principles are informed by the United Nation's direction on Social Justice in an Open World and by examples of best practice in the field of social justice. These principles underpin Council's approach to social justice and are applied in its activities and decision-making, accounting for Liverpool's diverse and rapidly changing social and natural environment:
 - a) **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.
 - b) **Equity:** Council is committed to fairness in providing services, making decisions and distributing resources equally. Particular consideration is given to those in need to ensure an increased collective benefit for the whole community.
 - c) **Access:** Council is committed to providing and advocating for services and facilities that are available to all regardless of background, ability or capacity. To ensure this, social justice principles help guide council's urban design and social infrastructure planning protocols.
 - d) **Human rights and advocacy:** 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. Council is committed to supporting advocacy campaigns aiming to reduce discrimination and disadvantage.
 - e) **Participation and partnership:** Council recognises the rights of people to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and is committed to supporting opportunities for stakeholder engagement in planning and decision-making processes.
 - f) **Sustainability:** Council is committed to assessing social, cultural, environmental and

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economic impacts of its decisions and actions on our community today and on future generations.

- g) **Community strengths:** Council values and acknowledges the strengths of our community such as diversity and community connections. Council recognises the benefits of building on those strengths and working towards empowerment and capacity building.
- h) **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.
- i) **Evidence informed approach:** Council recognises the importance of evidence informed solutions. It is committed to being informed of the changing trends based on scientific research and consultation processes. Council is also committed to monitoring and evaluating actions and strategies to ensure continuous improvement and effective and efficient service delivery.
- j) **Biodiversity and environmental protection:** Council is committed to protect and enhance the variety of life in all its forms, recognise and conserve the intrinsic value of biodiversity and natural ecosystems in its LGA. Council recognise social and environmental justice issues are frequently linked and that groups who are socially, economically, culturally or otherwise marginalised are especially vulnerable to the experience of environmental degradation.
- k) **Compliance:** Council is committed to upholding the relevant national and international legislative documents relating to human rights and social justice in all decision-making processes.

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

4.5 Council's Role and Responsibilities

4.5.1 Council has a key role 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 determinants that guides Council's work.

4.5.2 Council applies the social justice principles and other relevant guiding documents to directions it takes and how it allocates resources. 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 to other levels of government.

4.5.3 Council's responsibility in this regard is to support people who may have barriers to accessing services or opportunities. Compared to the Greater Sydney metropolitan area, overall, the Liverpool LGA has a higher proportion of people who:

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- a) Are young and aged under 24 years.
- b) Are born overseas and speak a language other than English at home.
- c) Have a lower income and higher housing stress.
- d) Do not hold formal qualifications and/or have not completed school.
- e) Experience domestic related assault.
- f) Live in a one parent household.
- g) Are unemployed.
- h) Live in social and community housing.
- i) Need assistance due to disability.
- j) Are full-time working parents with young children.

4.5.4 This Policy also 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”.

4.6 Application of Social Justice Principles

4.6.1 The social justice principles are applied when developing strategy documents and policies as well as when planning and delivering 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 are community consultation processes in place as part of its road infrastructure and land use projects.

4.6.2 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. Specifically, this Policy informs programs and activities as outlined below:

- a) Liverpool, Our Home 2027, Council’s 10-year Community Strategic Plan;
- b) Community Engagement Policy and Strategy;
- c) Advisory committees;
- d) District Forums;
- e) Community development programs (Youth, Aboriginal, ageing and disability, multicultural, Community 2168 Project, 2168 Children’s Parliament, Community Safety, and Community Grants);
- f) Community planning and policy (social research, social impact assessment and planning, community services and social infrastructure planning);
- g) Services to the community (events, libraries, arts and cultural programs, early childhood programs, community facilities, recreation and open space facilities); and
- h) Environment volunteer groups.

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5. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

5.1 This policy will be reviewed every four years. The review should include the following:

- a) Council's ongoing commitment to the purpose and objectives of this policy;
- b) Whether the manner in which Council manages this policy and related activities is professional, transparent and accountable;
- c) Whether conflicts of interest are identified and activities terminated should a conflict of interest arise that cannot be resolved.
- d) Measuring Council's integration of the social justice principles into Council's overall planning and service delivery to the community against the following Social Justice Principles Checklist:
 - i. Community members, groups and organisations have been engaged as required.
 - ii. Strategies have been put in place to provide access for children, young people, older people, people with disability, people from CALD backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people of diverse sexualities and women.
 - iii. The initiative does not disadvantage individuals because of their background, ability or capacity.
 - iv. Opportunities are available for people to contribute their views.
 - v. Internal and external partners have been invited to participate, where relevant.
 - vi. The traditional owners of the land have been recognised and acknowledged.
 - vii. The rights of citizens have been upheld.
 - viii. The short and long term social, cultural, environmental and economic impacts have been considered and addressed.
 - ix. Assets in the community have been considered and encouraged.
 - x. Community diversity and community connections have been promoted.
 - xi. Personal and community safety has been addressed.
 - xii. Physical and psychological health is protected and promoted.
 - xiii. There is evidence that the initiative is likely to produce a fair and just outcome.
 - xiv. Strategies for monitoring and evaluation are in place.

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AUTHORISED BY

Council Resolution

EFFECTIVE FROM

25 July 2018

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE

Community Development and Planning

REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed and reported on every four years in line with the review of Council's Community Strategic Plan.

VERSIONS

Version	Amended by	Changes made	Date	TRIM Number
1	Council resolution	Not applicable	23 May 2011	034883.2012
2	Council resolution	Complete review	25 July 2018	180128.2018

THIS POLICY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH

Governance and Legal Services

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- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix 1: Legislative requirements
- Appendix 2: Community groups that may experience disadvantage

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APPENDIX 1 – Legislative Requirements

There are several Acts related to the Social Justice Policy that governs councils in providing services in an accessible and equitable manner, particularly to groups that may experience disadvantage within the community. These Acts are listed below:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act 1986
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Carer Recognition Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Services Act 1993
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994
- Local Government Act 1993
- Multiculturalism NSW Act 2000
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

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APPENDIX 2 – Community groups that may experience disadvantage

Council recognises that the community of Liverpool is a very diverse group and that there are several groups within our community who may be categorised as disadvantaged and/or at considerable risk due to different circumstances. These circumstances may have led to issues around social isolation, financial difficulties, access and representation.

Council acknowledges and seeks to support adequate delivery of programs, services, information and opportunities to the groups listed below:

- Indigenous people
- People of diverse genders and / or sexuality
- People with disabilities
- People from CALD backgrounds
- People over 55 years
- Children under 12 years
- Young people 12 – 24 years
- Unemployed people or those in unsecure employment
- Disengaged young people
- People living with mental health
- People who experience homelessness or at risk of homelessness
- People from refugee backgrounds
- Older people living alone
- Carers
- Single parent families
- People living in social and community housing
- People living in geographically isolated areas