

# 1.0 Client Access and Equity Policy

## 2.0 Identification Grid

<b>Date first approved:</b> 20/05/2015	<b>Date of effect:</b> 30/04/2019
<b>Date last amended:</b> 30/04/2019	<b>Date of Next Review:</b> 30/04/2021
<b>Policy owner:</b> GM People, Planning, Performance and Technology	<b>Portfolio:</b> People, Planning, Performance and Technology
<b>Policy Author/s:</b> GM People, Planning, Performance and Technology	

## 3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 3.1 Create an inclusive environment that recognises and responds to cultural and linguistic diversity and ability/disability.
- 3.2 Promote access and equity and non-discrimination in service provision on the basis of; age, career and parental status, disability, employment activity, gender identity, lawful sexual activity, sexual orientation, industrial activity, marital status, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy and breastfeeding, race, religious belief or activity, sex, personal association or other attribute.
- 3.3 Strengthen outcomes for the people who access Launch Housing services through a model of service delivery that is integrated and coordinated.

## 4.0 Definitions

Discrimination	The unjust or prejudicial treatment due to personal characteristics or other attributes.
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## 5.0 Policy Details

### 5.1 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students/interns, contractors and volunteers of Launch Housing.

### 5.2 Policy Principles:

#### 5.2.1 Access:

- 5.2.2 People can easily approach Launch Housing services to seek assistance without fear of discrimination based on their country of birth, language, culture, race or religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or any other attribute.
- 5.2.3 We actively ensure services enhance accessibility. We also make reasonable accommodation to programs and buildings so that people can access services including people with a disability and people with parental, carer and family responsibilities.

### 5.3 Advocacy

- 5.3.1 With their permission, we negotiate and advocate on behalf of people. We offer opportunities that empower people to become advocates for themselves.

- 5.3.2 We provide people with information on their right to access an independent advocate and provide assistance where requested to do this. We understand the importance of specialist services for particular groups, such as services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- 5.3.3 We will make people aware of alternative service options to those provided by Launch Housing and work in partnership or collaboratively with these services when requested by clients or tenants to ensure access to these services.
- 5.3.4 We seek to influence attitudes and policy at all levels. Wherever possible, after obtaining informed consent, we include people in advocacy campaigns and ensure that they, and their well-being, are at the forefront of everything we do.

## **5.4 Communication**

- 5.4.1 We do not assume that all tenants and clients of Launch Housing have literacy and English language skills sufficient to understand all written materials.
- 5.4.2 Because of this, we communicate openly and effectively in plain language to enable people:
- equitable access to programs; and
  - an understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
- 5.4.3 Where possible we use forms of communication that can assist those people with limited literacy and English language skills.
- 5.4.4 Written material will be provided in the common community languages for a site /area or interpreter services will be made available where material is not available in the client/tenant's language. The languages spoken by clients /tenants at particular sites will be reviewed regularly.
- 5.4.5 Sites will ensure that clients/tenants are made aware that they can access interpreters and interpreters will be made available to clients and tenants upon request.
- 5.4.6 Communication is a two way exchange and we seek to provide it in creative and inclusive ways.
- 5.4.7 We design strategies to inform people of the services available, their entitlements and how they can obtain them.
- 5.4.8 We make accessible resources and information about our services, complaints, and rights and responsibilities freely available to people who use our services in a form they can understand. We also provide this information in other languages.

## **5.5 Equity**

- 5.5.1 We ensure service is delivered fairly and consistently to all people and accompanying children, regardless of who they are or where they come from.
- 5.5.2 We recognise that special measures or accommodations may need to be made for some clients to ensure all people feel welcomed, safe and able to access services.
- 5.5.3 If we cannot assist a person in the way they initially request, we will explore other options for assistance and help provide assistance to access these alternatives through referral.

## **5.6 Inclusion and participation**

- 5.6.1 The person is at the centre of the case management process, having full ownership over where the case plan goes and all decisions affecting their lives. We deal with people's particular circumstances with sensitivity and understanding.

5.6.2 We also regularly consult with those using our services about adequacy, design and standard.

### 5.7 Sustainable empowerment

5.7.1 People who access Launch Housing services set aspirational goals for themselves. We encourage, support and connect people to opportunities, experiences and networks in order to enable them to build independent and sustainable livelihoods and take greater control over their lives.

### 5.8 Transparency

5.8.1 We build respectful, caring and honest relationships.

5.8.2 We obtain a person's consent to be part of a program and provide accurate information about the services/supports period being offered.

5.8.3 We also have reporting mechanisms in place to ensure the effectiveness and responsiveness of access and equity objectives to people of diverse backgrounds.

### 5.9 Additional Support

5.9.1 In some circumstances, we provide targeted financial resources and additional support based on:

- the best interests of the person;
- the availability of the assistance;
- the potential to achieve sustainable outcomes and maximize opportunities;
- We balance these considerations against;
- duty of care;
- the resources required for other service users;
- and other funding or services available.

### 5.3 Client Record Management

5.3.1 We safely store and maintain client records according to the relevant legislation.

## 6.0 Responsibilities

GM Keeping Housing, GM Getting Housing & GM Housing Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that all reasonably practicable measures have been taken to promote access and equity and non-discrimination in service provision.</li><li>• Ensure key information, support and where relevant training is available to all staff.</li><li>• Ensure access and equity concerns are documented and reported properly.</li></ul>
Client Services Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To deliver service provision without discrimination.</li><li>• To obtain a person's consent to be part of a program and provide accurate information about the services/supports period being offered.</li></ul>

## **7.0 Relevant Legislation & External Documents**

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Charter of Rights and Responsibilities 2006
- DHHS Standards
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Performance against Performance Standards for Registered Agencies

## **8.0 Supporting Documents & Implementation Tools**

- Launch Housing Client Records Management Policy
- Launch Housing Privacy Policy
- Launch Housing Code of Conduct
- Launch Housing Client / Tenant Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Launch Housing Child Safe Code of Conduct