

## PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

### Title:

**Banyule Social Inclusion Policy**

### Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ▶ confirm Council's commitment to equity for all and to representing the full range of community interests with a whole of life perspective;
- ▶ recognise that some people in the community experience health and wellbeing inequities and barriers to participation in community life; and to
- ▶ acknowledge that to enable equity of inclusion for all, policies and services need to reflect the needs and aspirations of people with disabilities, their carers and families; people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples, their families and carers as first priority of this policy. Other focus areas of community disadvantage and exclusion will be identified and addressed through this policy as part of annual monitoring and planning of inclusion policy implementation.

### Definitions:

***Inclusion:*** Describes a situation where all people feel valued and can participate in decision making that affects their lives, allowing them to improve their overall wellbeing.

***Exclusion:*** Describes the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems that contribute to the integration of a person in the community.

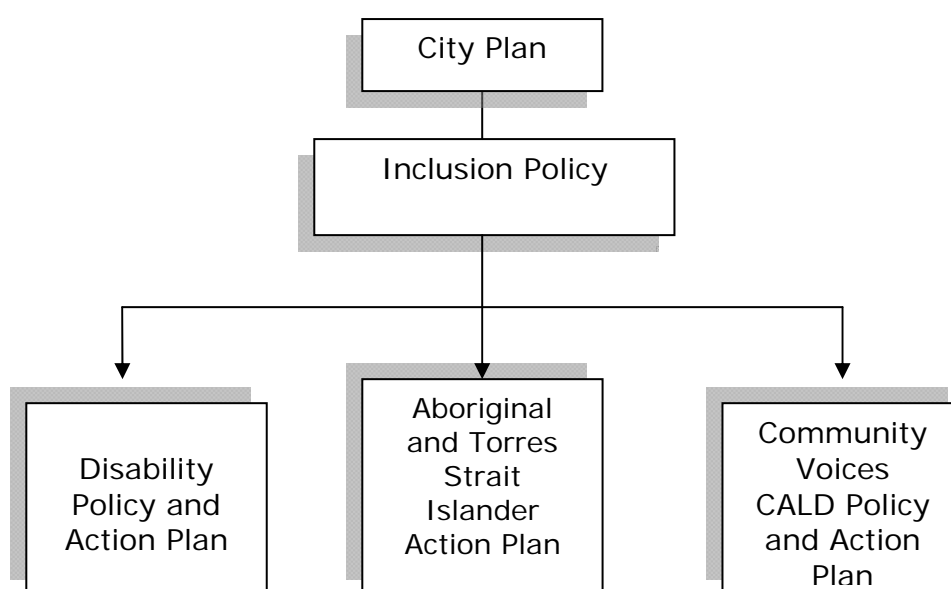
***Equity of access:*** Refers to the removal of barriers to access, including access to the built environment, information, communications, employment, goods and services and the elimination of discriminatory procedures to enable inclusion of all people.

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 1 of 9

## Relationships:

This Social Inclusion Policy replaces the Banyule Community Access and Inclusion Policy adopted in 1996 by broadening its original disability focus. It has been recognised that the need to enable equity has wider application of inclusion which is relevant to many within the community.

The Social Inclusion Policy serves as an overarching policy that is implemented through the actions contained in the Disability Policy and Action Plan, Statement of Commitment to Indigenous Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan and the CALD Policy and action plan.



## PART TWO - BACKGROUND

### Rationale:

The opportunity to participate in community life, with its attendant responsibilities and opportunities, is a fundamental right of all Australians.

The majority of people are able to exercise this right at will.

However some people experience barriers to participation. Most commonly these barriers take the form of:

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 2 of 9

- ▶ Access barriers, such as those experienced by people with mobility disabilities, vision and hearing impairment and those who experience mental illness or psychiatric disability.
- ▶ Language and cultural barriers, such as those experienced by people whose first language is not English, or whose custom of dress is uncommon in Australia.
- ▶ Social barriers, such as those experienced by people who are exposed to prejudicial or racist attitudes, or who are made to feel unwelcome in the community in which they live.
- ▶ Place based barriers where location can determine disadvantage by virtue of a lack of necessary social, economic and community infrastructure and services such as business, employment, housing, education, transport, health services, justice and policing to enable the full participation of residents.

Evidence demonstrates that people who encounter barriers to connecting effectively with their community can become socially isolated, and that this experience can adversely affect their health and wellbeing. When significant numbers of community members are excluded, community cohesion can be disrupted as negative stereotypes develop in the absence of knowledge and understanding, and community attitudes can be influenced by ignorance and suspicion.

Community inclusion processes identify barriers that people encounter to participation in community life and develop ways to remove or minimise their impact. Inclusion also confirms and celebrates the diversity of lifestyles and cultures within the community in ways that foster tolerance and understanding and contribute to a sense of identity and belonging.

Inclusion needs to be a proactive process as barriers may be unintentional. They may have become embedded within work practices, attitudes and assumptions to the extent that the wider community is unaware of their existence or impact.

Inclusion does not provide favourable treatment or direct unwarranted attention to particular groups in the community. Rather it recognises and confirms that social cohesion and sustainability can only be achieved when there is equity of opportunity for all to access and participate in community life. Everyone benefits within an inclusive community.

### **The prevalence of disability within Banyule**

The incidence of disability in Australia is known to be age related, from as low as 4% for the 0-4 years age group, to 41% of 65-69 year olds and 92% of those aged 90 years and over.

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 3 of 9

In addition, the *ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey 2003*, identified that there are approximately 20% of the Australian population with a disability.

For the first time the 2006 Census recorded the prevalence of disability in Australia. It found there are 5,119 people living in Banyule (4.7% of the population) who have a profound or severe disability (this did not include people with a moderate or mild disability). This is slightly higher than the national results which recorded 4.1% of the population with a profound or severe disability.

Findings of the 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers coupled with the population and age profile of Banyule states in 2008, an estimated 8,660 residents of Banyule – or 7.3% of the population have disabilities causing profound or severe restriction of communication, mobility and self-care.

Overall, **approximately 23% of the residents of Banyule have a disability**, including over 1,640 children, 14,060 people of working age, and 10,660 older residents.

#### **The number of people from CALD communities within Banyule.**

Banyule is now home to people from 143 different countries, 125 of which are non-English speaking countries. With even the largest overseas born groups each representing only a small proportion of the total population, our community is characterised by a high level of ethnic diversity.

Almost 18% of households speak a language other than English.

The major languages spoken are Italian, Chinese, Greek, and Arabic.

#### **The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Banyule**

Banyule has a sizeable Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander population of over 500 persons, and it is increasing.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait islander people living in Banyule experience higher levels of disadvantage than non-Indigenous people living in Banyule, as highlighted in Table 1 below.

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 4 of 9

Table 1 – Selected indicators of disadvantage

Indicator	Banyule Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	Banyule non-Indigenous
Median age	20 yrs	38 yrs
Median personal income	\$379	\$505
Rental accommodation	55%	23%
One parent families	30%	11%
Left school before Year 11	51%	32%
Unemployment rate	15%	4%

Source: Indigenous population and social data. ABS 2006

### Legislative context:

At the Federal level there are two key pieces of legislation that underpin Council's commitment to the concept of inclusion.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it unlawful to treat people with a disability less favourably than people without a disability in areas such as employment, education, and provision of facilities and services.

The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for public places to be made inaccessible to people with a disability.

The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 makes racial discrimination unlawful in Australia. Like the Disability Discrimination Act, the Racial Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, in areas such as employment, the provision of goods and services and access to public places.

There are in addition a number of other pieces of Commonwealth Legislation that prohibit unfair discrimination including:

- ▶ Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- ▶ Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workforce Act 1999
- ▶ Workplace relations Act 1996
- ▶ Age Discrimination Act 2004

In 2008, the Commonwealth government established a Social Inclusion Board and identified the following priorities for action:

- ▶ Addressing the incidence of homelessness
- ▶ Closing the gap for Indigenous Australians
- ▶ Employment for people living with a Disability or mental illness
- ▶ Addressing the incidence and needs of jobless families with children
- ▶ Focusing on particular locations, neighbourhoods and communities to ensure programs and services are getting to the right places

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 5 of 9

- ▶ Delivering effective support to children at greatest risk of long term disadvantage.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) was recently enacted by the Victoria Government. The Charter is based upon the principle that human rights are essential in a democratic and inclusive society. It was developed to ensure these rights are valued and protected within government and the community. The Charter includes the right of every person to take part in public life. Council, as a nominated public authority in the Charter is required to give adequate consideration to human rights when it makes a decision, and not to act in a way that is incompatible with a human right.

The Charter has a special importance for the Aboriginal people of Victoria, as descendants of Australia's first people, with their diverse spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters.

Within Victoria, Local government authorities have a clearly defined mandate to work with all citizens in local communities to increase health, wellbeing and participation. Two specific and relevant legislative references to support this mandate can be found in the Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003 and the Public Health and Well Being Act (2008). The Public Health and Well Being Act empowers local government to promote public health and wellbeing at individual and community levels. Local government is required to address disadvantage and inequalities through planning and partnership actions. The Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003 empowers the role by requiring understanding and action relevant to the diverse needs of the community, developing advocacy services, and fostering active participation in community life.

Commonwealth legislation is also echoed in the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995 and the Victorian Disability Act 2006

These Federal and State legislative requirements provide a clear impetus for Banyule City Council to take up a role in building inclusive communities for people of all abilities and backgrounds.

### Policy context:

This policy builds upon the Vision and Objectives contained within the Banyule City Plan (2009-2013) in particular:

- ▶ The support for "sustaining a healthy and engaged community" embodied in the Vision Statement; and Council's values of community well being, community participation and maintaining our community's trust.
- ▶ The People objective of Community Strengthening and Support to be achieved through:

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 6 of 9

- Planning, developing and delivering services for all stages of our peoples' lives
  - Supporting a strong, diverse and inclusive community
  - Promoting community safety and amenity
  - Honouring and celebrating Banyule's cultural; heritage and identity.
  - Encouraging healthy lifestyles and physical activity.
- ▶ The Participation and Good Governance objective of:
    - Support for civic participation and advocacy for the interests of the community.
  - ▶ The Prosperity objective through the draft Economic Development and Employment Strategy which outlines Council's role in employment, education and training.
  - ▶ The Place objectives of:
    - Create meaningful housing and residential neighbourhoods.
    - Support sustainable transport.

This policy is intrinsically linked to other lifestage and lifestyle policies and plans adopted by Banyule City Council. These include:

- ▶ Banyule Health Plan
- ▶ Community Safety Policy and Safer Banyule Action Plan
- ▶ Youth and Family Services Strategy
- ▶ Banyule Early Years Plan
- ▶ Active Ageing Strategy
- ▶ Connected Culture Strategy
- ▶ Youth Charter and Plan
- ▶ Volunteer Policy and Guidelines
- ▶ Neighbourhood Renewal
- ▶ Place based planning and urban design frameworks
- ▶ Disability Policy and Plan.

This policy also supports the revised Banyule Statement of Reconciliation being developed with the Wurundjeri Wandoon people, Traditional Custodians of this land. It also supports Council programs which target community engagement and participation.

The Social Inclusion policy has application to the review of organisational business units as required under existing Best Value Legislation.

### Policy Development Process:

This Policy was developed following a series of information and consultation sessions with Banyule Council staff, local Service Providers and Banyule residents who have an interest in community inclusion.

Responsible Officer:	Policy Number:	Date:	Page:
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 7 of 9

## PART THREE – PROPOSED BANYULE SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY

### Vision:

The vision for this policy is that Banyule will be a city which values diversity and actively promotes and enables the inclusion of all residents.

### Goal:

To maximise the benefits to Banyule of its diverse population by ensuring all people are respected and valued for their differences, have equity of access to services and resources, and the opportunity to contribute to the life of the community.

### Objectives:

1. To recognise, maintain and celebrate the importance of social diversity.
2. To promote full participation by all residents of Banyule in the life of the community.
3. To ensure equity of access to services and resources for all residents.
4. To work toward addressing place based disadvantage.

### Principles:

The following statements of principle underpin this policy:

- ▶ Individual differences should be respected and valued.
- ▶ Communities are strengthened by their diversity.
- ▶ Everyone has the right to participate equitably in the life of the community.
- ▶ Services and facilities should be responsive to community needs and aspirations and ensure equitable and timely access.
- ▶ All people have the right to live their lives free of discrimination.

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 8 of 9

## Role of Council:

Council's role in fostering an inclusive community is to demonstrate:

- ▶ Leadership – committing to the progressive removal of barriers to access to its own services, resources and facilities.
- ▶ Co-ordination - developing linkages and partnerships with other service providers and organisations to support a whole of city approach to inclusion.
- ▶ Governance –transparent decision-making informed by listening to the community and by developing consultation and advisory mechanisms.
- ▶ Advocacy – understanding and representing local community needs and concerns in appropriate forums.
- ▶ Celebration – supporting and promoting community events that allow the expression of social diversity and promote understanding and social harmony.

## Scope:

The Social Inclusion policy will apply to all:

- ▶ Council policy;
- ▶ Council service development and delivery;
- ▶ Council advocacy, community representation and partnership development.

## Human Rights Charter:

In accordance with Section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights, the Social Inclusion Strategy is assessed as being compatible with the human rights protected by the Charter. This assessment is based on a Statement of Compatibility of the Human Rights protected by the Charter that are relevant to the policy.

## Application period:

Date policy approved by Council: Submitted to Council for adoption  
5<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Date policy due for review: To be incorporated into Council's  
Health and Well Being policy when developed (2009/10)

Date of policy revocation: 12 months after review due date

Responsible Officer:	Policy Number:	Date:	Page:
Manager Health and Aged Services	Draft	September 2009	Page 9 of 9