

# Policy

# Access and Equity

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## Policy Statement

Beyond Housing will ensure fair and equal access to services and opportunities within our catchment. Beyond Housing services are provided in a manner that ensures all people are treated equally based on eligibility, relative need, and available resources. Beyond Housing ensures its hours of operation, office accessibility, office locations and outreach services, staff skills and experience, policies and procedures play a role in enhancing service access for all people.

## Policy Application

This policy applies to all Beyond Housing employees and includes all permanent and casual staff, volunteers, work experience students, management, and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). For the purposes of this document, all parties will be referred to throughout this policy as workplace participants.

## Responsibility & Authority

- The Board of Beyond Housing has responsibility for ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements at a Governance level.
- This policy is operational and therefore the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring:
  - Appropriate and effective policies and systems are in place to operationalise legal and regulatory requirements and therefore implement this policy in accordance with that responsibility.
  - All managers and workplace participants are aware of this policy.
  - Support for workplace participants to undertake their responsibilities under this policy is provided.
- The CEO may delegate specific responsibility to managers or workplace participants to ensure that the objectives relating to this policy are met.
- Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for informing workplace participants about their responsibilities under this policy.
- All workplace participants are responsible to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its requirements.

## Policy Detail

Beyond Housing values include Advocacy, Fairness, Innovation, Quality and Collaboration as part of our purpose of Ending Homelessness.

Beyond Housing will:

- Make services available to everyone who is entitled to them according to available resources and governing legislative rules, guidance documents and organisational strategic plan.
- Develop and deliver services based on fair treatment of all those clients who are eligible to receive them.
- Be transparent and equitable in the way we prioritise need and allocate resources.
- Define our criteria, as detailed in program guidelines, for determining if a person is eligible to enter the service and provide eligibility criteria in formats clients can understand.
- Use all necessary strategies to inform eligible clients of the services available, their rights and responsibilities, with due consideration to the issues and needs of the client group.
- Participate in the Victorian Opening Doors Initiative to ensure people requiring homelessness assistance have access to homelessness services 24 hours a day.

- Ensure that all workplace participants understand the principles of access and equity and that they practice in a way that upholds these principles.
- Provide training opportunities for workplace participants to ensure the provision of accessible and equitable services.
- Understand its current and prospective client base and develops services to respond to people's needs in an accessible and equitable manner.
- Ensure that clients are provided the opportunity to involve a support person, advocate, or family member to assist them.
- Ensure that our offices and services are accessible to people, including the provision of outreach and telephone services to people living in remote areas or are without transport can access our service.
- Seek feedback from people about the accessibility of our services and use that information to improve services.
- Ensure professional relationships with specialist services across the Goulburn and Ovens Murray regions to ensure people with diverse needs are provided with support opportunities.
- Not prejudice a person who has previously been refused services in future attempts to access services.
- Be integrated both internally and within the wider service system to ensure people receive appropriate services to meet their needs.
- Commit to timely and effective referral.
- Use a variety of strategies to establish contact with hard-to-reach people who face challenges in engaging with services.
- Work with clients, stakeholders, and the community to ensure services are culturally safe, welcome, and accessible for all people. We will consider a range of factors including gender, age, culture, religion, spirituality, and sexual identity in decision making and service development.

## **Identifying barriers to access**

To identify barriers to access, Beyond Housing will:

- Compare the profile clients with local population data and past service records on an annual basis to identify groups who are underrepresented.
- Consult with clients and/or their advocates, other agencies, and workplace participants.
- Seek advice from relevant community groups or members.

## **Physical and cultural access**

Beyond Housing will ensure:

- Our premises are within walking distance of public transport stops.
- Our premises and facilities are physically accessible to people with limited mobility or disability.
- Opening hours provide access to our full range of services.
- Services are provided in a flexible manner to meet the needs of individuals.
- We maintain effective messaging systems for clients to contact the organization.
- Client areas are kept clean, comfortable, and welcoming.
- The cultural and language needs of people within the target group/s are identified and accommodated.
- Interpreters are available for any person requiring this assistance.

## **Training**

Beyond Housing will ensure that all workplace participants receive relevant training through induction, supervision, and professional development.

## Definitions

<b>Access</b>	Removing barriers and improving opportunities. It means ensuring that workplace participants and clients with differing needs and abilities have the same opportunities to participate and achieve, as appropriate, in the service and operational activities of the organisation.
<b>Equity</b>	Ensuring that all people have the supports that they need to access services and participate to the same level.

## Related

Document Reference	Document Type
<a href="#">Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Disability Discrimination and other Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2009 (Cth)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</a>	Legislation
<a href="#">Code of Conduct</a>	Policy
<a href="#">Code of Ethics</a>	Policy
<a href="#">Compliments and Complaints</a>	Policy
<a href="#">Case Management</a>	Policy
<a href="#">Child Wellbeing and Safety</a>	Policy
<a href="#">Diversity</a>	Policy
<a href="#">Rights and Responsibilities</a>	Policy
<a href="#">Engaging Clients</a>	Procedure
<a href="#">Beyond Housing Vision, Purpose and Values</a>	Other
<a href="#">Beyond Housing Strategic Plan</a>	Other
<a href="#">Homelessness Services Guidelines &amp; Conditions of Funding May 2014</a>	Other

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