

EQUITABLE ACCESS POLICY (COMMUNITY POLICY)

1 **Scope:**

This policy applies to Rockhampton Regional Council facilities, services and programs.

2 **Purpose:**

To provide a framework to support Council's commitment to promoting inclusiveness and equitable access in the design, development and operation of Council facilities, services, and programs.

3 **Related Documents:**

Primary

Nil

Secondary

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

Building Act 1975

Civil Liability Act 2003

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Disability Services Act 2006

Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010

Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

Local Government Act 2009

Multicultural Recognition Act 2016

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Building Code of Australia

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

4 **Definitions:**

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

Access	The practice of ensuring that all members of the community have the opportunity to access information, facilities, services and activities regardless of individual circumstances, characteristics, abilities, or background.
Council	Rockhampton Regional Council
Discrimination	The practice or act of treating a person unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by state and federal law.
Diversity	Refers to the variety of differences between people, including ethnic background.

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Department: Community Services

Section: Communities and Facilities

Page No.: Page 1 of 3

Employees	<i>Local government employee:</i> (a) The chief executive officer; or (b) A person holding an appointment under section 196 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Equitable Access	Ensuring fair and socially just opportunities to access facilities, services, and programs.
Inclusiveness	The practice or act of creating an environment where people feel included regardless of individual circumstances, characteristics, abilities, culture, or background.
Universal Design	The design of products, environment, programs and services to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

5 Policy Statement:

Council values the contribution that residents and visitors make to the area and is committed to improving accessibility and inclusion for all, with practices that respect the diversity of backgrounds, abilities, values, beliefs and lifestyles of people within the community.

Recognising that equitable access maximizes participation and social inclusion in the community, Council will seek to achieve the following outcomes:

5.1 Access to Facilities, Spaces and Amenities

Council will ensure that all relevant standards are applied to planning and development within the area, encouraging proactive processes that promote universal design. Wherever possible, Council will strive to go beyond the minimum standards to improve access to its buildings, facilities, public spaces and streetscapes.

5.2 Access to Information and Services

Council will deliver information in clear and accessible formats and media, and will provide services that are inclusive and responsive to community needs. It will provide training for employees to enhance their capacity to identify and remove any barriers to equitable access in the planning and delivery of services.

5.3 Advocacy and Engagement

Council will seek to influence public policy and resource allocation advocating for equitable funding, service delivery and planning to address the needs of diverse groups and individuals. It will engage with the diverse community to seek guidance in identifying issues for planning and advocacy.

5.3 Employment

As a major Regional employer, Council will continue to set an example as an organisation which rejects discrimination, acknowledges the benefit of diversity among its employees, and promotes equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion and development.

5.4 Celebration and Participation

Council will seek to create an inclusive community that celebrates and values diversity by supporting local events, festivals and activities that promote pride, harmony, and respect for all. It will provide meaningful and inclusive capacity building opportunities to create pathways for people to connect, learn and enhance their strengths, overcome disadvantage, and foster a cohesive community.

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Section: Communities and Facilities
Page No.: Page 2 of 3

6 Review Timelines:

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

- 6.1. The related information is amended or replaced; or
- 6.2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by Council

7 Responsibilities:

Sponsor	Chief Executive Officer
Business Owner	General Manager Community Services
Policy Owner	Manager Communities and Facilities
Policy Quality Control	Corporate Improvement and Strategy

**EVAN PARDON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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Page No.: Page 3 of 3