



Policy & Procedure

ACCESS & EQUITY POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Responsible Person:	CEO	Reviewed by:	CEO
Organisational Area:	Operational	Review Date:	Oct 26
Approved and adopted by:	Board of Governance	Next Review Date:	Oct 29

Scope

This policy applies to all NRCHI staff, trainers, assessors, volunteers and participants involved in NRCHI's courses, programs and activities.

Purpose

North Ringwood Community House Inc. (NRCHI) is committed to the principles of access, equity, diversity and inclusion. NRCHI aims to ensure that all individuals have fair and equitable opportunities to participate in its programs and services, regardless of age, disability, cultural or linguistic background, ethnicity, gender, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity, religion, sexual orientation, economic circumstances or other personal characteristics protected by applicable law.

NRCHI seeks to identify and reduce barriers to participation, promote respectful treatment and provide appropriate support so that community members can access learning opportunities and services.

NRCHI will meet its applicable legal and regulatory obligations, including relevant Victorian and Commonwealth anti-discrimination and human rights legislation.

Definitions

Access: The opportunity to participate in programs, services and facilities without unreasonable barriers.

Equity: Fair treatment and opportunities that recognise individual circumstances and differing support needs.

Diversity: The range of backgrounds, experiences, identities and characteristics within the community.

Inclusion: Creating an environment in which people feel respected, valued and able to participate.

Reasonable adjustment: Appropriate changes or support that enable a person with disability to access and participate in education, services or activities on an equal basis, in accordance with applicable requirements.

Discrimination: Unlawful direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of a protected attribute under applicable legislation.

Policy statement

NRCHI is committed to providing inclusive, respectful and accessible programs and services that reflect the diversity of its community.

NRCHI will seek to identify and address barriers that may prevent people from participating fully in learning and community activities. This includes considering cultural, linguistic, financial, physical, educational and communication needs.



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Staff, trainers, assessors and volunteers are expected to treat all individuals with dignity and respect, promote inclusive participation and respond appropriately to concerns about discrimination, harassment, bullying or exclusion.

Responsibilities

Board of Governance

The Board provides strategic oversight of NRCHI's commitment to access and equity and monitors its implementation as appropriate to its governance responsibilities.

CEO

The CEO oversees implementation of this policy, responds to significant concerns and ensures that access and equity practices are reviewed.

Trainers and assessors

Trainers and assessors promote inclusive learning, identify barriers to participation, provide appropriate support within their responsibilities and implement agreed reasonable adjustments.

Staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers treat community members respectfully, support inclusive participation, raise concerns through appropriate channels and undertake relevant induction or training.

Participants

Participants are encouraged to communicate their support needs, seek assistance and provide feedback about access and equity.

Program delivery

NRCHI delivers accredited and non-accredited training and community programs designed to meet the diverse needs of its community.

Programs may include language and literacy support, computer courses, adult education, arts, health, leisure, information sessions, social activities and community development initiatives.

NRCHI seeks to provide affordable and accessible learning opportunities for community members, including older adults, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, unemployed people and individuals experiencing financial or other disadvantage.

Program design and delivery will take account of participant needs, available resources and relevant course requirements.

Enrolment and participant support

Enrolment processes will provide participants with an opportunity to identify relevant support or accessibility needs.



Where additional support is identified, NRCHI will discuss the participant's requirements and consider appropriate arrangements, taking account of program suitability, prerequisites, class capacity, available resources and applicable obligations.

Support may include additional guidance, accessible learning materials, reasonable adjustments, assistance accessing resources or referral to external services.

Where appropriate, a support person or other assistance may be considered in consultation with the participant. Any support provided during accredited assessment must comply with the relevant training product and assessment requirements.

NRCHI will not make assumptions about a person's needs or abilities based on their background, disability, language proficiency or personal circumstances.

Refer to the NRCHI Student Support Policy and Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

Staff induction and training

New staff and volunteers will receive information about NRCHI's access and equity commitments and relevant procedures.

NRCHI will provide appropriate guidance or training to help staff and volunteers recognise barriers to participation, communicate respectfully, respond to concerns and understand their responsibilities.

Further training or guidance may be provided where needs are identified.

Refer to the NRCHI Staff Employment Policy and Staff Induction Policy.

Communication and information access

NRCHI aims to provide clear, accessible information about its programs, services, enrolment processes and support options. Public information will use plain English where practicable.

Staff will assist community members to access information about programs and services and direct them to relevant support options where necessary.

Facilities and physical access

NRCHI's rooms are accessible, supporting participation by people with a range of access needs.

NRCHI will maintain its rooms and learning areas in a safe, orderly and accessible condition and consider accessibility when arranging furniture, equipment, learning activities and access to facilities.

Where access issues arise, NRCHI will consider appropriate responses within its responsibilities and, where necessary, liaise with the council regarding matters relating to the building or shared facilities.

If NRCHI uses other venues for programs or activities, relevant accessibility and safety requirements will be considered when selecting and using those venues.



Community engagement and program design

NRCHI welcomes feedback from participants, community organisations, support services and local partners about community needs and barriers to participation.

Where practicable, feedback will inform program development, scheduling, communication and service improvements.

NRCHI aims to offer programs that respond to diverse community interests and circumstances, including through affordable fees and flexible scheduling where feasible.

NRCHI supports inclusive participation in its community activities and seeks opportunities to strengthen engagement with underrepresented groups.

Cultural diversity and inclusion

NRCHI recognises and values the cultural, linguistic and social diversity of its community, including participants from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

NRCHI will seek to identify and address barriers to participation through respectful communication, appropriate learning support, accessible information and referral to relevant services where needed.

Support will be based on individual needs and preferences rather than assumptions about a person's nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or personal circumstances.

NRCHI is committed to providing an inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from all backgrounds. Racism, racial discrimination, harassment, bullying and exclusion will not be tolerated and will be addressed in accordance with relevant NRCHI policies and procedures.

Australian democratic principles

NRCHI supports the principles of Australian democracy, including the rule of law, equality before the law, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and respectful participation in community life.

NRCHI promotes an environment where people can express their views respectfully, participate in programs and activities, and engage with others without discrimination or intimidation.

Data collection and evaluation

NRCHI may collect relevant demographic, enrolment and participation information to understand community needs, identify barriers to access and assess whether programs are reaching their intended participants.

Information will be collected only for legitimate purposes and handled in accordance with NRCHI's Privacy Policy, Confidentiality Policy and applicable legal requirements.

NRCHI will review relevant information, participant feedback and identified barriers periodically to inform planning and continuous improvement. Where appropriate, consultation with participants and staff may be used to identify unintended exclusion or opportunities to improve access.



Complaints and responding to concerns

Participants, staff and volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns about discrimination, harassment, accessibility or unequal treatment.

Concerns will be handled respectfully, fairly and as promptly as practicable, in accordance with NRCHI's Complaints and Appeals Policy and other relevant procedures.

NRCHI will take concerns seriously and will not tolerate victimisation of a person for raising a concern or participating in a complaint process.

Information relating to complaints will be handled confidentially, subject to applicable legal and safety obligations. Where appropriate, NRCHI will consider corrective actions to address the concern and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Disability access and reasonable adjustment

NRCHI recognises that people with disability have the right to access and participate in education, services and community activities on an equal basis with others.

NRCHI will consider reasonable adjustments in accordance with applicable legislation and its Reasonable Adjustment Policy. Adjustments will be considered individually, taking account of the person's needs, the requirements of the program, relevant safety considerations and applicable obligations.

Where a requested adjustment cannot be provided as proposed, NRCHI will discuss the reasons and consider suitable alternatives where appropriate.

For accredited training and assessment, adjustments must preserve the requirements of the training product and the integrity of assessment.

Refer to the NRCHI Reasonable Adjustment Policy and Student Support Policy.

Legislative compliance

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic).
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic).
- *Disability Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth).
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth).
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth).
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth).
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth).
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic).
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic), where applicable to NRCHI's activities and obligations.
- Other relevant legislation and regulatory requirements applicable to NRCHI.

Related Documents

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy & Procedure
Staff Handbook
Student Handbook



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Complaints & Appeals Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Confidentiality Policy
Student Support Policy
Reasonable adjustment Policy
LLND Policy
Pre-Training Review Policy
Enrolment Policy
Student code of Conduct
Staff Code of Conduct
Privacy Policy
Employment Policy
Induction Policy

Document Locations

Electronic file folders accessible by NRCH Administration staff
Policy & Procedure Manual
Website

Date reviewed 25/3/2025	Version 7	Details of changes (if any) Significant reformatting Added Australian Democracy and Equity	Date of next review March 2028
Oct 26	8	Revision of policy to improve clarity, comply with VRQA Guidelines and 2025 Standards for RTO's and reformat	Oct 29