



Access & Equity Policy

Policy Owner:	The Director of Practice is responsible for the review and currency of this policy.
Endorsement:	Endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer on 18/11/2025.
Board Approval:	Adopted by the Board of Directors at a meeting of the Board on 25/11/2025. This policy is valid from the date of Board approval and remains in force, as amended from time to time, until such time as formally revoked by resolution at a meeting of the Board of Directors
Next Review Due:	October 2028

1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance to MASP staff on delivering accessible and equitable services that are responsive to client needs, staff needs and community diversity.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- MASP Board of Directors
- All staff and volunteers (including students), regardless of employment type or volunteer status.
- MASP's service delivery to clients and engagement with the broader community.
- All aspects of employment including recruitment, conditions and benefits, training and promotion, task allocation, shift and hour arrangements, leave, workload, and use of equipment and transport.
- All MASP-related settings and activities including on-site off-site, after-hours work, social functions, and conferences.
- Staff interactions with clients, colleagues, and members of the public during the course of their duties.

3. Policy Statement

MASP recognises and respects the diversity within the community and collaborates with other agencies to support vulnerable populations. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, age, disability, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexuality, gender, and socio-economic status.

This policy provides MASP staff with information about the programs and services that are developed. MASP aims to consider the impact of environmental, social, cultural, emotional, and physical factors on the health of individuals (both clients and staff) and the community.

3.1 Principles

3.1.1 Access and Equity

MASP is committed to access and equity by:

- Collaborating closely with communities of interest, including at the governance level, to understand and meet their needs effectively.
- Providing a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible environment for all service users and staff.
- Demonstrating cultural competence and safety by actively and respectfully seeking knowledge and understanding of the individuals and communities we support and employ, including their specific needs, customs, and values.
- Developing client-led cultural support plans and reviewing them on a regular basis.
- Ensuring that information and services are accessible and appropriate, including the provision of:
 - Alternative formats
 - Translations in languages other than English
 - Plain English materials
- Engaging qualified translators and interpreters for individuals who are not confident speakers or readers of English.
- Using appropriate technologies to meet the needs of specific groups, e.g., hearing augmentation devices for people with hearing impairments.
- Ensuring physical environments are visitor-friendly for all, regardless of ability.
- Providing transport options to enhance service access (refer to Client Transport Manual, P&P No. 28 – Int 10 01 2018).
- Avoiding publication or display of any material that may reasonably be perceived as discriminatory.
- Adhering to relevant legislation, including but not limited to:

Commonwealth Legislation:

- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (and Amendment 2013)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1987
- Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2017
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Fair Work Act 2009

NSW Legislation:

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Victorian Legislation:

- Disability Act 2006
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001

Staff will have access to training to build capacity in working with culturally diverse populations.

3.1.2 Equity of Access

MASP will ensure that all clients have equitable access to services. This includes:

- Providing physically accessible service options for people with physical or sensory disabilities.
- Ensuring no exclusion based on citizenship, language, residency status, or Medicare eligibility.
- Recognising that eligibility does not guarantee entitlement to services; service availability may depend on resource capacity and priority assessments.
- Delivering culturally appropriate services that reflect the diversity of the community.
- Recognising and supporting the needs of specific population groups, including:
 - People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - Individuals living in rural and remote areas
 - People experiencing financial or social disadvantage
 - Veterans
 - People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - LGBTQIA+ individuals
 - Care leavers
 - Parents separated from children through forced adoption or removal

The identification of special needs groups acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and the potential barriers they may face in accessing services—not as a blanket basis for prioritisation. MASP will:

- Ensure all clients receive equitable, appropriate, and non-discriminatory access to services.
- Deliver services that are culturally safe and inclusive.
- Support access to translation and interpreting services as required.

These principles are aligned with national strategies, including:

- National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds.
- National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Ageing and Aged Care Strategy.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Board of Directors	Responsible for the approval of this Policy.
CEO	Leads inclusive strategies, allocates resources and ensure legal compliance.
Director of Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the review of this policy and its associated procedures. Support staff training, promote inclusive service delivery, and monitor accessibility.
All MASP Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must adhere to this policy at all times. Provide respectful, inclusive, and accessible services.

5. Definitions

MASP	Mallee Accommodation and Support Program Ltd.
CEO	Chief Executive officer
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
Direct Discrimination	It occurs when a person is treated less favorably on the grounds of a personal characteristic, such as sex, parental status, race, age, or disability.
Indirect Discrimination	It occurs when a neutral, or seemingly harmless, policy, rule or practice has a discriminatory effect against a certain group of people.
Human Rights	The basic rights that belong to everyone which recognise and respect the dignity of other people. Human rights include civil and political rights, economic and social rights, and environmental and cultural rights.
Inclusive Environment	A setting in which all people feel welcome, respected, and valued, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances.
Disability	Disability, in relation to a person, means: a sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury or any combination thereof, which is, or is likely to be, permanent; and causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication; and requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support; and is not related to ageing; or an intellectual disability; or a developmental delay; (Disability Act 2006)

6. Related Documents

This policy is implemented in conjunction with the following related documents:

Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreter Services Policy and Procedure • Anti-Bullying, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy • Child Safe Policy • Clients at Risk and Duty of care Policy • Client Transport Policy • Code of Conduct • Incident Reporting Policy • Mobile Devices Policy • Privacy & Confidentiality Policy • Privacy & Information Security Policy • Risk Management Policy • Recruitment & Selection Policy
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy & Confidentiality Procedure • Cultural Support Plan Procedure • Clients at Risk and our Duty of Care Practice Guide
Instructions and Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity Diversity & Inclusion Committee Terms of Reference • OLG Terms of Reference M't I&G No 04
Forms and Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority to Release Information M't F&T No 02 • Client Consumer Access to Facilities – Self Assessment – M't F&T No 10 • Consent to Use of Surveillance Devices – M't F&T No 20 • Management Systems Quality Control Checklist – M't F&T No 06 • Orientation Checklist Line Supervisor M't F&T NO 19

7. Legislation and other References

Related Legislative Acts and other sources of Authority	<p>Housing Provider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Part VIIIA – Social Housing • Residential Tenancies Act 2018 – with amendments 1/1/21 (Vic) <p>NDIS Provider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Services Act 1986 (Cth) • Disability Act 2006 (VIC) • National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
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Employment Conditions

Primary

- Fair Work Act 2009 and Regulations 2009 (Cth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

Others

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Protected Disclosure Act 2012 (Vic)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth/NSW)
- Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (Vic)
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)

Client Services

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic)
- Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic)
- Public Health and Well-being Act 2008 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances (Amendment) Act 1981 (Vic)
- Victims of Crime Act Assistance Act 1996 (Vic)

Anti-Discrimination Acts

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 and Amendment Bill 2019 (Vic)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

Related Standards, Guidelines, and other References

- ACNC Governance Standards
- ASX Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations
- Australian Accounting Standards
- ISO 37000:2021 Governance of Organizations
- Child Safe Standards
- DFFH Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines
- Fraud and Corruption Control AS 8001-2021
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DFFH
- Human Services Standards
- National Employment Standards
- The NDIS Practice Standards
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- Risk Management Standard ISO 31000:2018
- Standards for Disability services in Victoria
- Work Health and Safety Standards

Website Links

- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#)
- [DFFH Community Services Quality Governance Framework](#)
- [Disability Services Commissioner](#)
- [Office of the Disability Services Commissioner](#)
- [SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Victorian Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Good Practice Guide](#)
- [WorkSafe Victoria](#)