

Access & Equity Policy & Procedure

QA REFERENCE	Management P&P No 27
INTRODUCED	10 January 2018
LAST REVIEWED	18 January 2022
NEXT REVIEWED	18 January 2025
RESPONSIBILITY	The Operational Leadership Group is responsible for the review and currency of this policy and associated procedures.
APPROVED	Approved by the Chief Executive Officer on 18 January 2022 This policy and procedure is valid from the date of introduction and remains in force, as amended from time to time, until such time as formally revoked by resolution at a meeting of the Operational Leadership Group.
ENDORSED	Endorsed by the Operational Leadership Group on 18 January 2022
RATIFIED	Ratified by the Board of Directors by resolution at a meeting of the Board on – N/A This policy is valid from the date of introduction 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.
REFERENCES	
Related Legislative Acts and other sources of Authority	<p><u>HOUSING PROVIDER</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Part VIIIA – Social Housing • Residential Tenancies Act 2018 – with amendments 1/1/21 <p><u>NDIS PROVIDER</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Services Act 1986 (Cth) • Disability Act 2006 (Vic) • National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 <p><u>EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS</u></p> <p>Primary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Work Act 2009 and Regulations 2009 (Cth) • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 • Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 <p>Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Superannuation Act 1999 • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • State Employees Retirement Benefits Act 1979 • State Superannuation Act 1988 • Superannuation Act 1976 (Cth) • Whistle-blowers' Protection Act, 2001 (Vic) • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 • Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 • Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth) • Workplace Relations Act, 1996 (Cth)

	<p><u>CLIENT SERVICES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 • Freedom of Information Act 1982 • Health Records Act 2001 • Information Privacy Act 2000 • Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) • Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) • Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 • Protected Disclosures Act 2012 • Public Administration Act 2004 • Public Health and Well-being Act 2008 • Working with Children Act 2005 • Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances (Amendment) Act, 1981 • Victims of Crime Act Assistance Act 1996 <p><u>ANTI DISCRIMINATION ACTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth) • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 • Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) • Equal Opportunity Act (Vic) 2010 • Human Rights and Equal Opportunity 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)
<p>Related Standards, Guidelines and other References</p>	<p><u>STANDARDS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACNC Governance Standards • ASX Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations • Australian Accounting Standards • Australian Standard 8000-2003 Principles of Good Governance • Child Safe Standards • DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines • Fraud and Corruption Control AS 8001-2008 • Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS • 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

	<p>WEBSITE LINKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Human Rights Commission • Commonwealth Ombudsman • DFFH Community Services Quality Governance Framework • Disability Services Commissioner • Office of the Disability Services Commissioner • Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission • Victorian Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Good Practice Guide • WorkSafe Victoria
Related MASP Policy and Procedure Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Bullying, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment - HRM P&P No 30 • Child Safe – M’t P&P No 22 • Clients at Risk and our Duty of Care - CWG P&P No 02 • Disciplinary Procedures HRM P&P No 17 • Incident Reporting - M't P&P No 25 • Mobile Devices – Fin P&P No 05 • Privacy and Confidentiality - M't P&P No 16 • Privacy and Information Security - M't P&P No 39 • Client Transport M'T P&P No 28 • Risk Management M’t P&P No 14
Related MASP Instructions and Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Notification to Co-ordinator M’t I&G No07 • Equity Diversity & Inclusion Committee Terms of Reference M’t I&G No 9 • OLG Terms of Reference M’t I&G No 04
Related MASP 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 • COVID-19 Infectious Diseases Plan for Working from Offices • 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
ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MASP • CEO • NDIS • Direct Discrimination • Indirect Discrimination • Human Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mallee Accommodation and Support Program Ltd. • Chief Executive Officer • National Disability Insurance Scheme • Direct Discrimination: occurs when a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of a personal characteristic, such as sex, parental status, race, age or disability. • Indirect Discrimination: 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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)
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PURPOSE

This policy provides information to all MASP staff around accessible and equitable services that are responsive to client needs and diversity. MASP recognises diversity within the community and works with other agencies on activities to support vulnerable populations within our community. Diversity includes; age, disability, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexuality (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex), gender, and socio-economic status.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- board of directors
- all staff, including: managers and supervisors; full-time, part-time or casual, temporary or permanent staff; job candidates; students on placement and volunteers
- how MASP provides services to clients and how it interacts with other members of the public
- all aspects of employment, recruitment and selection; conditions and benefits; training and promotion; task allocation; shifts; hours; leave arrangements; workload; equipment and transport
- on-site, off-site or after-hours work; work-related social functions; conferences – wherever and whenever staff may be as a result of their MASP duties.
- staff treatment of clients, of other staff and of other members of the public encountered in the course of their MASP duties.

POLICY

This policy aims to provide 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 and the community. That demonstrates that our services value, respect and accommodate diversity.

PROCEDURE

1. PRINCIPLES

1.1 Access and equity will be achieved by the following:

- Working closely with communities of interest to identify means of best meeting their needs. This includes engaging people at all levels including governance.
- Providing a welcoming and accessible environment for all service users.
- Possessing a level of knowledge and understanding of the individuals and communities with whom we work, with regards to particular needs, customs, etc.
- Making information and services available which is appropriate to the service user. This might include alternative formats, languages other than English and use of Plain English language and statements.
- Using appropriately skilled translating and interpreting services for communicating with people who are not confident speakers or readers of English.
- Using appropriate and available technology to meet the needs of specific groups e.g. hearing augmentation equipment for hearing impaired persons.

- Providing physical environments that are visitor friendly to all people regardless of ability.
- Provision of transport to enhance service delivery access – see Client Transport M'T P&P No 28 – Int 10 01 2018
- Not publishing or displaying any material that could reasonably be understood as indicating an intention to discriminate against any person
- Ensuring that practice is compliant with the following legislation:
 - Disability Act 2006 (Victoria)
 - Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victorian)
 - Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Victorian)
 - Federal Equal Opportunity/Anti-Discrimination Legislation
 - o Racial Discrimination Act 1975
 - o Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and Amendment 2013
 - o Disability Discrimination Act 1992
 - o Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1987
 - o Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2017
 - o Age Discrimination Act 2004

Where appropriate, staff will be encouraged to undertake training opportunities specifically related to working with culturally diverse people.

1.2 Equity of Access – MASP will ensure that all clients have equitable access to services.

To achieve equitable access, MASP will consider the following key principles:

- Physical access – all services must be able to offer accessible service options to people with physical or sensory disabilities.
- MASP does not have any exclusion from services based on citizenship, residency status or eligibility for Medicare support.
- Eligibility does not translate to having an entitlement to services. Services may not be able to be provided due to other people being assessed as a higher priority or resources not being immediately available.
- MASP will recognise people with cultural or other special needs with appropriate services which reflect the diversity of the population.
- MASP recognises the following special needs groups, as requiring additional consideration and support when accessing services:
 - o People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - o People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
 - o People who live in rural and remote areas
 - o People who are financially or socially disadvantaged
 - o Veterans
 - o People who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless
 - o People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
 - o People who are care leavers
 - o Parents separated from children by forced adoption or removal.
- The concept of special needs is not intended as a principle for generally prioritising access to services for an individual client over another. Rather, the identification of particular groups recognises that each person is unique and has different beliefs, values, preferences and life experiences, and that for some people these differences may result in barriers to accessing or using services.

- MASP will:
 - Ensure that all clients have equity of access to services and that support is accessible, appropriate and free from discrimination
 - Ensure that services are delivered in a way that is culturally safe and appropriate for people from diverse backgrounds
 - Support access to translation and interpreting services

These principles support the goals identified in the Australian Government's 'National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds' and 'National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Ageing and Aged Care Strategy'.