Social and Community Planning and Reporting Manual

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Contents

Foreword

The Local Government (General) Regulation 1999 requires all councils in NSW to develop a social/community plan and report on identified access and equity activities in their annual reports.

The Department of Local Government has prepared *Social/Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines* to provide councils with advice on the compulsory requirements for preparing, implementing and reporting on their social/community planning activities.

This *Social/Community Planning and Reporting Manual* supplements these guidelines. It provides additional information as well as practical options and suggestions to help councils successfully carry out their social/community planning and reporting roles.

Part A
Introduction

A1. A brief history of social/community planning

Councils have been carrying out social/community planning since the beginning of local government in NSW in the 19th century. By the mid-1970s, a number of councils had begun community development that included elements of social planning such as needs analysis and formal planning (*Baum et al, Resourcing Communities 2000 p78-80*). By the early 1980s, some councils had started to experiment with social plans covering community services, community facilities and social policy (North Sydney 1981; Lane Cove 1983; Blacktown, Fairfield and Warringah profiled in a 1983 Local Government & Shires Associations' manual). Numbers expanded steadily after that time, with 56 councils having current social plans by 1997 (according to Local Government Community Services Association data).

The 1996 NSW Social Justice Directions Statement *Fair Go, Fair Share, Fair Say* committed the State Government and the Department of Local Government to promoting a more inclusive community by ensuring that government services were responsive to community need and diversity.

The Social Justice Directions Statement was updated in February 2000 as *Supporting People and Strengthening Communities*. This demonstrated the government's efforts - working in partnership with the community - to build a fairer, more inclusive society.

A2. Importance of social/community planning for councils

Social/community planning has a number of social, economic, environmental and health benefits for councils and their communities.

These benefits include:

- *Council as a leader* – Social/community planning helps develop a positive leadership role and profile for the council in addressing social issues.

- *Stronger, more cohesive communities* – Social/community planning provides opportunities for families and community members to participate in activities together and helps build and maintain relationships that are essential to the overall well-being of communities.

- *Better quality of life* – Improved activities, services and facilities that meet the diverse needs within a community enhance the everyday lives of residents.

- *A planned and orderly approach to delivering services and facilities* – Social/community plans can be an important management tool by providing useful input to a council's management plan, Section 94 community facility plan, and other plans such as local plans under planFIRST. By presenting a demographic and social profile of the community and information about community needs, social/community plans help to ensure strategies meet priority needs in the community rather than the needs of a vocal minority.

- *Economic benefits* – A planned and orderly approach to delivering facilities and services minimises the chance of duplication and ensures optimal use of limited resources. A social/community plan can also identify those services council should have a role in funding and those that are the responsibility of Commonwealth and State government agencies, the private sector or community organisations.

- *Improved risk management* – By proposing community activities that comply with relevant legislation, such as the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, social/community planning can help reduce the number and cost of claims made against council.

- *Enhanced partnerships* – Identifying the roles of various agencies can lead to effective partnerships with technical and financial resources combined to achieve positive outcomes for the local area.

- *Environmental benefits* – Social/community planning can feed into environmental plans with residents providing useful feedback on parks, open spaces and natural environments. Opportunities for local community-based environmental projects can also be identified.

- *Health benefits* – Social/community plans can include information and strategies that help meet some of the health needs of disadvantaged target groups, such as improving physical access to public buildings.

A3. Social justice and social community planning

[PART A2 AND B3 OF GUIDELINES]

The NSW Government's Social Justice Directions Statement identified four key principles underpinning social justice. The relationship between the social justice principles and social/community planning is described below.

- Equity – there should be fairness in the distribution of resources, particularly for those in need. Therefore the planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances. The equity implications of proposed activities include the impact on community well-being as well as who pays and who benefits.

- Access – all people should have fair access to economic resources, services and rights essential to improving their quality of life. All residents should be able to get to and use public facilities and services regardless of their social and economic circumstances.

- Participation – all people should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives. This involves a two way flow of views and information, generally with a focus on decision making.

- Rights – equality of rights should be established and promoted. Opportunities should be provided for positive participation to accommodate linguistic, cultural and religious diversity within the local government area. Discriminatory practices should be avoided and information should be provided to and collected from all sections of the community.

A4. An integrated approach to social/community planning

[PART A5 OF GUIDELINES]

Social/community planning is most effective when it is integrated into council management planning and other planning processes. Councils prepare a range of plans with different legislative status. Some are required by legislation. Others are initiatives by councils with no specific legislative basis.

Figure 1 shows a 'whole of council' approach for incorporating social/community issues into social planning. The names of plans may vary between councils and some councils may have additional plans.
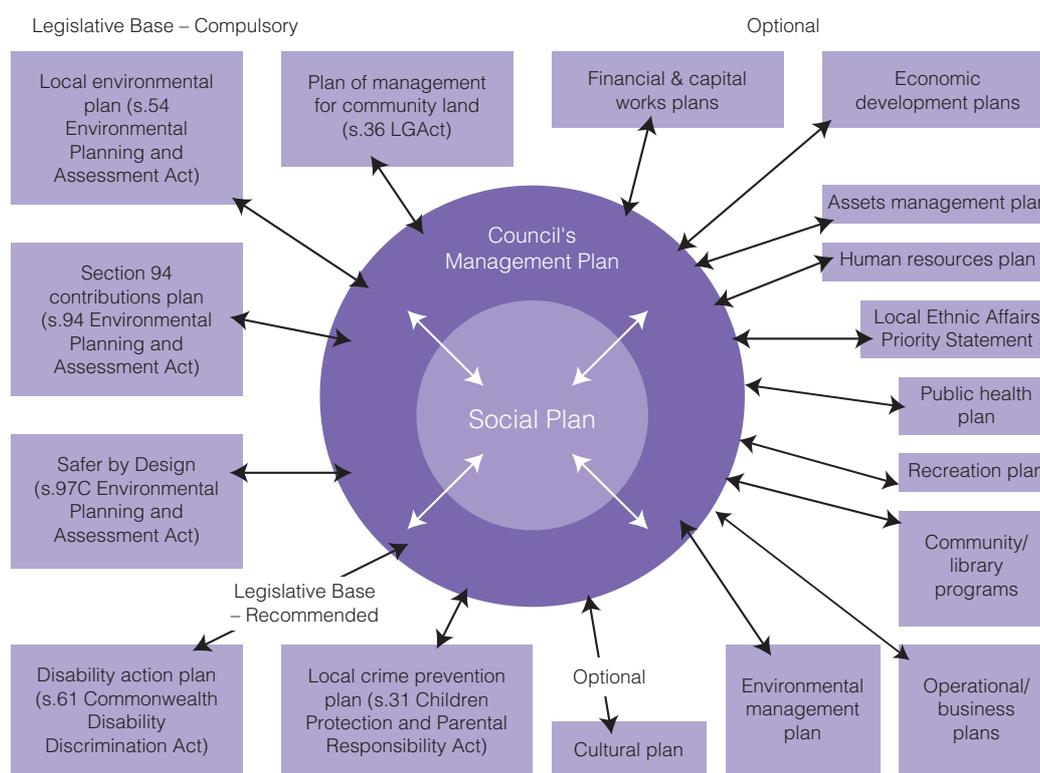
Figure 1: Whole of council approach for incorporating social/community issues into social planning

In some cases, a council may not have a formal plan for some of its activities or programs. A social/community plan can provide an integrating mechanism for these activities and programs and acknowledge that council has allocated resources to an identified priority issue.

A whole of council approach is also important because some council activities which are not traditionally regarded as 'community' or 'social' can have a significant impact on the well-being of a community. For example, the construction of a road may involve a number of different operational units of the council, some of which may initially seem unrelated to the principal service being provided.

Figure 2 gives an example of a 'whole of council' internal consultation for a council service project. The names of operational units may vary between councils and there may be other operational units involved.
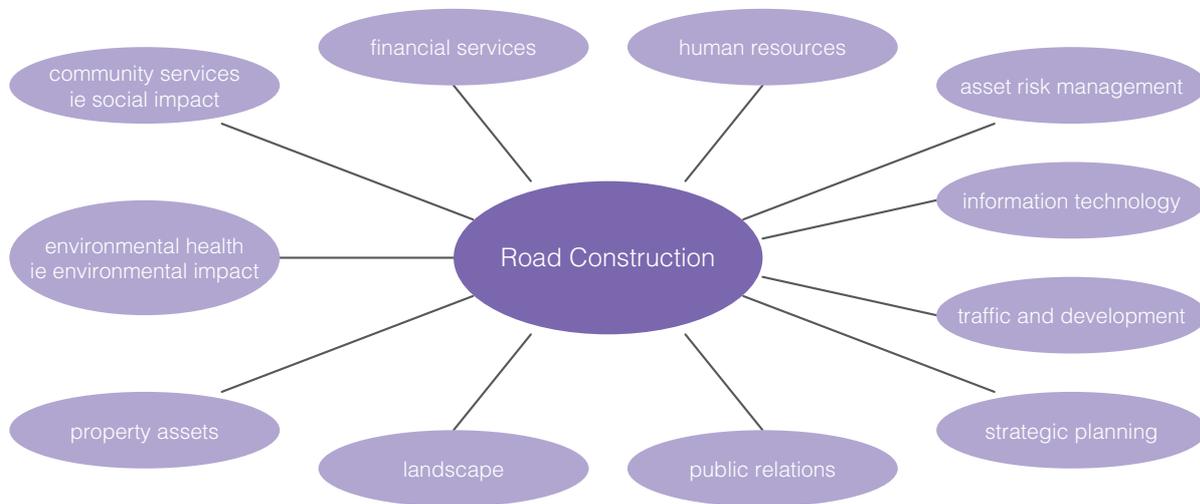
Figure 2: Example of whole of council internal consultation for a council service project

Linking the social/community plan with other council planning processes

The exchange of information and recommendations between the social/community plan and other council plans can occur in both directions at the same time or can be sequential if one plan is completed while the other is still being developed.

Linking the social/community plan with activities of other government agencies

You need to identify any links your social/community plan has with related activities of other government agencies. The social/community plan should feed into the relevant plans of other agencies and take into account the information and recommendations in those external plans. This facilitates resource sharing and reduces the duplication of services.

The social/community plan can also serve as a useful reference document when discussing issues with government agencies.

Figure 3 gives an example of possible links between a social/community plan and other government agency initiatives. These initiatives were current in 2002 but may change and there may be other NSW government initiatives that could be included.
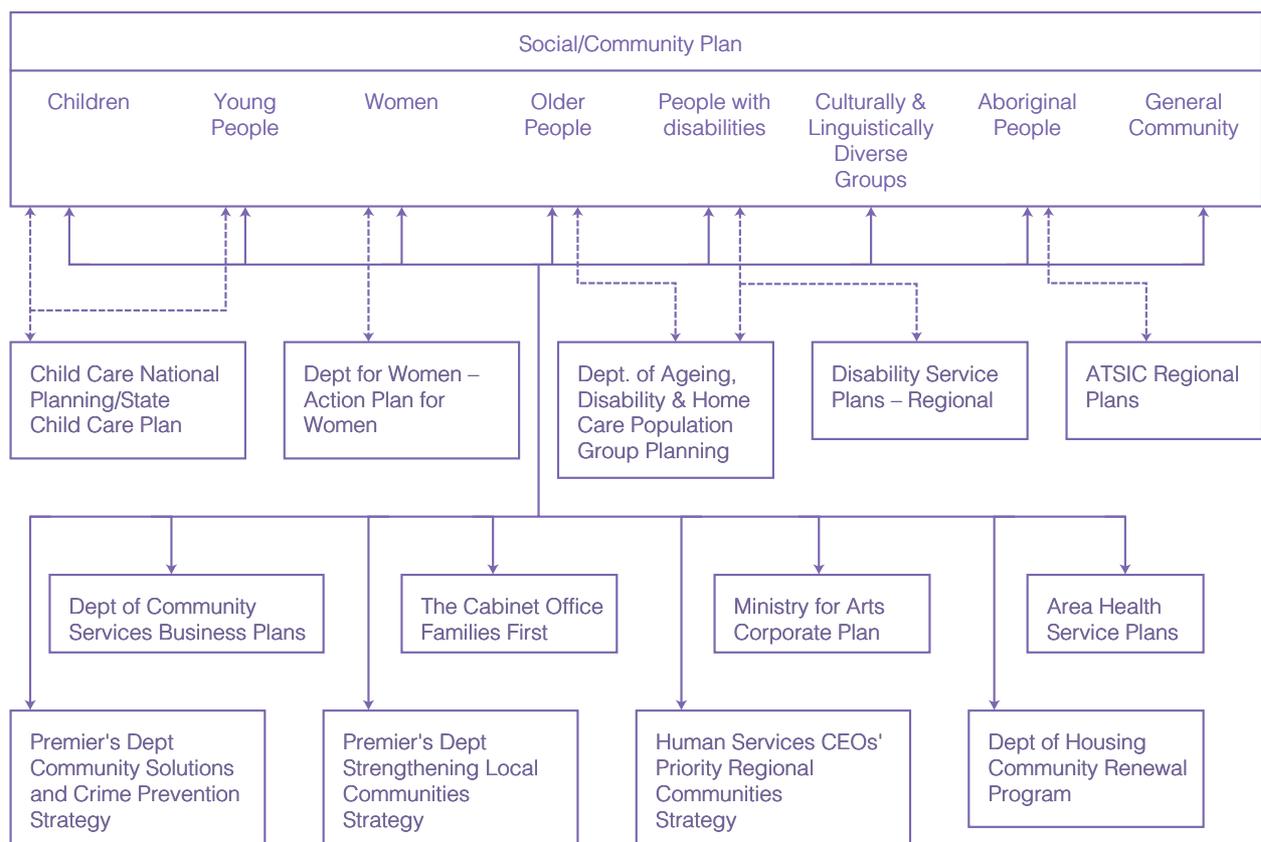
Figure 3: Example of links between a social/community plan and other government agency initiatives.

Councils as advocates for the community

Councils do not necessarily have to be the implementing body for all recommendations in a social/community plan. A council can play an important advocacy and leadership role even on issues where it does not have the statutory authority or the resources to implement a recommendation itself.

A5. Social/community planning and ecologically sustainable development

Ecologically sustainable development (ESD) means using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which all life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased *(New South Wales State of the Environment Report 2000)*.

The principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) were incorporated in the Local Government Act in 1998. These principles require councils to manage their regulatory and service functions in an ecologically sustainable manner.

The principles of social justice were introduced in 1998 as part of the reform package that included compulsory social planning for local government. One of the aims of these reforms was to ensure that people have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life. While this applied to contemporary circumstances, it also has intergenerational implications - local government has a responsibility to ensure that adequate resources and services will be available to future generations. Access to resources and services and equity in participation and consultation are fundamental foundations for social sustainability.

Figure 4 shows how you need to consider all council programs, together with your social/community plan and state of the environment report, for your management plan to be sustainable. The allocation of revenue and resources should ensure that the management plan delivers fair, efficient and effective outputs and outcomes for the community in both the short and long term.
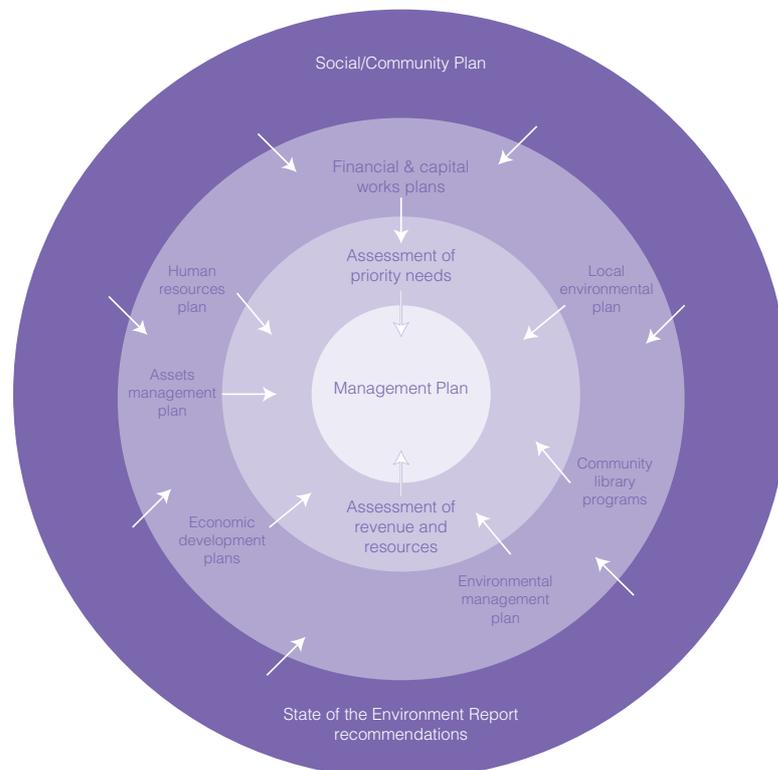
Figure 4: Incorporation of sustainability throughout a council's management plan

Part B

Developing a social/community plan

B1. Suggested steps for developing a social/community plan

Summary – key steps for developing a social/community plan

1. Decide on a methodology

2. Develop a demographic profile of the community

3. Conduct a needs assessment which includes:

   A. Obtaining and analysing existing information available about community needs and target groups.

   B. Reviewing current council services and other key services within the community to determine their appropriateness and accessibility.

   C. Consulting members of target groups, the general community, and internal and external stakeholders.

   D. Setting priorities.

4. Formulate strategies and set goals and targets

5. Consult on the draft plan

Step 1 – Decide on a methodology

Councils should first set rigorous boundaries for the social/community planning task ahead. You need to decide if the social/community plan is going to be developed in-house, by a consultant or both. You also need to decide the amount of resources to be allocated for the task and the time frame required. Making these decisions 'up front' will help you manage community expectations and avoid a protracted consultation phase that could exceed the allocated resources.

If council staff will be developing the plan, you need to decide if a single person or a multi-disciplinary team will be used to drive this process plus who will have executive responsibility for the plan being completed. Regardless of who is given the task of driving the process, it is a corporate responsibility to make sure that the plan is developed. Council staff across the full range of departments or sections should be involved in identifying issues and making recommendations to be included in the plan.

It is also important to make sure that the designated social/community planners clearly understand the purpose of the needs assessment process before collecting any information about their local government area.

If any part of the social/community planning task is to be done by a consultant, you should consider the following.

- How will ownership of the plan, particularly by councillors and senior staff, be fostered to ensure that the plan is implemented? For example, you could do this by keeping them informed of progress and inviting them to public meetings or focus groups as part of the consultation process. You could also conduct a workshop to present findings from the community consultation process and obtain their views on possible recommended actions.

- Does the consultant have the relevant skills and experience? For example if a consultant is used for facilitating public meetings or focus groups, they should not only have facilitation skills and experience but also credibility with the target group being consulted. Depending on staff resources, it may be more effective for council staff to co-facilitate these meetings with an experienced and credible community leader.

- Would it be more cost-effective in the long term for council to develop relevant skills in existing staff or employ additional staff so that these skills are available in-house?

- What is the best way to brief consultants so that they are clear about the tasks they are undertaking and to ensure that council gets value for money?

You could also establish an advisory group or groups to help prepare a methodology for developing the social/community plan. These groups might include representatives from the target groups and/or the general community. Having these groups involved in developing the methodology will help ensure that the methodology is appropriate for them. They will also be more likely to actively participate in the development of the plan and feel ownership for it.

Step 2 – Develop a demographic profile of the community

A demographic profile is a set of statistics that shows the characteristics of the community.

Councils should analyse the demographic information available about their local government area including information on the seven mandatory target groups.

There are two options for collecting and analysing this statistical information.

- You can choose to develop the demographic profile in-house. For more details to help you do this, please see Appendix A.

- You can purchase a *Regional Profile* and a *Population Target Groups* from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that provides information on your local government area. The *Regional Profile* has been specifically designed to help councils develop a demographic profile of their communities. The profile contains tables and graphs covering key census data (eg sex-age structure, family types, ethnicity indicators) as well as additional socio-economic data from both the ABS and other government agencies. Comparisons with the State and time-series data are also included. The *Population Target Groups* provides key demographic information from both ABS and other government agencies on the seven mandatory target groups.

The ABS has issued a *NSW Directory of Regional Statistics* as a companion to the *Regional Profiles*. The *Directory* provides reference information and descriptions of a wide range of social, economic, cultural and environmental statistics at the regional/sub-state level provided by the ABS and a number of NSW government agencies.

The ABS produces a wide range of census products, including community profiles and thematic profiles, which provide more detailed census tables on various topics. These may be useful in providing additional information on the community if you want to examine other topics beyond those in the *Regional Profile*. Government agencies, such as the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and Department of Immigration, collect a range of data that may be available at a local government or regional level.

The demographic data should be analysed carefully to gain an accurate perception of the characteristics of the target groups and the community generally. Target groups should not be looked at in isolation. For example, information about women may be broken down into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. This group in turn may be divided into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who are young people, aged between 25 and 45 years, and 45 years or older. The needs of one of these groups may differ significantly from the others despite sharing certain characteristics.

Step 3 – Conduct a needs assessment

[PART B4 2 OF GUIDELINES]

Conducting a needs assessment involves collecting and examining information about key issues and needs faced by the people living within the local government area or region. A broad definition of need should be used so that it includes any issues, commonly experienced by members of the community or a target group, that negatively impact on a person's quality of life. Need also includes barriers faced by particular groups in accessing services. This means that a lot of the issues identified may not be directly related to council's current services and facilities.

The assessment should be based on a range of factors including:

- existing needs analysis and findings from existing documents

- social trends analysis

- comparison of service/facilities demand data with current supply information involving council and non-council services

- comparison with benchmarks or other standards known to council

- a review of legal obligations.

You should include qualitative as well as quantitative information about the needs of your community as information about people's perceptions of needs and issues is also important. This can be used to supplement findings from statistics.

The needs of all mandatory groups should be examined, regardless of each group's estimated numbers within the local government area. For example, quantitative information about people with disabilities is limited so you need to make sure that the needs of people with disabilities are adequately assessed in this process.

Table 1 shows the most common issues covered by councils in their social/community plans for 1999 and 2000.

1. Transport (59%)	6. Recreation (43%)	11. Economy (15%)
2. Health (49%)	7. Education (35%)	12. Families (13%)
3. Housing (46%)	8. Culture (35%)	13. Communications (12%)
4. Employment (46%)	9. Information provision (24%)	14. Environment (11%)
5. Safety – including crime prevention and domestic violence (44%)	10. Community facilities and access (17%)	15. Men (8%)

Table 1. Issues covered by councils in their 1999 & 2000 social/community plans

Other general community issues covered by councils included community pride and spirit, libraries, rural issues, tourism, community care/support, low income earners (socio-economic issues), and volunteering; and issues affecting particular groups such as gays and lesbians and new residents.

There are various ways to conduct a needs assessment but, as a minimum, you should carry out four main tasks.

Task A: Obtaining and analysing existing information available about community needs and target groups

Councils should make sure that they access existing local and regional information about key issues and target groups within their community. This information can be obtained from a variety of sources including local, state and commonwealth government documents, community documents and media and local knowledge. You should build on findings from previous community consultations concerned with social planning and other relevant issues. This shows that council has taken notice of information and views expressed previously and is likely to result in greater community participation. It also saves time because the purpose of community consultation is to check that the information and views are still current rather than obtain the same information and views a second time. You may only need to do further research if information about certain issues or groups is not found in existing documents.

You should examine a range of local and regional needs-based plans and reports including:

- Department of Community Services (DoCS) Integrated Community Services Plans

- existing Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care needs-based plans for the Home and Community Care and Disability Services programs and regional population group plans

- any Area Assistance Scheme plans developed within the last five years involving the local government area

- the social/community plans of neighbouring councils facing similar community issues to help you obtain a regional overview

- local Area Health Service strategic plans

- regional Department of Sport and Recreation strategic plans

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) regional plans to supplement information obtained from the local Aboriginal Land Council

- Migrant Resource Centre settlement needs analysis reports

- Shaping Our Cities - the planning strategy for the greater metropolitan region of Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast, if relevant

- Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health regional plans

- Tolerance Report, by Bird C and Coco B, 1996 Crossroads Community Care Sydney

- the local government section of the Street Watch Report, Anti-Discrimination Board, Sydney.

- Regional Coordination Management Groups (RCMGs) regional service delivery plans and RCMG human services clusters' plans (Premier's Department)

- Local committee plans for the Clubs Community Development and Support Expenditure Scheme (Department of Gaming and Racing, local councils, ClubsNSW, NCOSS)

Councils are encouraged to consider including in their social/community plans strategies that are consistent with current NSW government social policy frameworks. There will, however, be varying issues of relevance or importance depending on the location of each local government area and the composition of its community, so councils will still need to develop strategies relevant to their particular area.

The following NSW government social policy frameworks are particularly relevant.

Young people

- *Working Together - Working for Young People, the NSW Government Youth Policy 2002–06* (Office of Children and Young People)

- *Better Futures: An Action Plan for Vulnerable Young People in NSW* (Office of Children and Young People)

Women

- *NSW Government Action Plan for Women* (Department for Women)

Older people

- *The NSW Healthy Ageing Framework 1998–2003* (Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care)

People with disabilities

- *The NSW Government Disability Policy Framework* (Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care)

Aboriginal people

- *NSW Government's Statement of Commitment.* A new Aboriginal Affairs policy is currently being developed (Department of Aboriginal Affairs)

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- *NSW Government White Paper "Building on our Cultural Diversity" and the Community Relations Commission Act and Resource Handbook for Chief Executive Officers and Senior Managers: Ethnic Affairs in the New South Wales Public Sector* (Community Relations Commission)

For more information on potential issues of relevance to local communities across NSW, please see Appendix B.

You may also want to contact the following agencies for further information about potential needs and issues facing members of the local community or a general overview of target group issues. Some of the agencies have statistical information on their web sites.

- Department of Juvenile Justice

- Department for Women

- Department of Aboriginal Affairs

- The Community Relations Commission

- Department of Housing

- Regional Organisations of Councils

- Premier's Department Regional Coordinator and/or Place Manager, if one exists

- Area Health Services

- Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

- Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

- Commission for Children and Young People

- Office of Children and Young People

- Department of Transport

- RTA

- Migrant resource centres

- Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW

After analysing existing information on community needs, you may decide to use the findings of research and consultations by other organisations to explore the needs of the general community or specific target groups. If you do, it is important to check that any information cited in the social/community plan is still current and the source is acknowledged in the plan.

Task B: Reviewing current council services and other key services within the community to determine their appropriateness and accessibility

Councils should conduct a review or audit of the way in which their practices might restrict people's access to their services. For example, you should consider whether all residents, but particularly those from the seven mandatory target groups and other groups covered by anti-discrimination legislation, that is, gay, lesbian, transgender:

- have access to the information issued by council

- are able to use services provided by council, including those provided under contract arrangements

- can access facilities provided or managed by council, including those provided under contract arrangements

- can participate in or attend council meetings, open days, surveys and other consultation mechanisms used by council.

The data collected when doing a review should, where possible, include a measure of the actual or perceived frequency with which people from the identified target groups use council's services. This data will help you identify any unintentional discriminatory practices that may be detrimentally affecting residents.

Councils could also conduct an audit of all key non-council services and resources available in the locality that are relevant to their key issues and target groups. This helps these services become involved in the needs and strategy identification process and ensures that appropriate recommendations are formulated.

Task C: Consulting members of target groups, the general community, and internal and external stakeholders

The processes you use to develop a social/community plan are critical for its long-term success. The plan should be developed in consultation with local residents, business and community groups, and other government and non-government agencies. Developing collaborative working relationships with these other groups and ensuring that all services are taken into account, gives councils the opportunity to have input into other planning processes and work in partnership to deliver coordinated and complementary services to meet local needs.

There are a range of different consultation methods that you can use to determine the key issues and needs of people within the local community, including those from the seven mandatory target groups. These methods include surveys, requests for submissions, confidential phone-ins, small focus groups with representatives of the target groups, and community meetings by specific or general invitation. Each potential consultation method has its strengths and weaknesses that you need to consider when selecting which methods to use.

Consultation has the added benefit of actively engaging key government departments, other agencies and local community members in social planning and community development. This maximises the use of local skills and resources to develop local solutions to local problems.

External consultation

Councils should take full advantage of existing committees and consultative structures to help with their needs identification process.

You should develop a list of key agencies, groups, consumer representatives and community leaders who have detailed knowledge about the issues and target groups to be examined in the social/community plan. Community services directories or the local telephone book can help provide a list of relevant contact people.

Information about the priority issues and needs faced by members of the target groups can then be obtained by phoning or talking face to face with a selection of people on this list. You should also ask these people to suggest other appropriate strategies for canvassing the views of target groups and other key stakeholders.

An appropriate consultation strategy for each issue and/or target group should then be developed in conjunction with the relevant community leaders. For example, just placing an advertisement in the local paper to attend a consultation or obtaining a copy of a survey would generally not be seen as appropriate by many groups.

Depending on the issue or target group being consulted, you should consider consultative strategies such as:

- issuing invitations or surveys to services working with a particular issue or target group for distribution to their clients after getting the consent of the service

- using wheelchair accessible venues and organising transport, particularly if a meeting is being organised targeting people with disabilities or the frail/aged

- organising multi-lingual invitations, information, and surveys; and using ethnic radio and newspapers as well as contacting organisations such as the Ethnic Communities Council to promote a survey, meeting or phone-in

- choosing a venue that is commonly used by members of the target group when organising a meeting or providing information

- making sign or language interpreters available for focus group consultations where relevant

- providing bilingual or bicultural facilitators to ensure the use of a culturally appropriate process

- organising confidential phone-ins and/or advertising through the gay and lesbian media as well as sending invitations to local gay and lesbian support groups.

There is great potential within the community to be involved in planning processes. For example, a survey of young people found that 71% wanted to participate in the development of their local council's management plan (*How young people would like to be consulted: a report of findings from interviews with young people*, 1998, Department of Local Government).

For additional suggestions about consultations, please see Appendix C.

It is important to remember that there may be numerous sub-groups of people falling within a specific target group. This means that there could be a great diversity of views and protocols within a single target group in one geographical community. You should consult with a range of people within each target group, for example men, women and different age groups.

When convening a meeting with key agencies and members of the community to explore the issues relevant to particular target groups, you may need to hold separate meetings or smaller workshops within the one large meeting. These smaller meetings should be based on the sub-groups identified by community leaders. Smaller groups are often better at exploring the full range of community issues and maximising the participation of people who feel uncomfortable speaking in large groups. A nominated minute taker and spokesperson for the group would generally then report back to the larger group or give the information to a council staff member or contact person.

Internal consultation

As well as consulting the community and external stakeholders, you should also make sure you involve relevant council staff and councillors in developing the social plan. This helps to raise awareness about needs and issues in the community as well as foster commitment to implementing solutions that are council's responsibility.

Some ways to involve council staff and councillors in developing and implementing the social/community plan are:

- providing information about the methodology for preparing the plan and an opportunity to comment eg by memo, email, brochure, council report or presentation

- gathering information about relevant council plans and reports and their views on community needs and issues, eg by memo, email, survey, one on one meetings or group workshop

- having nominated staff or councillors on a social/community plan steering group

- inviting them to consultation meetings in the community

- reporting on the social/community plan to existing decision making forums eg full council meeting, sub-committees, strategy groups or senior executive meetings.

The information you present should be in a clear and easy to understand format and relevant to the particular audience or forum. For example, a report to a senior executive group may outline issues such as legislative requirements, benefits to council, how the social/community plan links to the management plan, progress on implementing the existing plan, key steps in developing the plan and a request for each department to nominate a social/community plan contact. A workshop with planning staff, including strategic and development assessment planners, could identify the links between environmental planning and social issues, both in terms of particular target groups and the general community.

Task D: Setting priorities

It is important that councils encourage participants in the community consultative process to rank their concerns according to perceived importance rather than just develop one long 'wish' list.

Putting needs and recommendations in priority order is a difficult task but councils will eventually have to decide which recommendations to implement and in which order. Deciding on priorities is about making choices and making judgements about what is important amongst an identified array of needs.

Your priorities should not be solely based on the perceived number of people affected by an identified issue or falling within a particular target group. This perception may be inaccurate and, regardless of the accuracy of the estimated population, it is also important to assess the impact of that unmet need on the particular community or target group. It is important not to consider target groups completely independently of each other as strategies to address a need identified by one group may also address

a need identified by another group. For example, strategies to address a need for information to be provided in alternative formats may not only assist people with hearing and sight impairment but also older people.

Both councils and their communities should understand that although documenting current community need is an important first step in developing strategies to meet those needs, it is not realistic to expect that councils, in conjunction with other local community resources, will be able to meet all identified needs in the short or medium term. Priority recommendations will have to be identified and implemented in a staged fashion depending on the level of resources available. It is also important that councils remember that they do not have to be the implementing body for all recommendations in a social/community plan.

Given the value-laden nature of needs assessment, perfect agreement on priorities is unlikely to occur. However, any priority setting process should be based on fairness. The following suggestions may help you to strengthen and standardise the process:

- Involve representatives from all interest groups in the decision making process

- Guarantee everyone an opportunity to participate openly

- Make sure choices are made in an impartial manner

- Adopt methods and procedures that ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to make their choices without undue influence or pressure.

You also need to have appropriate and explicit decision criteria to determine the priorities of competing needs and strategies. Without such criteria, setting priorities becomes an arbitrary process. While councils should develop criteria that are appropriate to their local circumstances, the following are examples of questions that may help you develop effective criteria[1]:

- To what extent is the need likely to get better or worse over time?

- If left unattended, what is the likelihood that the need will go away?

- To what extent will the need result in or be likely to result in physical pain, danger or discomfort both in terms of those expressing the need and others in the community?

- To what extent will the need result in or be likely to result in other negative effects both in terms of those expressing the need and others in the community eg inconvenience, social isolation, alienation?

- To what extent is the need already being addressed?

- Does a proposed strategy address more than one need within a particular target group or locality?

- Does a proposed strategy address a need identified by more than one target group or locality?

- Can the need be addressed in ways other than through the social/community plan?

- What evidence exists about the effectiveness of proposed strategies, for example, from the review of the implementation of the previous social/community plans and program evaluation?

- To what extent are resources eg funding and trained personnel available to implement any strategy?

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[1] Adapted from McCracken, K. (1992) "Methods of needs assessment for community services planning", paper presented to 27th International Geographic Congress, Washington DC.

Step 4 – Formulate strategies and set goals and targets

[PART B4 5 OF GUIDELINES]

Once the key issues have been identified, you need to develop strategies that could be implemented by council or other groups or agencies. These strategies should describe ways of improving the general quality of life experienced by people in both the broad community and designated target groups and ensure that council services are accessible and appropriate to all. Councils can then consider these strategies when preparing their management plans.

Integrated approach

The strategies developed will depend on the issues and unmet needs identified and the circumstances facing the particular council and community. It is important that strategies in the social/community plan do not conflict with each other or with strategies in other council plans. Part A3 of the manual emphasises an integrated approach to social/community planning, including linking the social/community plan with other council planning processes.

Whole of community approach

Many of the issues identified within a social/community plan may fall outside the responsibility or resources of council. You may need to have some strategies that involve council writing to a relevant authority or community group or forming a working partnership with them to address the identified need.

For example, council and the community may have identified that there is a general lack of awareness about the needs of people from a diverse cultural and linguistic background which prevents them from readily accessing council information and other community services or government departments. Strategies to address this issue might include providing training for council staff as part of a Local Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement program, hiring staff who reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the local community, as well as council writing to other identified community services and government departments.

Legislative requirements

You also need to consider specific legal requirements that will affect your planning for particular groups in the community. For more details about councils' obligations under the Community Relations Commission (CRC) Act, the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act, please see Appendix D.

Differing views

There are likely to be tensions and disagreements between different groups in the community about the strategies that should be implemented to address needs. These differing viewpoints may be valid and reflect the experience of that particular group. You must handle the social/community planning process carefully to ensure that the views of one group are not given undue weight or taken more seriously than the views of others. If a group feels that its views are not considered in the social/community planning process, they are unlikely to support the plan and may seek to undermine it.

Developing a consensus, particularly where a community is extremely diverse or tensions and disagreements are entrenched, may prove to be impossible. It may also be very time-consuming and energy and resource intensive. However, the process of developing a social/community plan and engaging all parts of the community can provide opportunities for discussion between groups with differing viewpoints. This in turn can bring new perspectives to problems, break down assumptions and stereotypes, and lead to new and innovative solutions.

A common issue encountered by councils is young people's use of public space. There are many groups in the community that are affected by this issue, including older people, businesses, security personnel, the police and young people themselves. If strategies are implemented to prevent young people from gathering in public spaces without considering the young people's needs and circumstances, they may simply move elsewhere to socialise eg to parks and carparks. If the young people are involved in anti-social behaviour or crime, this just shifts the problem. The young people's need for safe and low cost recreational opportunities has not been addressed. If young people have been gathering in a particular public place because it is safe, they may be less safe in the new place and this may result in increased crime against young people.

One way of addressing needs equitably is to identify broad community needs and issues first, then examine them for ways in which they might affect members of each target group. You should also consider how the issues might affect individuals within that group according to each person's age, cultural and linguistic background and whether they have disabilities.

Heterogeneity of target groups

It is important to remember that target groups are not homogeneous and people may belong to more than one target group. Gender differences are also important. For example among older people, men and women differ in their access to health and community services and participation in social activities.

While the needs of many older people and people with physical and sensory disabilities coincide (eg poor vision and mobility difficulties), many older people do not perceive themselves as having a disability. Initiatives for people with a disability, which generally enhance community participation for older people as well, may need to be communicated in a different way to older people.

You should therefore apply target group analysis at each step in the development of a social/community plan.

The target group analysis in Table 2 is from *In Focus: A gender analysis of NSW Local Government Social Plans, Department for Women, 2001*. Although it applies specifically to women, it can be used as a model for all target groups.

Steps for developing social/community plans	Applying gender analysis
1. Decide on a methodology	1. The methodology is based on the principles of social justice and promotes gender equity • Does the council have a statement of principles which sets out its commitment to equality?
2. Develop a demographic profile	2. All demographic data in the community profiles is reported and analysed by gender. • Has data for each population group including young people, older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities been broken down and used? • Has data on socioeconomic and other relevant factors been collected, reported and analysed by sex, such as household composition, employment and income?
3. Conduct a needs assessment which includes:	3. Gender issues are identified and integrated throughout the needs assessment in the plans. • What common themes and issues for women emerge from the review of social plans? • What issues have been identified for women as a mandatory target group? • Have gender issues been identified within each of the other mandatory target groups? • How have the plans addressed gender issues that cross target group boundaries?
3.1. Obtaining and analysing existing information available about community needs and target groups	3.1. Existing information is analysed to identify differences between women and men within target groups. • To what extent does existing information present a gendered perspective on community issues and concerns?
3.2. Reviewing current council services and other key services within the community to determine their appropriateness and accessibility	3.2. Review of council and other key services includes an assessment of client access by women and men. • What consideration of gender issues has been included in the audits of existing services?
3.3. Consulting members of target groups, the general community, and internal and external stakeholders	3.3. Consultation process involves specific activities to facilitate women's participation and results are reported by gender. • Has the degree of participation of women and men been identified? • Were women's organisations consulted? • Were there any women-only focus groups conducted during consultation?
3.4. Setting priorities	3.4. Women's needs are given equitable priority and attention. • What priority has been given to women's needs and concerns?

Steps for developing social/community plans	Applying gender analysis
4. Formulate strategies and set goals and targets	4. Strategies are developed to address gender issues. • What gender specific strategies have been developed for what issues?
5. Consult on the draft plan	5. Action is taken to ensure women's equal participation in the consultation of the draft plan • What activities have been undertaken to ensure women's equal participation in the consultation of the draft plan?

Table 2. Gender analysis of the suggested steps for developing a social/community plan

You may wish to specifically state council's commitment to social justice for the target groups in the social/community plan. The following are two sample statements for women and older people.

> *The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving, political, social economic, cultural and environmental security among all people.*
>
> *(City of Sydney's social plan 2000,101)*
>
> *To promote and encourage the active, dignified and meaningful participation of the Shire's Elderly Citizen's in community life whilst providing a high level of specifically designed services and support.*
>
> *(Inverell Shire Council's social plan 2000,19)*

Identifying access and equity activities

You should involve key agencies and residents from the general community and specific target groups when formulating activities that could be included as recommendations in the social/community plan. This will help to ensure that appropriate activities are canvassed and you do not unnecessarily duplicate existing initiatives in the community. The latter part of any consultations could be devoted to formulating activities so that another separate consultation doesn't have to be organised at a later date.

All council business units should also be involved in identifying potential access and equity activities. These activities could include in-service training, consultation processes, service reviews and audits, project/facilities development and anticipated capital works. Each business unit within council should be asked to suggest activities that would benefit the broader community as well as activities for the mandatory target groups.

Each recommended activity should include:

- a goal and/or target - this will help you monitor achievement of the activity if it is included in the management plan and business unit or operational plans

- a timeframe, if possible

- a priority ranking eg high, medium or low. See Step 3 Task D for information about setting priorities, including in relation to activities

- a locality, if relevant

- an indicative budget of the cost of the recommended action to help council in allocating resources

- the section of council or other agency responsible for the activity.

The identified issues and the recommended actions can be shown in a matrix. Tables 3 and 4 are examples of how this might be done.

Issue	Target groups							
	Children	Young People	Women	Older People	People with disabilities	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders	Culturally & linguistically diverse	General
Health	Increase immunisation against chicken pox	Increase immunisation against chicken pox	Enhance hydro-therapy facilities at council pool	Enhance hydro-therapy facilities at council pool	Enhance hydro-therapy facilities at council pool		Arabic speaking health inspector	Decreased general practitioner waiting lists
Transport			Increase number of bus shelters	Low cost transport for frail/aged	Wheelchair access for buses			Services within 500m of 95% of residencies
Recreation	Upgrade playground facilities for children	Provide sporting facilties for young people	Assist sporting groups for women	Encourage usage of Seniors Centres	Enchance services provided at council pool	Encourage participation of young people in Council's youth groups	Encourage use of existing venues	
	Promote "fair play" to school and sporting communities	Conduct & promote physical activity programs at convenient times and places	Provide childcare for mothers participating in physical activity	Promote access to public facilities during the day, eg golf courses	Promote and support a physical activity disability network	Develop partnerships with targeted communities to conduct physical activity programs	Advocate clothing rules that cater for the cultural needs of the whole community	Facilitate partnerships with health, sport & recreation providers & community groups
Community pride and spirit	Reconciliation poster competition			Seniors Day concert & civic awards		Reconciliation poster competition	Folkloric festival	Australia Day events
						Sorry book in foyer of council offices	NESB section in local museum	

Table 3 Matrix of target groups with social/community issues

Issue	Recommended action	Target groups (incl. general community)	Locality	Priority (L, M, H)	Timeframe	Budget
Health	Immunisation	Children, youth	All areas	H	June 05	$12 000
	Extended services of Early Childhood Health Centres (ECHC)	Women and children	East Gullyton & Wamba	H	June 05	$32 000
	Publicise services of ECHCs in community languages	Women from Culturally & Linguistcally Diverse Backgrounds	All areas	H	Dec 04	$18 000
Transport	Bus shelters	All	At main urban centres	M	April 05	$26 500
Housing	Encourage residential care beds (hostel & nursing homes)	Older people – frail or with disabilities	All areas	M	On-going	
	Encourage medium density housing within community & self-care retirement village options (SEPP 5)	Older people – capable of self-care	All areas	M	On-going	
Culture	Renovate Dreamline centre	Aboriginal	Gullyton	M	Oct 06	$140 000
Communication	Introduction to council website in community languages	Culturally & linguistically diverse	All areas	L	Dec 04	$3 500

Table 4. Matrix of target groups with recommendations for access and equity activities

Some of the recommended activities in Tables 3 and 4 have clear implications for land use planning. These include the enhancement of hydrotherapy facilities at a council pool, an increase in the number of bus shelters, transport services within 500m of 95% of residences and encouraging medium density housing or greater housing choice. Such actions would be included in new local plans under planFIRST.

Step 5 - Consult on the draft plan

You should give the community and other interested parties an opportunity to comment on the draft social/community plan before it is adopted by council. This can be done in a number of ways including public exhibition, advertising the draft and mailing out copies on request, or organising meetings to discuss particular areas of the plan.

If you have included information from other agencies in your social/community plan, you should consult with these agencies and check that the information is still current.

It is also a good idea to consult the community and relevant government agencies and non-government organisations on the initial, as well as the final, draft of the plan. You could send relevant sections of the first draft of the plan to them for their comments or suggested changes.

In the letter asking for comments on the draft, you could also state that:

- council will be using the final social/community plan for the next five years to help prepare its annual management plan and/or business unit or operational plans – unless another social/community plan is developed during that period

- council has to include a section in the draft management plan specifying the access and equity activities that it intends to implement to assist the community and people within the designated target groups

- members of the community will have an opportunity to comment on the draft management plan

- council has to report on its progress in implementing the adopted access and equity activities in their annual report each year and in the next social/community plan.

If you decide not to include certain suggested changes in the final draft of the social/community plan, you could put a summary of the key concerns, issues and comments that arose during the development of plan in an appendix so that the community knows that these issues were considered. You could also include reasons why they were not incorporated in the final plan.

B2. Sample format for a social/community plan

There is a sample format for a social/community plan in Appendix F. It contains the following chapters:

Chapter 1 – an outline of the aims of the social/community plan and the planning principles used to develop the plan.

Chapter 2 – an outline of the process used to develop the plan.

Chapter 3 – a community profile based on key demographic data relating to the local government area or region.

Chapter 4 onwards – details about key community issues, and/or specific target groups and/or localities.

B3. Making the social/community plan accessible

[PART B5 OF GUIDELINES]

The social/community plan should be user friendly, written in plain English and have an easy to follow format. Consideration should be given to:

- using alternative formats for people with disabilities, such as large print, on an accessible Web Site, on computer disk, on audiotape or in Braille

- providing a summary in community languages

- making the plan available at libraries and other community venues, such as migrant resource centres, seniors centres, neighbourhood centres, youth centres and Aboriginal land councils.

B4. Possibility of a regional planning process

[PART B6 OF GUIDELINES]

If your council decides to participate in a regional planning process, there are a number of ways you can do this:

You could:

- develop a regional plan with neighboring councils or a Regional Organisation of Councils, e.g. the *Clarence Valley Social (available from www.graftoncity.nsw.gov.au/townplanning/CVSocialPlan%20Oct-01.pdf)*

- organise regional consultations but still write up a council-specific plan e.g. the *Northern Sydney Aboriginal Social Plan*, September 2000 *(available from www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/help/policies/Frameaborig.htm)*

You will still need to identify the priority needs and recommended actions relevant to your council's area.

B5. Other plans

Councils must consider developing the following plans in conjunction with their social/community plans.

Cultural plans

In recent years, a number of NSW councils have prepared cultural plans setting out aims and strategic directions for the short, medium and long term. These cultural plans may be a separate document and linked to the council's management plan, or they may form part of the social/community plan.

The NSW Ministry for the Arts, in consultation with the Department of Local Government, is seeking to formalise the cultural planning process to encourage sustainable, integrated and strategic planning at the local level. Separate cultural planning and reporting guidelines have been prepared to help councils develop a cultural plan for their area.

Disability action plans

A council might develop a disability action plan to make sure that it does not discriminate against people with disabilities under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. Although not mandatory, having and implementing such a plan may act as part of the defence against a complaint made under the DDA.

If councils decide to develop a Disability Action Plan, whether a DDA Action Plan or a plan under the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework, there are two main options:

These options are:

1   Develop a DDA Action Plan that aims to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act only. This means that the plan identifies and addresses barriers to people with disabilities accessing existing council services and facilities. The plan could be a separate document that is cross referenced in the social/community plan. Alternatively, it could be a section in the social/community plan but would need to be supplemented to fully meet the requirements of the social/community plan in relation to people with disabilities (see option 2).

2   Develop a Disability Action Plan that aims to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and social/community plans. A plan developed in accordance with the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework would meet these requirements. This means that the plan not only identifies and addresses barriers to people with disabilities accessing existing council services and facilities, but also identifies the broader needs of people with disabilities and how these needs might be addressed by the council and other agencies. The plan could be a separate document that is cross referenced in the social/community plan. Alternatively, it could be incorporated into the social/community plan.

For more information about how to develop a disability action plan and link it to other council plans and how to consult with people with disabilities, please see Appendix G.

Local crime prevention plans

The Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act 1997 provides for the endorsement and support of local government crime prevention activity by the NSW Attorney General. The key to this local activity is the preparation of a local crime prevention plan that you submit to the Attorney General for endorsement as a Safer Community Compact. Once a compact is endorsed, you can then apply for grant funding to implement identified strategies and programs.

There are likely to be strong links between the issues and strategies identified by social/community plans and local crime prevention plans. If a crime prevention plan is a separate document, it should cross-reference any crime prevention elements in the social/community plan. Councils with limited community and administrative resources should consider a joint process for developing social/community and crime prevention plans. Councils with significant resource constraints may be able to have their social/community plan recognised as a crime prevention plan and then be eligible for endorsement and funding. This includes social/community plans that have a crime prevention section.

When developing a crime prevention plan or social/community plan, you should refer to the Crime Prevention Resource Manual that was distributed to councils in October 1998. The manual sets out the steps involved in taking a council and community partnership approach to crime prevention. It also includes examples of what local councils in NSW and other states of Australia and overseas have done to prevent crime in their local areas.

The Crime Prevention Division of the Attorney General's Department has also appointed regional crime prevention advisers to work with councils to reduce the incidence of crime by developing, promoting and implementing crime prevention plans. These advisers can meet with councillors and council staff and provide advice about data sources, composition of community safety committees and best practice intervention and crime prevention strategies. They can also help facilitate public meetings and workshops with key stakeholders to identify key crime concerns and related crime prevention strategies.

For help with crime prevention planning or for additional copies of the resource manual, please contact the Crime Prevention Division of the Attorney General's Department on 02 9228 8307. The manual is also available on the Department of Local Government's website at www.dlg.nsw.gov.au under Information – Local Government Publications.

Part C

Implementing a social/community plan

C1. Management planning requirements

Councils must include an 'Access and Equity Activity Statement' in their management plan. This statement contains the recommended actions from the social/community plan that council is going to implement in the following year.

Table 5 shows some options for including recommended access and equity actions from the social/community plan in your management plan and annual report.

Social/Community Plan	Management Plan	Annual Report
Option 1		
Recommended access and equity (A&E) actions	Include all A&E actions in the Access and Equity Activity Statement.	Report all A&E actions in a single section called Access and Equity Activity Statement.
Option 2		
Recommended access and equity (A&E) actions	Include some A&E actions in the Access and Equity Activity Statement and other A&E actions under relevant principal activities in the management plan. If A&E actions are included under other principal actions, they must be cross-referenced with the Access and Equity Activity Statement.	• Report on some A&E actions in a single section called Access and Equity Activity Statement • Report on other A&E actions according to sections identical to those used in the management plan. All A&E actions must be cross-referenced with the Access and Equity Activity Statement section of the annual report.
Option 3		
Recommended access and equity (A&E) actions	Include all A&E actions under relevant principal activities. The management plan must contain an Access and Equity Activity Statement section that references all A&E actions contained elsewhere in the management plan.	Report on all A&E actions under the relevant principal activities but include an Access and Equity Activity Statement which references all A&E actions reported on in the annual report.

Table 5: Options for including access and equity actions in the management plan and annual report

It is likely that certain access and equity actions could be implemented through a local plan under planFIRST. Therefore the access and equity statement should be used to inform the development of this plan.

Councils are encouraged to include in their access and equity activity statement information such as the area of council that will be responsible for implementing the activity, the required resources for implementation, and timeframes for completing the activity.

You can provide the information in a prose format, a table or a combination of both. Table 6 gives examples using a table format.

Target group: older people (page 18 of social/community plan)

Planned access and equity activity	Objectives	Performance Targets	Performance indicators ie: way of assessing performance
Continue to operate a high quality meals on wheels service	To maintain the nutritional health of aged persons in the community To allow for the maintenance of a culturally appropriate diet	100% of client requests for meals met 80% of clients satisfied with quality of meals 80% of clients who requested a multicultural/ethno specific meal are satisfied with quality of meal	Number of meals provided to meet client requests % of clients satisfied with quality of meal

Target group: women (page 34 of management plan)

Planned access and equity activity	Objectives	Performance targets	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance indicators, ie: way of assessing performance	Budget
Install lighting in main street to improve safety for women after dark	To provide a safer environment, particularly for women	Lighting installed in main street	General Manager	Dec 04	All lights installed in streed by December 04	$28 000

Table 6: Examples of access and equity activity statements in table form

C2. Involving the community, councillors, council staff and other agencies

It is important to involve the community, councillors, council staff and other agencies in implementing, as well as developing, the social/community plan.

This might involve including them in:

- determining how strategies are to be implemented
- determining how and what resources are to be allocated to implementing strategies
- monitoring and evaluation.

You should provide a summary of the social/community plan to local residents and other stakeholders, including relevant state government agencies and non-government organisations. This summary should include the main findings from the assessment of the effectiveness of the previous social/community plan.

B1 Step 3 of this manual includes examples of how you could involve councillors and council staff in implementing the social/community plan.

You should also encourage state government agencies to take your social/community plan into account in their planning and resource allocation processes. For example, as a minimum, you should provide copies of the social/community plan to all the agencies you consulted during the development of the plan or who may carry out activities related to the access and equity issues identified in the plan.

You should also consider meeting with relevant agencies to develop partnerships and discuss how recommended actions in the plan might be implemented. Through the implementation of planFIRST, PlanningNSW will be working closely with individual councils to assist in determining those aspects of social/community planning which can be given effect in new local plans.

C3. Monitoring and evaluation

[PARTS B4 4 AND C3 OF GUIDELINES]

The monitoring and evaluation of strategies and initiatives is essential to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated and the needs of the community are being met.

You should plan for evaluation and monitoring at the same time as you plan the activity, program or facility. This ensures that relevant data will be available and adequate resources are allocated to collecting and analysing this data. An accepted 'rule of thumb' is that 10% of the value of the total resources allocated to a program should be allocated to evaluation.

While monitoring should occur on a regular basis, the timing of evaluation can vary depending on the purpose of the evaluation and the amount of resources allocated to the program. If the purpose of the evaluation is to assess if the program is being implemented as planned (process evaluation), this may occur during the first 1-3 years of the program being implemented. It is important to allow an adequate amount of time before this type of evaluation is carried out. If the purpose of the evaluation is to determine if the program objectives have been achieved and assess the impact of

the program (outcome or impact evaluation), this may occur at the end of the program, if it has a set timeframe, or every 3 – 5 years after its introduction. Programs with significant resources should be evaluated more frequently than those with fewer resources.

Some processes that you can use for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of access and equity activities are to:

- measure progress against indicators or targets – for more information on social indicators, please see Appendix H

- identify gaps or over-supply in service provision, relative to the demand. This would involve an initial detailed assessment with ongoing reviews of activity trends and demand and population change/growth

- assess the benefits of activities compared to the resources allocated, and further identify low cost means of achieving the outcomes of the activity

- assess the value of promotions and information about access and equity activities by assessing participation levels and feedback

- collect feedback on the personal benefits of access and equity activities through surveys or personal contact with members of target groups

- obtain the views of relevant government and non-government organisations about the effects of the activity.

Because many local councils have limited resources for surveys and research projects, you could:

- include questions about access and equity activities in an existing regular council survey such as a community needs or resident satisfaction survey

- establish a partnership with universities, TAFE colleges or schools to involve students in conducting research

- collect feedback from users of activities and facilities by, for example, providing a suggestion box or asking them to complete a short questionnaire or participate in a quick informal interview

- use the expertise of partners involved in implementing the social/community plan - for example, area health service staff may have research and/or evaluation expertise

You should also consider involving the community, especially community organisations, in planning and overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of the social/community plan.

This could include providing input into:

- determining how strategies are to be monitored and evaluated

- determining how and what resources are to be allocated to monitoring and evaluation

- carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities eg conducting interviews with service users and non-users, analysing data, reviewing draft reports on findings

- disseminating findings from monitoring and evaluations eg presenting findings at community group meetings

- providing feedback on the implementation of recommendations from evaluation.

C4. Funding sources

There are many possible sources of funding for implementing a social/community plan. The following documents and other sources provide information about funding opportunities.

- Funding Calendar. A Directory of Community Funding, WESTIR Limited. This publication is updated annually and can be purchased for approximately $40.00 from WESTIR, phone (02) 9622 3011

- The Rural Book: Handbook of Major Federal Government Services and Programmes for Regional and Rural Communities 1999-2000, Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services, phone 1800 026 222

- Commonwealth Assistance for Local Projects 1999-2000. A Directory for Local Government and its Communities, National Office of Local Government, phone 1800 065 113 (available from www.nolg.gov.au under Commonwealth Assistance for Local Projects)

- NSW Government Community Builders website. This site includes links to NSW Government funding programs, and information about other fund raising strategies and writing funding applications (www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au)

- Easy Grants Information Service, Strategic Australia Pty Ltd, email strategicaustralia@bigpond.com.au. A fee is charged for using this service

- Australian Grants Register, Julie Summers (ed), Australian Scholarly Publishing. This publication includes information about grants in the areas of disability, health, older people and welfare. It can be purchased for approximately $70.00 by phone (03) 9817 5208

- Creating Active Communities. Physical activity guidelines for local councils - available from the Department of Local Government's website at www.dlg.nsw.gov.au under Information – Local Government Publications; see section 8.2 Funding Programs and Award Schemes.

Councils that provide funding to non-government organisations in their communities, for example through a small grants funding program, might consider allocating funding on the basis of the organisation's role in implementing the social/community plan.

Part D
Reporting access and equity activities

D1. Annual report requirements

The access and equity activity component of council's annual report can be prepared in a prose format, a table or a combination of both. Table 5 in C1 shows some options for reporting on recommended actions from the social/community plan.

Table 7 shows how you could present access and equity activities according to target group.

Target group: older people

Access & Equity	Objectives	Performance Targets	Performance Objectives	Performance as at June 05
Continue to operate a high quality meals on wheels service	To maintain the nutritional health of aged persons in the community	100% of client requests for meals met	Number of meals provided to meet client requests	Achieved in full
		80% of clients satisfied with quality of meal	% of clients satisfied with quality of meal	

Target group: women

Access & Equity	Objectives	Performance Targets	Performance Objectives	Performance as at June 05
Install lighting in main street to improve safety for women after dark	To provide a safer environment, particularly for women	Lighting installed in main street by end December 2004	All lights installed in main streed by end December 2004	Achieved in full

Target group: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Access & Equity Activity	Objectives	Performance Targets	Responsibility (optional)	Timeframe (optional)	Performance Objectives	Status as at June 05
Introduce Aboriginal Mentoring Program	To enable Aboriginal community members to gain a greater insight into local government	Introduce Aboriginal Mentoring Program by December 04	General Manager	December 04	Number of Aboriginal participants & mentors selected by December 04	Partially Achieved
	To encourage Aboriginal people to stand for election	Provide Aboriginal community members with information on election process by March 07		March 07	Increase in number of Aboriginal people standing at 2007 elections	In Progress

Reasons for partial achievement - Aboriginal Mentoring Program in place but information strategy about the election process delayed due to unforeseen staffing constraints. This will be remedied by August 2005

Table 7: Examples of reporting on access and equity activities in the annual report

Table 8 shows how you could present access and equity activities according to issues.

Access & Equity Activity	Target groups (incl general community)	Objectives	Performance Targets	Performance Objectives	Status as at June 05
Develop recreation & leisure programs for children and young people with a disability	Children Young people People with a disability	Provide affordable access to recreation & leisure programs for children & young people with disabilities	Develop a comprehensive recreational & leisure plan	Completion of plan recommending programs by May 05	Draft plan completed To go before council in June 05
Establish Internet Cafe in Gullyton	Young people	Provide social & intellectual activity for young people in Gullyton	Open Internet Cafe, with 8 terminals and refreshment area	Open Cafe Average 25 visits youth per day	Cafe opened Feb 05 Avg 32 visits p/day

Access & Equity Activity	Target groups (incl general community)	Objectives	Performance Targets	Performance Objectives	Status as at June 05
Upgrade playgrounds	Children	Shade and softfall area in Tipi Park	All play equipment be under sail shade and surrounded by softfall	Shade and softfall of AS standard provided in Tipi Park	Completed Sept 04
Improve meeting and socialising facilities for older people	Older people	Make facilities more comfortable for older people	Install hearing loops, heating and cooling and accessible features at all community halls.	All community halls upgraded. Survey users to determine satisfaction	Jan Ngu Hall upgrade completed. Federation Centre to be completed Nov 05
Develop recreation & leisure programs for children and young people from non-English speaking backgrounds	Children Young people People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds	Launch the "Schools Out Recreation Activities Program Project" in Term 1 2005	Program for children which involves many NESB participants	Over half children and young people attending come from NESB families. Average 12 children per day	Program held. Over 50% NESB attending. Avg 10 children per day.

Table 8: Matrix showing recreation activities in the annual report

D2. Additional reporting requirements for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

[PART D2 OF GUIDELINES]

Councils must identify in their annual reports which of three key result areas apply to each activity or strategy aimed at assisting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The key result area that applies to the activity or strategy should be included in the report on council's access and equity activities in its annual report.

Table 9 gives an example of how you could report on the three key result areas for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Target Group: People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Access & Equity Activity	Objectives	Performance Targets	Performance Objectives	Key result area	Status as at June 05
Produce council brochures in community languages	To increase access to council services for people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through the dissemination of information	Brochures developed in top 5 community languages and distributed within 6 months	Number of brochures developed and distributed by December 2004

Number of community languages targeted | Social Justice | Achieved in full |

Table 9: Reporting on people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the annual report

For more details about how the three key result areas relate to local council activities, please see Appendix I.

Part E
Recommended reading

The publications listed below provide further information to help councils prepare and evaluate social/community plans.

Please see Appendix C for documents on consultation.

Social planning

- *Ground Rules, A Social Planning Handbook for Local Government*, Colin Menzies for the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW, NSW Local Government Industry Committee and NSW Department of Planning. LGSA, Sydney, 1993.

- *Social Planning Guidelines for Queensland Local Government*, C. Menzies, Local Government Association of Queensland, July 1996.

Planning for young people

- *Bikes, Bands and Strategic Plans. Including young people in the business of local government*, Local Government Association of Queensland, 1997

- *Roads, Rates and Rock 'n' Roll. Planning local services for and with young people*, Municipal Association of Victoria, 1987

- *Working Together - Working for Young People, the NSW Government Youth Policy 2002–06*, Office of Children and Young People, 2002 *(available from www.youth.nsw.gov.au)*

Planning for women

- *In focus: A gender analysis of NSW Local Government Social Plans*, Department for Women, January 2002. *(available from www.women.nsw.gov.au/pdf/infocus.pdf)*

- *Gender Lens: A Guide to Inclusive Policy and Program Development.* http://www.weq.gov.bc.ca/GENERAL/Gender_Lens/intro

- *The Full Picture: Guidelines for Gender Analysis.* The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Wellington, New Zealand.

- *Gender Based Analysis – A Guide for Policy-Making.* The Status of Women, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Internet email address: swc-cfc@vli.ca

- *NSW Government Action Plan For Women 2000–02*, Department for Women, *(available from www.women.nsw.gov.au/pdf/action/ap2001.pdf)*

To obtain a copy or get additional information about these reports, please contact the Department for Women on (02) 9334 1160.

Planning for older people

- *NSW Government's Healthy Ageing Framework*, Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, 1998. *(available from www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au)*

- *Platform for Action 2000–02 on issues of concern to older people in NSW*, Australian Coalition 99 (NSW) June 2000 (available from Events and Projects webpage of the Committee on Ageing's website at *www.coa.nsw.gov.au)*

Planning for people with disabilities

- *NSW Government Disability Policy Framework*, Ageing & Disability Department, 1998. *(available from www.add.nsw.gov.au/PDF/dpf.pdf)*

- *NSW Government Disability Policy Framework Communication Handbook*, Ageing & Disability Department, 1998. *(available from www.add.nsw.gov.au/PDF/DPF_Comms_handbook.pdf)*

- *NSW Government Disability Policy Framework Guidelines*, Ageing & Disability Department, 1998. *(available from www.add.nsw.gov.au/PDF/dpf_guidelines.pdf)*

- *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans: A Guide for Local Government*, P Griffiths. Australian Local Government Association, Deakin, ACT, 1995.

Planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- *Building a Partnership Between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Local Government*. Australian Local Government Association, Deakin, ACT, 1994.

- *NSW Government Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal People*, 1997, Department of Aboriginal Affairs (this is to be replaced by a new Aboriginal Affairs Policy expected to be released by the end of 2002).

Planning for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- *For One and All. Access and Equity in Local Government: a Guide to Customer Service in a Multicultural Society*. Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW, Sydney, 1994.

- *Building on our Cultural Diversity. Report of the Review of the Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979 and the Development of an Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 White Paper*, 1996, Community Relations Commission. *(available from www.crc.com.au/publications/whitepaper/index.htm)*

- *The Charter of Principles for a Cultural Diverse Society*. Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, Ashfield, NSW.

- *Resource handbook for Chief Executive Officers and Senior Managers: Ethnic Affairs in the New South Wales Public Sector* (1998), Community Relations Commission, *(available from www.eacnsw.com.au/publications/resourcehandbook/contents.htm)*

- *The People of New South Wales*, Community Relations Commission, 1998. *(available from www.crc.nsw.gov.au)*

Planning for people of diverse sexualities, including gay men and lesbians

- *More than Tolerance – Strategies to Improve Planning and Service Provision to Assist People from Sexual Minorities*, Intersection, May 1997, (PO Box 380, Broadway 2007).

- *Tolerance Report*, Bird C and Coco, B. Crossroads Community Care, Sydney, 1996.

  This report examines gay and lesbian issues in Sutherland Shire but has broad

recommendations relevant to other councils as well. Phone Crossroads Community Care Centre Inc on 02 9525 3790 to obtain a copy.

- *Out for Justice – education modules and material for organisations in understanding the issues that impact on lesbians and in developing strategies to improve access and equity*, COAL (Coalition of Activist Lesbians), Sydney, 1997 (PO Box 424 Thirroul 2515).

- *The Final Report of the Street Watch Implementation Advisory Committee –* (Section on Local Government). Anti-Discrimination Board, Sydney, 1996.

- *Social Planning Kit*, Intersection, 1998.

To obtain a copy or get additional information about these reports, please contact Crossroads Community Care on (02) 9525 3790.

Planning for general community issues - transport

- *Integrating Land Use and Transport*, PlanningNSW, 2001 *(available from www.planning.nsw.gov.au/programservices/transportchoice.html)*

Evaluation

- *Evaluating Community Safety – A Guide*, R. White & G Coventry, Crime Prevention Victoria, Department of Justice, September 2000 (available from www.justice.vic.gov.au). This publication was developed for evaluating community safety initiatives, but it can be used for evaluating any social initiative.

Appendix A

Developing an inhouse statistical profile of the community

If your council decides to develop its own statistical profile, rather than purchasing the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Local Government standard profile, you should access the following sources of data about the community and the seven mandatory target groups.

The information in the ABS census data on community profiles and thematic profiles will be particularly useful. For example, the basic community profile covers information such as age-sex profile, family structure, ethnicity indicators and socio-economic characteristics. The usual residents profile provides data on people who usually live in the area while the time series profile compares census data between 1986,1991 and 1996.

It can be useful to put local statistics in context by comparing them, if possible, with statistics referring to the state averages. You should also consider including time series data to help determine socio-economic trends within your local government area.

Many councils have already completed statistical profiles so examining the style and format of these can be helpful.

You should also check whether other agencies, such as the Department of Community Services or NSW Health, have developed recent statistical overviews of your area. Some agencies include demographic data in their annual reports and other publications.

Appendix B
Potential issues of relevance to local communities across NSW

Contents

Councils are encouraged to consider including in their social/community plan strategies from the following NSW Government policy documents.

1   Young people

Source: *NSW Government Youth Policy 2002-2006 - Working Together Working for Young People*, Office of Children and Young People

Strategies include those that:

- increase the participation of young people in our community, and involve them in the decisions and processes that impact on their lives

- support young people to achieve their educational and employment goals

- enhance opportunities for young people to participate in sport, recreational and developmental activities

- provide information and services to help young people lead healthy lives, now and in the future

- improve the safety and well-being of young people by improving the safety of their environments and by providing appropriate support before their problems become acute

- facilitate partnership building and collaboration in local communities to improve planning, services and programs for young people.

2   Women

Source: *Issues of Importance for Women in NSW* – a document produced by the NSW Department for Women based on the *NSW Government Action Plan for Women*

Strategies include those that:

- reduce the level of violence against women

- enable women to work in a workplace that is equitable, safe and responsive to all aspects of women's lives including their work and family responsibilities

- promote a safer and accessible environment for women including safe streets and shopping centres, safe and reasonably priced transport, accessible buildings, transport and recreational areas

- promote the position of women in society by encouraging their participation in decision making and appointments to boards and committees

- promote education and training opportunities for women

- improve the health and quality of life for women by addressing a wide range of areas including the need for appropriate housing and sanitation, physical activity and nutrition, media and body image messages and supportive social networks

- provide effective and responsive services to help families and individuals including the provision of suitable childcare facilities

- ensure access to a sound and fair legal system for all women, including Aboriginal, immigrant and refugee women, and assist them in a wide range of areas including domestic violence, physical and sexual assault.

3   Older people

Source: *NSW Healthy Ageing Framework 1998–2003* – Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Strategies include those that:

- improve attitudes to ageing and older people and decrease unlawful age discrimination

- increase participation of older people in the work force, education, leisure and volunteering

- provide information about services and rights so that older people can make informed decisions

- provide accessible and supportive living environments that make it possible for older people to live as independently as possible

- promote the independence, well-being and health of older people by providing health, accommodation, care and support services

- develop a planned approach to policy and service provision for older people based on high quality data and research and supported by equitable and sustainable resourcing.

4   People with disabilities

Source: *NSW Government Disability Policy Framework* – Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Strategies include those that:

- ensure people with disabilities have access to buildings used in the provision of services including communications

- promote positive attitudes to people with disabilities through the information and education councils provide to their own staff, the users and potential users of their services

- make sure council staff who have or may have contact with the public have been trained to deal appropriately with people with disabilities

- provide information about council and local services that is accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities

- adjust council's work environment across all aspects of employment to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities

- implement strategies for handling complaints by or for people with disabilities

- promote the following principles:
    - people with disabilities are full and valued members of the community
    - people with disabilities will have access to services provided to the general community
    - in providing services to people with disabilities, the focus will be on the whole of life needs of individuals in their own communities
    - better outcomes for people with disabilities will result from cooperation among service providers, with the active participation of people with disabilities
    - services will support and be sensitive to the diversity of people with disabilities
    - the unique needs of people with disabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background will be recognised
    - the legal rights of people with disabilities will be recognised and protected.

5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Source: *NSW Government's Statement of Commitment* – Premier's Department (this is to be replaced by a new Aboriginal Affairs Policy currently being developed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs)

Strategies include those that:

- improve infrastructure services in Aboriginal communities
- improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal people
- improve health outcomes for Aboriginal people
- improve family and support services to meet the needs of Aboriginal people and communities
- improve education and training outcomes for Aboriginal students
- empower Aboriginal people and communities to achieve economic self-sufficiency
- provide a more responsive justice system
- improve protection of the consumer and industrial rights of Aboriginal people
- promote and protect Aboriginal cultural heritage
- support the work of Aboriginal artists
- encourage greater respect for Aboriginal people's relationship to the land, the sea and the rivers
- build effective partnerships with Aboriginal communities based on mutual respect and trust

- set standards for measuring improved outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities.

6   People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Source: *Building on our Cultural Diversity: Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 – NSW Government White Paper*, 1996, Community Relations Commission

Social justice

Strategies include those that:

- promote accessible and quality programs and services for all people regardless of their backgrounds
- develop policies and programs that are responsive to linguistic, cultural, racial and religious diversity
- increase participation by members of ethnic communities in decision making bodies
- increase understanding of cultural diversity by local service providers particularly in essential areas such as health, education, community welfare, housing, police and justice
- increase understanding of cultural diversity by government funded organisations
- value and make productive use of a culturally diverse local workforce
- increase access to accredited interpreters and translators for customers of local services
- promote urban and regional planning that reflects the current and future needs of NSW's culturally diverse community and ensures housing, social and community infrastructure is accessible
- improve the planning and provision of settlement services to ensure new migrants are better supported.

Community harmony

Strategies include those that:

- promote community development and unity within the community
- promote community tolerance of all religious beliefs and practices
- promote community harmony and a decrease of racial vilification and violence
- encourage the valuing of diverse cultures and languages
- provide harassment and discrimination free environments
- develop harmonious workplaces
- promote Aboriginal reconciliation.

Economic and cultural opportunities

Strategies include those that:

- use the ethnic community's language and cultural skills to attract business and expand overseas trade

- improve employment opportunities and outcomes for members of ethnic communities

- increase public recognition of the positive contributions made by ethnic communities to the social, economic and cultural life of the state

- support multicultural arts and artists

- promote tourism and international cultural and sporting exchange opportunities that are supported by a skilled and culturally aware workforce.

Appendix C
Consulting members of target groups and other key stakeholders

Contents

1   Barriers faced by social justice target groups

Social justice target groups can face a number of barriers when consultations are being undertaken. These barriers include but are not limited to the following:

Children and young people

- using language they don't understand
- using techniques that don't appeal to them or are intimidating eg public meetings
- using venues that are not accessible to public transport or where they do not feel comfortable

Women

- using venues that are not considered safe, particularly if the consultation is being held at night
- a lack of childcare
- consultations being held at times that do not take account of family and work responsibilities

Older people

- using written material, particularly in small print
- using venues that are not considered safe, particularly at night; and are not accessible

People with disabilities

- using language that people with intellectual disabilities may find complex and techniques that require a relatively long attention span eg public meetings
- using venues that are not accessible to people with physical disabilities, including their facilities such as toilets
- using written material that is not available in alternative formats such as large print and Braille for people with vision impairment
- using oral material with people with hearing impairments where there is no hearing loop available

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- using language that they may find complex
- using techniques that are intimidating eg public meetings, particularly if they include a large number of non-Aboriginal people
- using venues where they feel uncomfortable
- the history of contact between Aboriginal people and government agencies may mean that there is a lack of trust in the consultation process, particularly if recommendations are not implemented and no reasons are given

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- using language they may find complex

- using techniques that don't recognise cultural differences eg using public meetings to consult with a number of different groups that don't get on, having women speaking when men are present.

2   Checklist for consulting with social justice target groups

This checklist sets out some key issues and questions you need to consider when planning community consultations. It includes some specific points for social justice target groups, but can also be used for consulting with any group in the community.

Councils are not required to comply with each item in the checklist, but considering these issues will help you conduct an effective consultation. The points in the checklist are especially important if the issue is complex or contentious and involves a large number of people with a range of views.

What issue or problem is going to be the focus of the consultation?

- What is the nature of the issue or problem?

- What matters have already been discussed and decided?

- What matters need to be discussed and decided?

- What are the possible options and likely contentious issues?

- Are there any genuinely non-negotiable issues?

What are the aims of the consultation?

- What are the aims of the consultation?

- What consultation has already been done in relation to this issue?

  Consultation should build on, or at least acknowledge, previous consultation on an issue. If you don't do this, those being consulted are likely to become unwilling to participate if they believe their views are not being seriously considered.

- What information is needed from the consultation?

Who should be consulted and how should they be contacted?

- What population groups should be consulted?

- What organisations should be consulted? The effectiveness of consultation will be enhanced by developing ongoing and long term relationships with those organisations.

- What structures already exist within the group to be consulted that you could use either to make contact with them or as part of the consultation process eg committees, newsletters, community surveys, and events?

- Are other consultation processes happening that are likely to involve the same participants?

If so, either integrate consultations, particularly if they are about similar issues, or carry out your consultation at a different time. You should contact relevant government agencies and peak bodies about conducting a joint consultation.

This will maximise use of resources and avoid groups feeling that they are continually being consulted about similar issues.

- How should participants be selected?

- Do participants need to be representative or have particular characteristics eg be of a certain age?

- How should participants be contacted?

   For some groups, such as Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, personal contact eg a phone call or visit rather than a letter may increase participation.

   Young people should be contacted through a range of sources, for example, educational institutions, youth organisations, shopping malls, libraries, fast food outlets and youth facilities such as skate parks.

- How can people living in rural and remote areas be provided with opportunities to be consulted on matters that affect them?

- How can members of target groups be encouraged to attend consultations?

   For example, in regard to young people, this might include submitting articles to the local media about positive things that young people have done, providing young people with training, informing young people about what local councils do, and encouraging young people to bring a friend with them.

How should target groups be involved in planning the consultation?

- When consulting with Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, have you involved key community and religious leaders in planning the consultation where possible?

   This is important to ensure that:

   - appropriate consultation techniques are used

   - changes that occur within communities over time, eg the emergence of new organisations and changes to group contact people, are taken into account

   - differences between and within groups, including political, religious and philosophical differences, are recognised.

   While some groups can be consulted together, others should not.

- When consulting people with disabilities, have you involved key disability groups in planning the consultation where possible?

   This will ensure that the needs of different groups of people with disabilities are taken into account eg people with hearing and sight impairment may need to be consulted separately.

- When consulting children, young people, women and older people, these groups and/or organisations working with these groups should be involved in planning the consultation where possible.

What consultation techniques should be used?

- Is a one-off consultation sufficient or will a series of consultation be necessary?

  People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds usually prefer processes that allow for ongoing exchange, eg consultative committees, rather than one-off consultations.

- Are the techniques appropriate for the aims of the consultation and the needs of the groups being consulted?

  For example, asking people to write things down may not be appropriate for people with low levels of literacy and people with intellectual disabilities who often prefer smaller groups and short meetings.

- If the council is establishing a committee, have you considered including representatives from the social justice target groups affected either specifically or as members of the general community?

  In the case of young people, there should be an emphasis on informality rather than formal meeting procedures, time is allowed for young people to socialise, and opportunities are provided for young people to have fun, be creative and be challenged such as through role plays, drawing, music and photography.

What information should be provided?

- At the beginning of the consultation, have you informed participants about the aims of the consultation, what information is to be obtained, the limits to what is negotiable, how the information is going to be used, who will make the final decisions on recommendations from the consultation, and how participants will be informed about these decisions?

  This is important because it will:

  - ensure that all those involved have clear and realistic expectations
  - increase the likelihood that the aims of the consultation will be achieved
  - increase the confidence participants have in the consultation and their willingness to be involved in further consultations.

- What are the attitudes, knowledge and experience of those being consulted? For example, groups that lack experience may need to be given training and/or information about consultation.

- Have you given participants all the relevant information in a balanced and easy to understand way?

- Have you minimised the use of jargon and technical terms and fully explained them where they are necessary?

- Have you considered visual methods for conveying information such as slides, overheads, charts and diagrams? These should be in large print and/or may need to be read out if there are people with a vision impairment.

- Do the language and examples you've used take account of the background and circumstances of participants, such as literacy levels?

- Is written information available in a range of formats?

  For people with disabilities, is any written information clear and concise and in appropriate formats eg audiocassettes, large print, Braille? Do you need aids to assist in verbal communication eg listening devices for the hearing impaired and sign interpreters for the deaf?

- For people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, do you need to have interpreters or provide written information in languages other than English?

- Are participants encouraged to ask questions to clarify information that has been presented and to check that they understand what is being discussed?

- Have you provided any additional material that was not available at the time of the consultation but participants agreed would be useful to have?

What type of venue should be used?

- Is the venue easily accessible by public transport and for people with mobility difficulties eg wheelchair users and/or can transport be organised for participants?

- For people with mobility difficulties, does the venue have accessible parking and set down areas, is it clearly lit and signed, does it have an accessible pathway to the public entrance, and does it have accessible doorways and toilets?

- Is the lighting adequate, particularly if participants have to read written material?

- Is the seating suitable eg are seats comfortable, can seats be positioned so that everyone can see everyone else, can seating be reorganised for small group discussion?

- Is there adequate heating and ventilation?

- Have you considered holding a series of consultations in different locations to ensure that people living in rural and remote areas have the opportunity to participate?

What about the timing of the consultation?

- Have you given adequate notice of the consultation time?

- Do you need to provide reminders?

- Are meeting times suitable for participants eg avoid holding meetings during school holidays or at times when there are religious festivals or other cultural events? You may need to hold meetings at different times, eg during and outside working hours, to enable different groups to attend.

- Have you made sure that meetings don't go on for too long - two hours is enough for most people.

Does support and other assistance need to be provided?

- Are participants asked if they have any specific requirements?

- Do you need to provide childcare or care for older people and people with disabilities?

- Should participants, eg people with a brain injury or intellectual disability, be encouraged to bring along a support person?

- Can the expenses of low income participants be met eg transport costs?

- What refreshments should be provided before, after and/or during the consultation?

- If you are going to provide a meal, you should try to find out about participants' dietary requirements particularly if they are from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

- Have you planned a break during the meeting to give participants a chance to stretch, relax and discuss matters informally?

- Has the council a policy and procedures for assisting people from target groups to participate in consultations which they may otherwise not participate in, for example, providing for or covering the costs of accessible transport or taxis, attendant carers, support people and interpreters; and providing information in alternative formats?

Who should prepare the agenda?

- Who is responsible for preparing the agenda?

- Have you given participants the opportunity to have input to the agenda? For example, you could circulate a draft agenda before the meeting, discuss it at the start of the meeting and make any changes or additions so that it reflects what participants hope to achieve.

- How much time should be allocated to each item on the agenda?

- Is it realistic to expect all the items to be covered in a single meeting or should additional meetings be held?

How should consultations be conducted?

Using a facilitator

- Is the facilitator skilled in accessible facilitation techniques? For example, if an overhead is used, is this information also read out and are there large print versions available?

- If you're having a meeting, who is going to chair or facilitate it? Facilitators should ideally have a neutral role in relation to the matters being discussed so you should consider using someone from outside the council.

- It is often helpful for facilitators to work with organisers to plan the consultation process, including preparing the agenda and deciding on forms of participation.

- If a facilitator is being used, you should explain their background and role to participants at the beginning of the meeting.

- If you are working with specific population groups, eg people with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities and young people, you should try to use facilitators who have previous experience working with these groups.

  For some groups, eg Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, you should consider using facilitators who are members of these groups or co-facilitate with members of these groups.

Meeting procedures

- Meeting procedures should encourage the free flow of views and suggestions.

- Participants should agree about ground rules such as the agenda and whether speakers will be time limited.

- During the meeting, the facilitator should:

  - introduce each item on the agenda by providing a clear statement about the area to be discussed and what has to be decided and provide any necessary background information

  - draw out or invite people to speak who haven't contributed

  - be non-judgmental and encourage participants to express negative views in ways that are directed at the view expressed not the person who expressed it

  - make sure everyone feels free to express their views without fear of being personally attacked

  - indicate understanding of participants' comments eg by repeating or rephrasing them

  - acknowledge fears or resentment

  - respond to criticism neutrally

  - provide conclusions or summarise the directions the meeting is moving towards, including summaries of 'for' and 'against' positions in the case of controversial issues.

Recording discussions and reaching decisions

- Try to record the discussion where everyone can see it eg butcher's paper, overhead projector, whiteboard.

- Accurately record discussions and decisions reached eg using participants' own words.

- Try to reach a consensus position, if this is appropriate.

- If a decision cannot be reached or is not yet appropriate, you need to decide how the matter should be progressed eg can it be deferred to a further meeting or referred to a sub-committee.

- If you decide that small working groups might be more effective than a large meeting, you need to clearly define who is responsible for which tasks.

How will feedback be provided to participants and others?

- Major decisions, suggestions and responsibilities should be recorded and circulated to participants – you could also consider communicating outcomes to a wider audience and inviting comment.

- You could prepare a 1-2 page summary as well as a more detailed report – you can give participants the summary and then ask them if they would like the more detailed report (see Attachment 1).

- How are you going to provide feedback to participants? You should ask participants about this - there is an example of an evaluation questionnaire in Attachment 1. You will need appropriate contact details for participants eg postal address, email address.

- You should give participants feedback as soon as possible - including how the information they provided was used and, if necessary, reasons why their views were not incorporated into decisions. You could do this as part of the detailed report prepared on the consultation or as a separate document.

- You should also give participants an opportunity to provide further feedback if appropriate eg on a draft plan.

How should the consultation process be evaluated?

- You should evaluate the consultation to find out if aims were achieved and to identify improvements.

- Evaluation needs to be planned as part of the consultation planning process so that adequate resources and appropriate strategies are in place.

- Your evaluation should cover:

    - Which consultation techniques drew the highest response rates and the highest level of satisfaction from participants?

    - To what extent did target groups participate in the consultation eg in terms of numbers and expressing views?

    - Which techniques were most effective in clearly conveying information and how adequate was the information provided?

    - To what extent did participants express their views?

    - Was the information obtained useful?

    - What impact did the consultation have on decision-making?

    - How adequate were the timing, funding and other resources?

    - How cost-effective was the consultation?

- You should document the consultation process, particularly the issues or problems that arose and how these were addressed as this will be a useful resource for future consultations.

- You should obtain feedback from participants in the consultation by:
  - informal discussions that are documented
  - interviews that can be done one-to-one or as a group depending on the preference of participants (see Attachment 1)
  - a questionnaire (see Attachment 1)
  - observations to assess the quality of participation.

- The results of the evaluation should be recorded and retained for future reference.

What resources will be needed?

- What personnel are required?
- Is there a need for training of staff or external personnel eg as facilitators?
- How much time will the consultation take?
- What funds are needed to meet the costs of the process and the expenses of participants?
- What resources are needed for evaluation?

3   Some further information on community consultation

General

A Guide to Citizen Consultation in Local Government, Vols.2 & 3, G. Inglis, Parry Shire Council, June 2000.

Better Service Through Consultation. Approaches to consultation for government agencies, R. Kennedy, Office on Social Policy, February 1993.

Common Ground and Common Sense: Community-based Environmental Health Planning: an action handbook, R Nicholson, P Stephenson, V A Brown, K Mitchell, edt, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, 2002

Ideas for Community Consultation. A discussion on principles and procedures for making consultation work, L. Carson & K. Gelber, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, February 2001.

Improving the delivery of local public services: Involving users, United Kingdom Cabinet Office, London, 1999. *(available from www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/1999/consult/public.pdf)*

Participation and the NSW Policy Process. A Discussion Paper for The Cabinet Office NSW, J. Byrne & G. Davis, March 1998. This includes information about how agencies consult and what they consult about.

Reaching Common Ground. Open Government, Community Consultation and Public Participation, Conference Proceedings, 23-24 October 1996.

Resourcing Consultation. A manual to assist consultation by government agencies, R. Kennedy, Office on Social Policy, November 1993.

Young people

Council Staff and Councillors' Views about Youth Consultation, 1999, Department of Local Government, *(available from www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/information/case.pdf)*

How Young People would like to be Consulted, 1998, Department of Local Government. *(available from www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/information/casestdy.pdf)*

How Local Councils Consult with Young People. A report on findings from a survey of local councils in NSW, 1997, Department of Local Government. *(available from www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/information/97-63.pdf)*

TAKING PARTicipation seriously, NSW Commission for Children and Young People *(available from www.kids.nsw.gov.au/publications/taking.html)*

Youth Consultation Checklist, Department of Local Government, April 1999. - available at www.dlg.nsw.gov.au under Information - Local Government Publications. *(available from www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/dlg/dlghome/documents/information/check.pdf)*

Older people

Including Us Too! Tips for events managers working with older people, Margaret Tucker, January 2001 *(on the Committee on Ageing's website available from http://www.coa.nsw.gov.au/publications.htm)*

Together We Decide. A manual for consulting with elderly people, J. Ashby, City of Melbourne, 1992 - this includes information about consulting with older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and a detailed task list for setting up forums.

People with disabilities

Access Resource Kit to Improve Access for People with Disabilities, Western Australia Disability Services Commission et al - includes checklists for public participation – www.dsc.wa.gov.au/uploads/ARK_May_2001.pdf

Better Employment Practices, Better Information and Communication Practices, Better Physical Access, and Inclusive Consultation, Commonwealth Office of Disability *(available from http://www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/pubs/pubs_index.htm)*

Commonwealth Disability Strategy. Inclusive Consultation. A practical guide to involving people with disabilities – checklist of things to consider, Department of Family and Community Services *(available from www.facs.gov.au/disability/ood/congdein.htm)*

Communication Handbook for NSW Government Agencies to assist in developing communication strategies that meet the information needs of people with disabilities- a component of the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework–Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health 1998 *(available from www.add.nsw.gov.au/PDF/DPF_Comms_handbook.pdf)*

Community Consultation. Consultation Protocol, NSW Department of Community Services, 1994. This includes guidelines for consulting with people with disabilities.

Consultation and People with a Disability. Issues for public sector managers in NSW, I. Scales, Disability Council of NSW, 1997 *(available from www.discoun.nsw.gov.au under publications)*

Effective consultation in developing an Action Plan under the Disability Discrimination Act, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. *(available from www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/action_plans/effecti.../effective_plan.htm)*

Inclusive Consultation, Commonwealth Office of Disability *(available from www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/pubs/pubs_index.htm)*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Community Consultation. Consultation Protocol, NSW Department of Community Services, 1994. This includes guidelines for consulting with Aboriginal people.

Talking with Indigenous Australians, N. Blomeley, 1996.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Community Consultation. Consultation Protocol, NSW Department of Community Services, 1994. This includes guidelines for consulting with ethnic communities.

Consulting the Multicultural Way. Guidelines for APS managers consulting and negotiating with non-English speaking background groups, Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1994.

"Consulting with minority groups", F. Parker in Reaching Common Ground. Open Government, Community Consultation and Public Participation, Conference Proceedings, 23-24 October 1996.

People of diverse sexualities

Gay and Lesbian Community Consultation, the Visibility Report. South Sydney City Council, Zetland, NSW.

Attachment 1

Possible evaluation questionnaire

We would like your feedback on this consultation so that we can improve future consultations. You do not have to put your name on the questionnaire. If you would like a report summarising what was discussed and decided at this meeting, please complete the tear off section at the end of the questionnaire.

Notification

How satisfied were you with how you were invited to participate?

☐ Satisfied ☐ Not satisfied

Comments

....

....

....

Were you given sufficient notice of the consultation?

☐ Too much notice ☐ Not enough notice ☐ Notice given okay

Comments

....

....

....

Venue

How satisfied were you with the venue that was used?

☐ Satisfied ☐ Not satisfied

Comments

....

....

....

Timing

How satisfied were you with when the meeting was held?

☐ Satisfied ☐ Not satisfied

Comments

....

....

....

How satisfied were you with the length of time the meeting took?

☐ Too long ☐ Too short ☐ Length okay

Comments

....

....

....

Support and other assistance

How satisfied were you with the level of support and assistance provided?

This should include a list of things provided eg childcare, reimbursement of transport costs etc.

☐ Satisfied ☐ Not satisfied

Comments

....

....

....

Provision of information

How satisfied were you with the information provided?

☐ Satisfied ☐ Not satisfied

Comments

....

....

....

How satisfied were you with how the information was provided?

☐ Satisfied ☐ Not satisfied

Comments

....

....

....

Conduct of meeting

Overall, how satisfied were you with how the meeting was run?

☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

Comments --

How satisfied were you with the opportunities provided to express your views?

☐ Satisfied ☐ Not satisfied

Comments --

Suggestions for improvements

Do you have any suggestions for how we could improve future consultations?

Other comments

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the consultation?

Please tear off this section when you have completed it

Feedback contact details

If you would like a report summarising what was discussed and decided at this meeting, please complete the following:

Your name: ---

I would like the report [tick one box]:

☐ Posted to me at this address:

☐ Emailed to me at this address:

☐ Faxed to me at this number:

A more detailed report will also be prepared at a later date which will include information about the decisions that were made based on the consultation. If you would like a copy, please complete the following [tick one box]:

☐ Posted to me at this address:

☐ Emailed to me at this address:

Appendix D
Relevant legislation

Contents

1 The Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism (CRC) Act 2000

[PART A4 OF GUIDELINES]

Section 3 of the CRC Act refers to the duties of public authorities including councils and their chief executive officers, amongst other things, in the following terms:

> (3) The principles of multiculturalism are the policy of the State.

> (4) Accordingly, each public authority must observe the principles of multiculturalism in conducting its affairs.

> (5) It is the duty of the chief executive officer of each public authority to implement the provisions of this section within the area of his or her administration.

Appendix I provides additional detail on how the CRC Act relates to local government, including the reporting requirements arising from that Act.

2 Local Government Act 1993

Section 8 of the Local Government Act 1993 sets out a charter that commits councils to consultation and to providing adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to report on their achievements annually.

3 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

Under both State and Commonwealth legislation, councils are required to not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against people with disabilities in the delivery and provision of their services, goods and facilities.

The objects of the DDA are:

> (a) to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the areas of:
>> (i) work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and
>> (ii) the provision of goods, facilities, services and land; and
>> (iii) existing laws; and
>> (iv) the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and

> (b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and

> (c) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

The DDA states that organisations may develop action plans to eliminate discriminatory practices and that these may be given to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Section 61 of the Act states that an action plan of a service provider must include provisions relating to:

(a) the devising of policies and programs to achieve the objects of this Act; and

(b) the communication of these policies and programs to persons within the service provider; and

(c) the review of practices within the service provider with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices; and

(d) the setting of goals and targets, where these may reasonably be determined against which the success of the plan in achieving the objects of the Act may be assessed; and

(e) the means, other than those referred to in paragraph d) of evaluating the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (a); and

(f) the appointment of persons within the service provider to implement the provisions referred to in paragraphs(a) to (e) (inclusive)

4   NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

Council operations are also covered by the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW). This Act and the Commonwealth discrimination legislation have similar provisions in the areas of sex and race discrimination. The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits actions such as discrimination at work, racial vilification, sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS vilification, or discrimination on the grounds of sex, homosexuality, transgender, marital status, disability or age.

This legislation affects councils in three main areas of their work:

- the types of services (including accommodation) councils provide to everyone in the community or in council buildings and the way in which those services are provided

- how councils run their meetings and make decisions

- council employment practices.

Appendix E

Planning for people of diverse sexualities (includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender)

This information will help councils to make sure that their planning takes into account the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people living within their community and that they comply with State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation.

When conducting a needs assessment for this target group, you need to be aware of privacy concerns. Many people within this group face direct or indirect discrimination as a result of their sexual preference so you need to be sensitive to these issues when assessing their needs.

When formulating and reviewing their planning processes, councils should:

Identify the degree to which gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people are isolated

- Do council funded or operated community information services include information on services and issues appropriate to their needs?

- Are any council facilities targeted for these groups to use for meetings, cultural events etc?

- Has council provided or funded any cultural activities, events or festivals for this population group?

- Are the problems of harassment and violence included in any council reports, activities or committee/forum discussions on local safety needs?

- Do council libraries include a range of written, audio and visual resources appropriate to their needs?

- Are council consultations on community needs and issues involving, and providing information on, this target group?

Identify the barriers experienced by gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people in accessing council facilities, services and processes

- Has there been any advocacy of the needs of this population group by local community service providers, school counsellors, police and health service providers?

- Are council and other service providers saying that there are no gays, lesbians or transgender people using their services or that there are so few as not to require needs identification? If so, what are the rationales used to support these beliefs?

- Are council staff sensitive to the needs of this population and have they received any training in working with, or being aware of, their needs?

- Are staff including references to these needs and issues in their work and developing resources that can also be used by gays, lesbians and transgender people?

- Do council policies provide for equality of access for these citizens?

- Is there a staff development plan to look at access and equity activities, including training, to overcome the barriers experienced by this population group?

Appendix F

Sample format for a social/community plan

Councils may find the following sample format useful for their social/community plans.

Chapter 1   Introduction

This chapter could contain an outline of the aims of the social/community plan and the planning principles you used when developing the plan.

It could include information such as:

- The need for councils to help meet the NSW government's social justice commitments.

- Developing a social/community plan is an evolving process and the plan will need updating and fine-tuning over time.

- The plan is a product of a participatory process that aims to forge working relationships between council, other key government and non-government agencies, and community and business groups so that important community issues can be identified and tackled in a cooperative and coordinated way.

- Identifying community issues will help council formulate its management and business plans across the range of council functions and make sure its services, facilities and processes are, as far as possible, accessible and responsive to all members of the community.

- Although identifying and documenting community needs is an important first step, realistic expectations need to be maintained. Councils and/or other agencies will not be able to meet all identified needs in the short term. Priority recommendations will have to be identified and implemented in a staged fashion depending on the level of resources available.

Chapter 2   Planning process

This chapter could contain an outline of the process that council used, in conjunction with the community, to develop the social/community plan. It should show how a participatory needs assessment was done involving key stakeholders, representatives of the mandatory target groups and other community groups.

This chapter could also outline any changes council plans to make to its future social/community planning processes and note that the social/community plan will be updated within the next five years.

Chapter 3   Community profile

This chapter could contain a community profile based on key demographic data relating to the local government area or region. The more detailed demographic data on particular issues, localities and/or target groups could be put at the beginning of the specific chapters for each issue, locality or group.

Chapter 4 onwards

The remaining chapters in the plan could contain details about key community issues, localities or the seven mandatory target groups and other relevant target groups.

Each chapter should have a short summary of the key issue, target group and/or locality it covers. This summary page should also include any recommendations about the issue, target group and/or locality which were seen as a high priority to the community and which could be implemented by council, government agencies and/or community groups to address the identified need.

Appendix G

Addressing the needs of people with disabilities

Contents

1   Introduction

The Local Government Disability Reference Group has prepared this section of the manual to provide councils with information and options to consider when addressing the needs of people with disabilities.

The reference group was established to provide advice to the Department of Local Government on the implementation of strategies in its Disability Action Plan aimed at helping councils better meet the needs of people with disabilities within their communities. The reference group was chaired by the Department and included representatives from the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, PlanningNSW, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, the Local Government and Shires Associations, the Local Government Community Services Association (LGCSA), People With Disabilities (NSW) Inc., the Physical Disability Council of NSW, the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association and Disability Services Aboriginal Corporation.

The information in this section has been drawn from the following sources:

- a survey of councils that had set up an access committee and subsequently disbanded it

- a survey of councils that are members of the Ageing and Disability Division of the LGCSA

- a survey of councils on disability initiatives that included access committees and disability action plans

- information provided by local government regional access forums and a review of selected council disability action plans, social/community plans and management plans

- complaints made to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

- a review of key documents.

2   Legislative context

Under both State and Commonwealth legislation, councils are required not to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against people with disabilities in the delivery and the provision of their services, goods and facilities.

The relevant legislation includes the:

- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

Other legislation which is relevant to people with disabilities includes the:

- NSW Local Government Act 1993 and Regulations

- NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 – State Environmental Planning Policy Number 5, Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

For example, the DDA requires developers to make new facilities or upgraded existing facilities physically accessible to people with disabilities. Those who fail to do so may be taken to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

The case Cooper v Coffs Harbour (May 1998) is significant to councils because it was found that 'approval of a development or building application does not in itself protect developers or builders from liability with the DDA or with equivalent State or Territory anti-discrimination legislation'. Councils therefore need to make sure that their planning policies, procedures and guidelines give practical effect to the DDA.

For more information about State and Commonwealth Disability Discrimination legislation, please see Appendix D of this manual.

3   Who are people with disabilities?

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) defines a disability in relation to a person as:

(a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or

(b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or

(c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or

(d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or

(e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or

(f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or

(g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

(h) presently exists; or

(i) previously existed but no longer exists; or

(j) may exist in the future; or

(k) is imputed to a person.

(Section 4 Disability Discrimination Act 1992)

The term disability is broadly defined and is intended to include physical, sensory, intellectual and psychiatric impairment, mental illness or disorder, and the presence in the body of organisms causing or capable of causing disease. These provisions have broad application. For example, they are intended to ensure that persons with HIV/AIDS come within the definition of disability for the purposes of the Act.

The definition of disability in the DDA includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, and learning disabilities, as well as physical disfigurement, and

the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms. This broad definition is meant to ensure that everyone with a disability is protected. For example, it covers people with HIV/AIDS, dementia, diabetes, epilepsy, anxiety disorders, cerebral palsy, hearing and vision impairments and brain injury.

The DDA covers a disability that people have now, had in the past (for example, a past episode of mental illness), may have in the future (for example, a family history of a disability which a person may also develop), or are believed to have (for example, if people think someone has AIDS).

Councils are encouraged to understand and analyse experiences of disability by using the social model, rather than the medical model, of disability.

The medical model of disability focuses on what a person can't do because of the effect of a disability. That is, disability is viewed as a medical and individual problem that limits a person's capacity to do things. For example, a person with a physical disability has limited mobility, a person who is blind cannot see 'properly'.

The social model of disability values the abilities and skills of people with disabilities and focuses on social, political and economic barriers that limit or prevent a person with a disability from taking part in community life. That is, the problem is not the individual's disability but society's failure to include disability. For example, physical barriers such as steps prevent a person who uses a wheelchair from getting into a building. A written survey form prevents a person who is blind from participating.

The rights based framework of the DDA reflects the social model of disability.

4   Disability action plans

Councils have the option of developing a disability action plan. Although it is not mandatory, a disability action plan provides a comprehensive way of addressing barriers faced by people with disabilities when accessing council services and facilities. Having and implementing such a plan may also help councils if a complaint is made against them. You can lodge plans with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). If you have developed your plan using the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework then you can also give your plan to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

A Department of Local Government survey found that a total of 51 councils out of 163 or 31% had adopted a disability action plan as at 30 June 2001.

The survey also found that:

- 52% (40) of urban councils and 13% (11) of rural councils that responded to the survey had adopted a disability action plan

- 73% (37) of councils had used the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework to develop their plan

- 59% (30) of councils had sent the plan to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

- another 43 councils (27 urban and 16 rural) planned to adopt a plan by 30 June 2002.

4.1   Benefits of a disability action plan

A disability action plan can result in a number of benefits for councils. These benefits include:

- ensuring councils meet their legal obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the NSW Anti-discrimination Act 1977

- reducing the likelihood of complaints of discrimination on the grounds of disability - plans are taken into account and may serve as a partial defence in the case of a complaint being made

- helping councils to meet access and equity requirements in a way that is consistent and coordinated with state government agencies

- ensuring that necessary changes are made as efficiently as possible because they are part of an overall plan, they are implemented over a sensible time span, and they are made in cooperation with other relevant agencies

- increasing the number of people able to use council's facilities and services

- increasing the pool of people from which to select the best person for a job

- acknowledging that specific measures must be taken to provide services in ways that are appropriate to people with disabilities who may also be disadvantaged because of their gender, culture, language, religion, sexuality, geographical location or socioeconomic circumstances

- promoting practices that benefit all service users eg improved physical access helps parents with young children as well as people with mobility difficulties and clear signs using graphics and symbols help not only people with visual impairments but also anyone who has difficulties in understanding written English.

Source: NSW Government Disability Policy Framework Guidelines to assist government agencies and participating local councils develop Disability Action Plans, Ageing and Disability Department and NSW Health, 1998.

4.2   Developing a disability action plan and linking it to the social/community plan

If councils decide to develop a disability action plan, whether a DDA (ie Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act) Action Plan or a plan under the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework, there are two main options:

These options are:

1   Develop a DDA action plan that aims to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act only. This means that the plan identifies and addresses barriers to people with disabilities accessing existing council services and facilities. The plan could be a separate document that is cross referenced in the social/community plan. Alternatively, it could be a section in the social/community plan but would need to be supplemented to fully meet the requirements of the social/community plan.

2   Develop a disability action plan that aims to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and social/community plans. A plan developed in accordance with the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework would meet these requirements. This means that the plan not only identifies and addresses barriers to people with disabilities accessing existing council services and facilities, but also identifies the broader needs of people with disabilities and how these needs might be addressed by the council and other agencies. It could be a separate document that is cross-referenced in the social/community plan or it could be incorporated into the social/community plan.

The NSW Government Disability Policy Framework was developed by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) and NSW Health to help NSW Government agencies develop disability action plans. While this requirement does not apply to local councils, the framework also aims to help councils that want to develop a disability action plan which meets both the requirements of section 61 of the Disability Discrimination Act and social/community plans. Most of the framework documents are available from the DADHC website at www.add.nsw.gov.au/publications.html. Other documents, such as the guidelines, can be obtained from DADHC (phone 02 8270 2000).

The following publications will help you develop a disability action plan that meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act only.

- Developing an Effective Action Plan, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission - available at www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/action_plans/Effective_Plan/effective_plan.html

- Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans: A Guide for Local Government, Australian Local Government Association - available at www.alga.com.au

Some other materials that may be useful when developing disability action plans are:

- Creating Accessible Communities training package, Local Government and Shires Association, Department of Local Government and Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care - available from DADHC (phone 02 8270 2000)

- A list of local council DDA action plans - available at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website at www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/action_plans/Register/register.html#local

- Disability Service Plans: Resource Manual for Local Government, Western Australia Disability Services Commission - available at www.dsc.wa.gov.au/uploads/Resource_Manual_for_Local_Governments1.doc

4.3   Examples of disability action plan strategies

The strategies you include in your disability action plan should be developed from the needs identified during consultation. Make sure you take into account the diverse needs of people with disabilities in the community. You should consider type of disability, gender, culture, religion, sexuality, geographic location and socio-economic circumstances.

Some examples of strategies from current council disability action plans and other possible strategies are presented below.

Improved coordination

- Prepare and implement a DDA plan that addresses the differing needs of people with disabilities.

- Ensure the disability action plan is linked to other council plans, in particular the management plan and budget.

Promoting positive community attitudes

- Promote and sponsor, in cooperation with local services, activities to include people with disabilities in community events eg Australia Day picnic.

- Profile the achievements of people with disabilities in newsletters and other formats.

Information provision/communication

- Use alternate mediums such as TV and community/ethnic radio for public notices eg Koori press.

- Ensure that information is offered in clear language, in a variety of formats, is available in community languages and is distributed to relevant community organisations.

- Work with identified services in the local area to help them develop accessible information giving and communication techniques for people who have a disability, are Aboriginal or who speak a language other than English.

- Ensure council's website complies with HREOC's guidelines on accessibility (availble from www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html)

Customer service

- Ensure that relevant staff receive training in the operation of the council's TTY (Telephone Typewriter) and hearing loop, and that these are promoted and adequately maintained

- Promote and display notices about interpreter and phone relay services in council's foyer and service points for the information of people with disabilities (consider notices in main community languages).

- Provide training to all staff about how to engage with people with disabilities including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those of Aboriginal descent.

- Ensure all staff know how to refer people with disabilities from non-English speaking backgrounds and who to refer them to in council.

Physical access

- Provide relevant development approvals to access committee for comment.
- Develop a resource booklet to ensure developers and builders comply with access requirements.
- Adopt access requirements in development control plans, particularly in relation to access to commercial premises and provision of accessible/visitable housing, for example accessible entry points, continuous paths of travel and accessible toilets as per AS1428.2

Access to services

- Review access to and satisfaction with complaints system by people with disabilities.
- Work with identified services in the local government area to develop ways to encourage better use of local services by people who have a disability eg improved information giving and communication and/or transport options.
- Advocate on behalf of people with disabilities for improved services from the Commonwealth and State government.

Transport

- Lobby transport providers to increase services to people with disabilities.

Employment

- Explore opportunities to employ people with disabilities at council.

4.4 Strategies responding to complaints made to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

This section includes a selection of complaints made about councils to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and suggests strategies that could prevent action being taken against councils under the Disability Discrimination Act.

- Development consent granted without relevant access conditions

Complaint: A council permitted a café development that was not wheelchair accessible because there was a step at the entrance. The council conceded that the development application had required access conditions in accordance with the Building Code of Australia and had to issue the developer with a notice requiring the premises to be brought into compliance by including ramp access.

Strategy: Develop a disability access checklist or resource booklet for council's planning and building staff and refer relevant development applications to an access committee for comment.

- Access conditions set out in the development consent not monitored

Complaint: A council approved construction of a motel with disability access but failed to note on final inspection that a number of features of the accessible suite were not in fact accessible to people who use wheelchairs and there was no disabled parking space.

Strategy: Provide building inspectors with training relating to access audits and sections of the Building Code of Australia to ensure those development approvals with disability access conditions are properly inspected by council staff and comply with the conditions set.

- Council beach improvements remove previous access

Complaint: Council's improvement works to a beach included a new path and steps. This removed access to the beach for a woman who used a wheelchair to reach and enter the water with assistance from her husband.

Strategy: Conduct disability awareness training and awareness raising activities for all sections of council. Training should highlight that access does not just relate to buildings but all aspects of council's operations.

- Provision of disabled parking

Complaint: A man whose disability makes it difficult for him to walk long distances complained that he had been discriminated against when he had to appear at a courthouse that did not have any disabled parking near its entrance.

Strategy: In consultation with the access committee, undertake a disabled parking audit and prepare a disabled parking plan for council's consideration.

There are further examples of disability complaints at www.hreoc.gov.au. Full copies of all decisions in public hearings under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 are available from SCALEplus at www.scaleplus.law.gov.au/mainpage.html.

4.5   Links with other council plans

This section covers the possible links between a disability action plan and other council plans such as the management plan.

Different departments or sections of a council may be responsible for implementing many of the strategies in social/community and disability action plans. To ensure that these strategies are considered in the planning, reviewing and resource allocation of the responsible department or section, it is important that they are incorporated into relevant plans or planning processes.

Some relevant plans that disability action plans could be linked to include human resources or equal employment opportunity plans, environmental management plans, public health plans, transport plans, crime prevention plans and financial and capital works plans. A number of councils have incorporated physical access strategies from their disability action plan or social/community plan into a development control plan. You should identify existing council plans and planning processes and discuss appropriate linkages to the disability action plan with responsible managers.

For existing plans, you could consider preparing an addendum that outlines how the disability action plan relates to that plan. For example if an equal employment opportunity (EEO) plan already exists, an addendum that summarises issues and strategies related to the employment of people with disabilities could be prepared and incorporated within the EEO plan.

Some examples of ways in which you could link a disability action plan to council's management plan are:

- The disability action plan is listed as a key objective or principal activity of the management plan and/or each manager's business plan. For example, both plans are identified as key elements to assist council to 'increase opportunities for everyone to pursue a satisfying and socially responsible lifestyle'.

- Particular disability action plan strategies are ranked and costed and specific budget line items are allocated for inclusion in the management plan. Strategies can be included under the community services or community development section of the management plan or be listed under relevant principal activities such as environmental management, traffic and parking, works and services and access and equity.

- Disability action plan strategies are incorporated in the management plan as part of the social/community plan priorities.

Disability action plan strategies need to be implemented to be considered as a part of the defence against a complaint made under the DDA.

5   Consulting with people with disabilities

5.1   Effective consultation

When preparing your social/community plan, you need to consider ways to specifically consult with people with disabilities. It is also important to remember that there will be several types and levels of disability within a given community.

As well as diversity based on disability, people with disabilities differ in terms of characteristics such as gender, culture, language, religion, sexuality, geographic location and socio-economic circumstances. There are some examples of specific barriers faced by people with disabilities in relation to consultation in Appendix C of this manual.

Effective consultation requires proactive mechanisms to ensure the needs and views of all segments of a community are heard and responded to. There is a checklist for consulting with social justice target groups in Appendix C of this manual.

5.2   Consultation mechanisms

Many councils currently use access committees to consult with people with disabilities. These are covered in detail in section 5.3. Examples of other consultation mechanisms currently used by councils to consult with people with disabilities are:

- committees such as community planning committees - representation on these committees can include people with different disabilities, representatives of disability organisations and council staff from relevant departments such as planning and building services

- networking with or seeking feedback/advice from disability organisations - for example, participating in relevant interagency groups and using the council newsletter, articles in the local newspaper, council events and the council's website

- consultation with the community including sessions targeted to people with disabilities - for example, focus groups, public meetings and public exhibitions

- surveys of people with disabilities.

Many councils that have access committees also consult with people with disabilities in other ways. Generally, these councils reported that these consultation mechanisms complement or enhance the operation of the access committee.

In a recent survey of councils, several features were identified as being necessary for consultation mechanisms to be effective for people with disabilities. These features included:

- *characteristics related to participants* – commitment, representation of a range of disabilities, councillor and council staff representation, and participants encouraged to identify solutions and focus on the 'big picture'.

- *characteristics related to the council* – commitment eg to providing access to services and facilities for all members of the community, the provision of resources from a range of sections within the council, the access committee reporting directly to the full council, and allocating funding eg so that the access committee has its own budget for implementing its recommendations.

- *characteristics related to the operation of the consultation mechanism* - these are mainly related to access committees and include existence of a clear mandate, charter and guidelines; an experienced chairperson with an understanding of disability issues; participation is encouraged (eg timing of meetings, participants are empowered to express their views, input is valued); access committee members are provided with training (eg in access/disability awareness); proactive approach; there is an action plan; accountability (eg evaluation of action plan); and a number of tasks are carried out simultaneously (eg awareness raising and implementing projects).

5.3   Access committees

Access committees have been described by a number of councils as an effective mechanism for consulting people with disabilities. A survey by the Department of Local Government found that of 163 councils that responded, a total of 97 (91%) councils had established an access committee that was still operating as at 30 June 2001.

The survey also found that:

- 95% (71) of urban councils and 81% (26) of rural councils that responded to the survey had established an access committee that was still operating

- another 9 councils (3 urban and 6 rural) were planning to establish an access committee by 30 June 2002.

One council described the importance of its access committee as follows:

The access committee gives a well-known and publicised structure for people to raise an access issue, and they can participate in following the issues through. The schedule of meetings means that reliable timeframes of expected solutions [are] provided, which increases public satisfaction.

Many access committees were established initially to provide advice to councils on physical access matters. However, many access committees have now taken on a broader role. The meaning of "access" has broadened to encompass the range of physical, communication and attitudinal issues that impact upon the lives of people with disabilities. The role of the committee has important implications for the expertise needed by committee members.

Some possible roles for access committees are:

1. Identify and provide advice to the council on addressing physical access issues only. Specific tasks might include making recommendations on how to improve access to council facilities and reviewing development applications. Members of committees with this role should have a good understanding of physical access issues, including strategies to address these issues.

2. Provide advice to the council on the development and/or implementation of a disability action plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Specific tasks might include consulting people with disabilities to identify barriers to accessing council services and facilities, making recommendations on how to improve access to council services and facilities, and reviewing development applications. Members of committees with this role should have a good understanding of barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing services and facilities, including strategies to address these barriers.

3. Provide advice to the council on the development and/or implementation of the social/community plan in relation to people with disabilities. The role of this committee may also include developing and/or implementing a disability action plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. Specific tasks might include any of the activities described in the following section. Members of committees with this role should have a good understanding of the broad range of barriers faced by and the needs of people with disabilities, including strategies to address these barriers and needs.

While access committees can be an effective way of consulting with people with disabilities, councils should consult with people with disabilities in other ways to ensure that a wide range of people are provided with the opportunity to be consulted on all issues that impact on them.

Some of the specific activities of access committees include:

Identification of needs and planning

- providing a forum for identifying access needs and researching broader issues of concern for people with disabilities through access audits and consulting with the community

- contributing to the development and implementation of councils' Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) action plan or disability action plan

Provision of advice to council and other organisations

- providing advice on how to improve access to services and facilities

- participating in the development approval process eg providing input to a council statement that clearly sets out what access provisions need to be met to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, reviewing applications or encouraging council to establish an appeal or review panel (with a community-based access expert as one of its members) to deal with appeals from developers and providing input to the panel's policies and procedures

- making recommendations to council about the allocation of funds to address access and other disability issues

- identifying and/or addressing disability issues in general

Policy development and implementation

- participating in developing and/or implementing relevant council policies eg advise, monitor, and review the management plan and social/community plan

- reviewing and revising council policies regarding the provision of information in alternative formats and informing people with disabilities about these policies

Awareness raising/information provision

- organising training for council staff involved in development and building approval processes on physical access issues

- providing input to a council information and education strategy about access aimed at developers, architects, designers and builders

- coordinating an annual access awards scheme

- coordinating activities for the International Day of Disabled Persons

- preparing articles for the local newspaper and other publicity of the achievements of people with disabilities

- producing a video eg Lismore City Council's access committee has produced a video called 'Getting Around' that shows the difficulties of getting around a town if you have a disability and how these difficulties can be overcome

- organising disability awareness training for council staff

Advocacy

- lobbying local, State and Commonwealth Government

Project or program development and implementation

- preparing a mobility map for the central business district within the local government area

- establishing a sensory walk

- developing employment strategies, for example, job information packages are provided in alternative formats and encourage people with disabilities to contact council staff to discuss interview arrangements

The members of an access committee can include:

- councillors

- council staff from various sections of council eg community services, building, engineering/works and urban planning

- community based organisations eg Rotary, Apex, Neighbourhood Centre

- residents with disabilities and/or representatives from disability organisations eg Australian Quadriplegic Association, Royal Blind Society, Blind Citizens Australia, Better Hearing Australia.

One council expressed the need for members with:

A diverse range of abilities and backgrounds who are able to investigate all of the issues around access and identify potential solutions. Individuals have to be committed and willing to contribute the time and energy required to get results, so that the committee doesn't just become a forum

for complaints with no resolutions. By having representatives from each of the major disability groups on the committee, issues are addressed from many different angles.

The majority of councils surveyed reported that a councillor chairs their committee. In other cases, the chair was shared between different members of the committee on a rotating basis or chaired by a community representative or a council staff member.

Most councils said that their access committee reports directly to council. Some other reporting relationships are:

- the committee reports via another council committee such as a community services standing committee or policy committee

- the committee reports to council staff eg community development division

- the committee does not have a formal reporting relationship with council but, for example, the minutes of the meetings are included in council's bulletin which is distributed to councillors

- the committee is an incorporated association independent of the council but minutes are tabled at council meetings and distributed to relevant senior staff.

The type of support provided by councils to access committees includes:

- Administrative support – eg preparing and distributing the agenda and minutes, writing and posting correspondence, providing refreshments and a venue for meetings, and carrying out tasks arising from meetings. This support can be rotated between different sections of council.

- Budget allocation – a budget is allocated each year to implement committee recommendations. Where the amount was specified, this ranged from $2,000 to $150,000. Some uses of funding covered access initiatives such as works projects or payment for Auslan interpreters.

- Technical expertise – includes providing cost estimates of works or access audits of council buildings.

- Political support - through the involvement of a councillor on the committee.

- Dedicated disability worker – often provides primary support for the committee with specific expertise in the areas of community consultation, policy and program development and training of committee members and other stakeholders.

Training

While access committee members may be selected because of their understanding of disability issues, they may not be aware of council processes or may have limited committee experience. It is therefore important to make sure that committee members are given training tailored to meet their particular needs ie the knowledge and skills to allow them to participate effectively on the committee.

Some examples of the kinds of training that councils have provided for access committees members are:

- The role of local government, relevant legislation eg Disability Discrimination Act, Local Government Act and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, and council processes - this training has been provided by council staff.

- The role of access committees - this training has been provided by council staff.

- Physical access eg access standards, SEPP 5, tactile surface indicators, luminance contrast, plan reading, Australian Standards for People with Disabilities, Australian Standard for Toilets for People with Disabilities, MLAK keys, Access to Built Environment, and function of the Land and Environment Court. This training has been provided by council staff, TAFE and/or disability organisations such as the Guide Dog Association and Quadriplegic Association.

- Other disability issues eg TTY, National Relay Service, accessible website design and communication techniques.

Some councils reported that although committee members were not given formal training, they were given information such as the committee's terms of reference and council's access plans and policies (eg access and mobility development control plan) and encouraged to attend relevant seminars.

A number of organisations provide training for access committees. These include:

- The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) – this is a registered training organisation that delivers public and in-house programs, including an accredited advocacy course, short courses (lobbying, being an effective community representative on committees, negotiation skills), modules, seminars and conferences. All courses can be tailored to meet the individual requirements of access committees. For more information, contact the centre on (02) 9299 7833.

- Guide Dogs Association of NSW – they can provide awareness training for access committee members and access workshops for people with vision impairment who are interested in access issues and being on an access committee. Contact your local Guide Dog Association office or call Client Services city office on (02) 9409 9330.

- The NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre – they provide training for government and community organisations, including short information sessions about the rights of people with disabilities under disability discrimination law, and training workshops for disability advocates about disability and discrimination law which can be tailored to the needs of particular organisations.

5.4   Regional access forums

As well as local access committees, several regional access forums (some of which are auspiced by regional organisations of councils) have operated in the Sydney metropolitan area over the last 10 years. These include Inner West Regional Access Forum, Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils Access Forum, Northern Access Forum, Eastern Sydney Regional Disability Access Forum and Western Sydney Regional Forum.

The role of these regional access forums includes:

- raising issues of common concern in the region
- advocacy and lobbying on regional and state wide issues eg Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and planFIRST
- acting in a coordinated way to achieve maximum benefit across the region
- advising councils about access issues and opportunities to address them
- undertaking broad community education and awareness raising
- providing collective support and information sharing.

Major priority areas for regional forums include the built environment, accessible housing, transport, pathways eg pathways from education to employment, participation in community life, accessible parking eg RTA permits, the MLAK key system, information technology and signage.

Each forum has set its own membership criteria. However, in most cases the forums consist of local access committee representatives, councillors and council staff (usually the disability service worker or aged/disability worker). Forums cover between seven and eleven local government areas. Each forum decides the number of representatives from each local government area and elects a chair. The chair and administrative support of the forums is usually rotated annually or every two years between member councils. The forums usually meet quarterly or bi-monthly.

6   Useful resources

The following publications provide extra information to help you develop a disability action plan and/or a social/community plan in relation to people with disabilities. These are in addition to those publications listed in Appendix C, that cover consulting people with disabilities.

Disability legislation

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) - www.humanrights.gov.au/legal/index.html
- Making Connections, Disability Rights, 1997, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission - includes information about disability discrimination and the Disability Discrimination Act, with particular reference to Indigenous communities
- Anti-discrimination Guidelines for Managers of Local Council and Anti discrimination Guidelines for Local Government Councillors - available at:
  - www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/lawlink
  - www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/disability
  - www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/guideindex

- Creating Active Communities: Physical Activity Guidelines For Local Councils Department of Local Government et al - www.dlg.nsw.gov.au under Information – Local Government Publications (see Section 7.9 on people with disabilities)

Planning and building

- Access Resource Kit to Improve Access for People with Disabilities, Western Australia Disability Services Commission et al - includes checklists for buildings and facilities, providing information, staff awareness, public participation and adapting services – www.dsc.wa.gov.au/uploads/resourcekit11.asp

- Better Physical Access, Commonwealth Office of Disability – www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/pubs/pubs_index.htm

- Housing for everyone, Physical Disability Council of NSW www.pdcnsw.org.au/doc.htm under Information - Adaptable Housing

- Housing for Life, ACT Government and Master Builders Association (ACT) video (available for loan from Lgov or purchase from Canberra Building Information Centre, phone 6247 2099, email Canberra@mba.org.au)

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) - www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/buildings/access_to_premises.html and www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/faq/Local_govt/local.htm#general

- Integrating Land Use and Transport. Improving transport choice – guidelines for planning and development, PlanningNSW – www.planning.nsw.gov.au

- Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Access Guidelines www.sopa.nsw.gov.au - they can also provide a list of consultants, phone 02 9714 7823

- Willoughby and Newcastle Council's draft adaptable housing project (awaiting approval from PlanningNSW). For further details on this project contact either the Housing Policy Officer, Willoughby Council on 02 9777 7526 or by email at housing@willoughby.nsw.gov.au or the Housing Strategy Officer at Newcastle Council on 02 4974 2857

Provision of Information

- Warringah Council, Disability Information Service website (a site about disability activities and events that are available in the local area) – www.warringah.nsw.gov.au/disab.htm

- Better Information and Communication Practices, Commonwealth Office of Disability – www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/pubs/pubs_index.htm

- Communication Handbook for NSW Government Agencies to assist in developing communication strategies that meet the information needs of people with disabilities - a component of the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework – Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and NSW Health 1998 - available at www.add.nsw.gov.au/PDF/DPF_Comms_handbook.pdf

- Education Network Australia, 'Authoring Guidelines for Web Accessibility' - www.edna.edu.au/edna/publish/system/edures/access_guidelines/access_guidelines.html

- 'Disabled Accessibility: the Pragmatic Approach', Jakob Nielsen Alertbox, June 1999 - www.useit.com/alertbox990613.html and 'Beyond Accessibility: Treating Users with Disabilities as People', Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox, November 2001 - www.useit.com/alertbox/20011111.html). These documents are concerned with web design practices

- 'Making the Web Easy to Use for Users with Disabilities', Nielsen Norman Group – this report provides design guidelines for websites and intranets based on usability studies with people using assistive technology - www.nngroup.com/reports/accessibility/

- World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) – www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html

Employment

- Better Employment Practices, Commonwealth Office of Disability – www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/pubs/pubs_index.htm

- Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment (ODEOPE) -www.eeo.nsw.gov.au. This website provides general information on people with disabilities such as adjustments at work, networks, publications, statistics, applying for jobs, employment agencies, and traineeships

- The Anti-Discrimination Board -quarterly publication 'Equal Time' includes information about the Board's activities, policies and initiatives. It provides commentaries on landmark discrimination and harassment legal cases - www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/ pages/etindex. The Board also produces fact sheets on each individual ground or type of discrimination covered by NSW anti-discrimination law, including 'Disability Discrimination – Your Rights'

- Employers Making a Difference (EMAD), the Australian Employers' Network on Disability – www.emad.asn.au. The network promotes and supports businesses that encourage people with disabilities as employees, customers and suppliers

Other

- Achieving Access - website for facility and event managers, Sydney Olympic Park Authority - www.sopa.nsw.gov.au

- Access and Local Government Staff Training Resource Kit - produced by the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC). This kit is currently at the development stage and is expected to be printed in early 2003. For further details, contact SSROC on 02 9317 2811

Appendix H
Social indicators
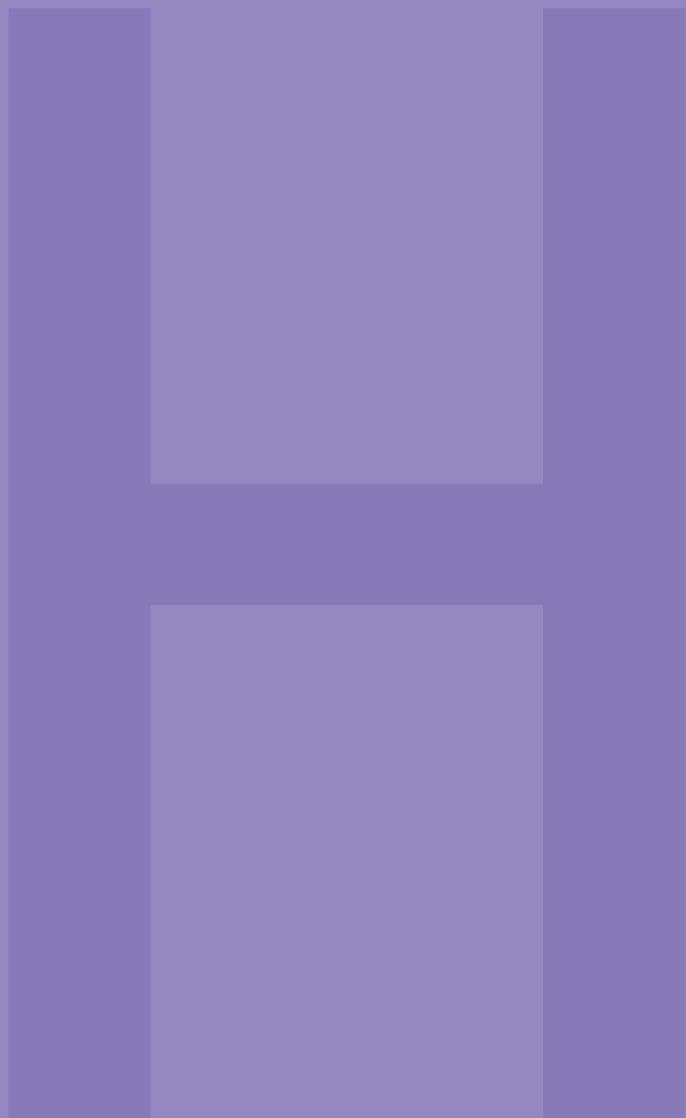
Contents

## 1	Developing social indicators

Councils may use their own internal resources and experience to develop social indicators relating to their access and equity activities or for social/community issues in their area that council may have an impact on.

You may also use indicators from existing sets of indicators (see section 6 - useful publications) or adopt indicators used by other councils dealing with similar social issues.

To develop indicators that will provide an accurate picture of community well-being, you must be aware of the needs of the general community, each of the seven target groups and any optional target groups. You should also consult with these groups about the appropriateness and adequacy of the indicators you select.

## 2	Types of indicators

There are two main categories of indicators:

- output indicators describe programs or other activities provided to the community by council

- outcome indicators describe the impact on the community of programs or other activities provided by council.

There is more information on outcome indicators in section 3.

The NSW Council on the Cost and Quality of Government categorises indicators as follows:

- Resource indicators or inputs describe the quantity of resources used to provide a particular program or activity eg total expenditure, unit cost, number of staff, and the value of capital assets.

- Service indicators include output and outcome indicators. Output indicators are defined in the same way as above. Outcome indicators in this categorisation describe the extent to which outputs achieved targets or standards set by the agency eg competencies acquired through attending vocational courses.

- Satisfaction indicators describe the personal assessment of services by clients and/or community stakeholders based on their own expectations. These can be similar to outcome indicators.

- Community indicators describe broad social, economic and environmental standards achieved in the community. These are the same as outcome indicators described above.

Indicators have also been categorised in the following way:

- quantitative indicators are usually expressed in quantitative or numerical terms such as percentages, ratios and rates

- qualitative indicators are descriptive and are usually expressed in a narrative form rather than in numerical terms, such as an assessment of the quality of a service by clients

- milestone indicators relate to one-off events, usually whether a milestone has been achieved such as a plan being completed by the due date or an advisory committee established as planned.

3   Outcome indicators

While councils do not have complete control over outcome indicators, they are strongly encouraged to use at least some outcome indicators. This type of indicator is the only type of indicator that can provide you with feedback on the impact your services are having on the local community. Outcome indicators allow you to identify services that may be having a positive or an adverse effect on the community. If the adverse effects are due to factors council can control, you can make any necessary changes. If the adverse effects are outside council's control, you may be able to take on an advocacy role to address them.

The use of outcome indicators enhances a council's accountability to its community. When reporting on outcome indicators, it is important to inform the community about council's role in achieving outcomes, other factors beyond council's control that can affect the achievement of outcomes, and how council intends changing the services it provides or addressing factors outside its control to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes being achieved for the community.

Table H.1 provides examples of indicators for different types of outcomes:

Type of outcome	Example of indicators
Change in circumstances	Level of access by community members to council services
Change in status	Number of households able to afford appropriate housing Decrease in unemployment
Change in behaviour	% of young people who play sport, participate in (council) youth club or are involved in other socially acceptable activity rather than commit crime
Change in functioning	% of people from the mandatory target groups who are satisfied with council's customer service
Change in attitude	% of Aboriginal people who feel that they belong to and are valued by the community
Change in knowledge	Council publications are understood by people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds Attendance of broader community at cultural events such as NAIDOC Week celebration and Carnivale
Change in skills	% of older people using library computer effectively
Maintenance	% of older people and people with disabilities who continue to live safely at home

Type of outcome	Example of indicators
Prevention	Number of graffiti incidents
	Number of women needing or using a court-based support women's service
	Number of drownings – domestic & other

Table H.1: Examples of types of outcome indicators (adapted from Patton, M.Q, (1997) Utilization-Focused Evaluation: Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, p.160)

A significant amount of work on the development of social indicators has been taking place in NSW and Australia in recent years. The following are some examples:

- The social plans and annual reports of a number of councils contain sets of indicators eg the Hurstville Snapshot 2000.

- ABS publication – Measuring Australia's Progress [1370.0], 2002.

- University of Melbourne, Measuring Community Well Being – A Framework for the Development of Community Indicators, 2001.

- Community Indicators and Local Democracy project, funded by the Australian Research Council. This project involved the NSW councils of Waverley and Queanbeyan (available from www.elton.com.au).

- Newcastle City Council and the Australia Institute, Indicators of a Sustainable Community.

- Sutherland Shire Council, State of the Shire Report, 2000.

4   Checklist

The following checklist will help you make sure that the indicators you develop are useful, accurate and reliable.

What are the intended outcomes of the activity?

Before selecting a set of indicators, you need to identify the intended outcomes of the program or activity so that the indicators are appropriate.

Have you developed a comprehensive set of indicators?

A single performance indicator will only provide information about one aspect of the program's performance. Indicators should cover:

- appropriateness - the extent to which the stated program objectives match the needs of the clients of the program, including council

- effectiveness - the extent to which the program objectives are achieved

- efficiency - the extent to which the intended outcomes of the program are achieved at a reasonable cost and in a reasonable time.

Are your indicators relevant?

Does the indicator:

- relate to activities or potential areas of activity of council?
- have a capacity to measure (benchmark) the effect that council's activity or inactivity has had on the indicator?
- identify the impact of council's performance on the seven target groups and/or the general community?
- help the community assess council's performance in relation to the social issue covered by the indicator?
- help council assess its own performance in relation to the social issue covered by the indicator?
- inform council and the community of emerging social issues that may need to be addressed directly or indirectly by council?
- help identify circumstances where council should act as an advocate for the community with other government or non-government agencies to address social/community issues?
- help identify circumstances where council can work jointly with other government or non-government agencies to address social/community issues?

Are your indicators useful?

Do the indicators provide:

- important, useful and meaningful information about the program or activity?
- information about the key outcomes of the program or activity?

Do the indicators involve data that can be:

- collected with reasonable accuracy?
- collected within the resources available or provide information that justifies the cost of collection?
- collected consistently over time ie reliable?
- impartially collected, analysed and reported?

Do the indicators:

- encourage staff to concentrate upon important outcomes?
- give a fair overview of performance ie tell more than just a 'good news' story?

Have you tested your indicators?

Indicators should be tested to make sure that they measure what they are intended to measure (ie they are valid) and that they measure accurately and consistently (ie they are reliable). They also need to be credible to significant stakeholders of the program that is why you should ask stakeholders to give you feedback on the indicators you

have developed.

Do you review your indicators?

Indicators should be reviewed from time to time to make sure that they are still valid. However try to avoid making unnecessary changes to indicators because this makes comparisons over time very difficult.

5   Using findings from indicators

After an indicator that relates to an activity of council has been measured, council and the community should consider the following:

- If the goal was fulfilled or exceeded, is any further action required to maintain or improve the situation?

- If the goal was not achieved, what action must be taken to ensure that the goal is achieved in the next reporting period?

- Should the council act as an advocate for the community with other government or non-government agencies to address the issue?

- Are there opportunities for the council to work with other government or non-government agencies to address the issue?

If the indicator does not relate specifically to an activity of the council, council and community should consider the following:

- Are there any emerging social issues that may need to be addressed directly or indirectly by the council?

- Should the council act as an advocate for the community with other government or non-government agencies to address the issue?

- Are there opportunities for the council to work with other government or non-government agencies to address the issue?

6   Useful publications

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *ABS Regional Profiles: Population Target Groups (2001 census)*

Council on the Cost and Quality of Government, Annual Report, November 2001 (especially Appendix 4) - *available from www.ccqg.nsw.gov.au/about/annual_report.htm*

Hughes, Phillip and Black, Alan *The identification and analysis of indicators of community strength and outcomes*, Department of Family and Community Services, Occasional Paper No. 3, 2001

Local Government Community Services Association of Australia, *Just, Vibrant and Sustainable Communities*, 2001

Department of Local Government, *Management Planning for NSW Local Government: Guidelines*, 2000 (especially sections 4.2.10 and 5.4.2)

Office of Public Management, NSW Premier's Department, *New Requirements and Guidelines for Program Evaluation*, Strategic Management Brief No.5, March 1991

Office of Public Management, NSW Premier's Department, *Planning and Monitoring Your Program. First steps in program evaluation*, 1992

Strategic Projects Division, NSW Premier's Department, *Evaluation Manual*, January 2001

Appendix I
Additional reporting requirements for council strategies targeting culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Contents

1   The Local Government Act 1993

Councils are required under section 428 (2)(j) of the Local Government Act to provide details in their annual report of programs they have undertaken in that year to promote services, and access to services, for people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

2   The Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000

The Department of Local Government will be using three key result areas to monitor and evaluate local government activity in relation to ethnic affairs. The three key result areas are:

- social justice
- community harmony
- economic and cultural opportunities.

The Department is obliged to use these three key result areas when reporting on the local government sector to the Community Relations Commission. Councils will therefore have to identify in their annual report which of the three key result areas apply for each significant activity or strategy aimed at assisting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

2.1   Principles of cultural diversity

There are four principles of cultural diversity outlined in Section 3(1) of the CRC Act.

- Principle 1 All individuals in NSW should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life.

- Principle 2 All individuals and public institutions should respect and accommodate the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the primary language.

- Principle 3 All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided or administered by the government of NSW.

- Principle 4 All public institutions of NSW should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of NSW as a valuable resource and promote the resource to maximise the development of the State.

2.2   The three key result areas and some possible outcomes and strategies for councils

Social justice

Local Government will ensure that:

- resources are fairly distributed

- ethnic communities are consulted about decisions related to local government policies, functions, and service delivery
- the rights and responsibilities of all people are recognised
- services and functions are effectively targeted to meet the needs of members of ethnic communities.

Some outcomes for councils could include:

- policy development that is responsive to linguistic, cultural, racial and religious diversity
- increased participation by members of ethnic communities in local government decision making processes
- increased understanding of cultural diversity by local government-funded organisations
- more accessible programs and services delivered by local government.

Some possible strategies are:

- policy on equitable access to community facilities
- provision of appropriate meals to cater for customers being served
- use of multilingual staff at the front counter of council
- provision of interpreters in consultation meetings
- input from ethnic communities to council's management plan
- involvement of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in consultations required under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and Local Government Act.

Community harmony

Local government will foster a climate of mutual respect by:

- highlighting the benefits of cultural diversity to the community
- supporting anti-discrimination measures
- promoting and maintaining community harmony.

As Australia moves into the next century, major issues will include those of cultural diversity and shared values. The challenge is to develop a common understanding that cultural diversity is one of the defining characteristics of a united, modern Australia.

Some outcomes for councils could include:

- a decrease in racial vilification and racially based violence
- valuing of diverse cultures and languages other than English
- local government work environments free from harassment and discrimination

- freedom to practise a range of religious beliefs in the spirit of tolerance.

Some possible strategies are:

- Carnivale activities
- systems in place to report and act on complaints about harassment and discrimination
- cross-cultural training for council staff
- flexible work practices
- use of multilingual staff
- citizenship ceremonies - review and update ceremonies to take account of diversity and make them more meaningful for participants eg provide interpreters and appropriate entertainment
- complaints handling mechanisms that are accessible to people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Economic and cultural opportunities

Local government will:

- promote the benefits of multiculturalism in the economic and cultural life of the local community
- recognise cultural diversity as a positive force in developing economic opportunities in the local area and enriching the community through social and cultural activities.

Some outcomes for councils could include:

- utilising the language and cultural skills of the members of NSW ethnic communities to attract business
- improving employment opportunities and outcomes for members of ethnic communities
- multicultural arts and artists becoming an integral part of the cultural life of the community.

Some possible strategies are:

- equal employment opportunity policies and practices
- a mentoring program
- 'theme areas' that provide opportunities for cultural expression
- libraries
- main street programs reviewed to take account of diversity
- council grants marketed to ethnic groups to encourage them to apply.