



Equity and Access Policy for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled People





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Purpose of this Policy

The strategic intent of Council under this policy is to enable the seven policy aspiration i.e., Communication, Consultation, Accessibility, Advocacy, Partnership, Prevention and Equal Employment Opportunity, in Council's businesses to meet equitable outcomes for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people. This will involve but is not limited to:

1. identifying, minimising, and removing barriers to the participation of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people in all of community life,
2. recognising the need for inclusive services in the community,
3. providing measures for access for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people to Council services and events in a safe manner,
4. acknowledging and respecting the diversity within the disabled community, including age-related physical, mental, and intellectual challenges, and
5. contribute to the wider Social Wellbeing of Invercargill City District.

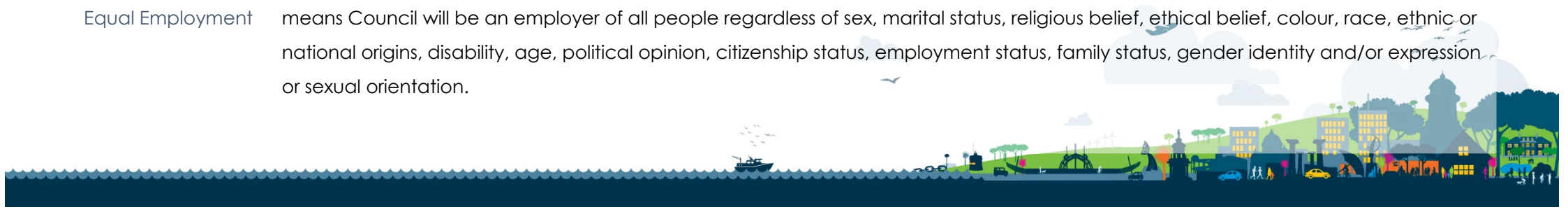
Policy Scope

This policy applies to all of Council's business within Invercargill City District. This includes Council assets, programmes, events, services, partnerships and when Council is consulted and advocating on behalf of Invercargill and communities.

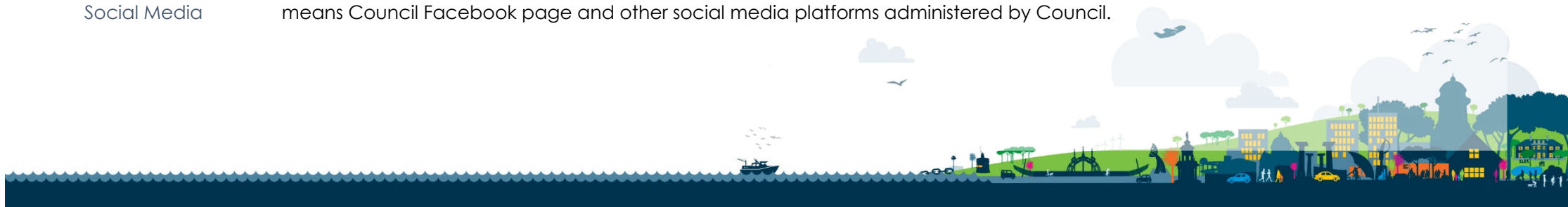


Definitions

Accessibility	means ensuring the removal of barriers whether they are attitudinal or physical or environmental, which increases the opportunity for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people to participate in the community.
Advocacy	means Council will provide appropriate opportunities and support to Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people and the combined disability groups for self-advocacy.
Community Building	means a building with the sole purpose to be accessed by the local community and is Council funded. For example, the Invercargill Public Library, Splash Palace, Civic Theatre etc.
Communication	means that Council will communicate its information and details of the decision to the public at a level appropriate to the nature of the matter.
Council	means Invercargill City Council
Council's Role	means Council will be an advocate for all citizens; a partner of likeminded institutes advocating on disability issues; will plan in the best interests of the public affected; continue to provide facilities and services; and lead by example; continue to be an equal employment opportunities (EEO) organisation and regulate to ensure quality standards and safety is maintained.
Consultation	means a process to improve existing relationships, processes and protocols related to local government and resource management issues. Consultation is triggered when a decision is deemed significant under Council's Significant and Engagement Policy.
Disability	means a person experiencing disability is a person with physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, psychiatric or other impairments who face barriers in the social and physical environment that prevent them from fully participating and contributing to community life.
Equal Employment	means Council will be an employer of all people regardless of sex, marital status, religious belief, ethical belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, political opinion, citizenship status, employment status, family status, gender identity and/or expression or sexual orientation.



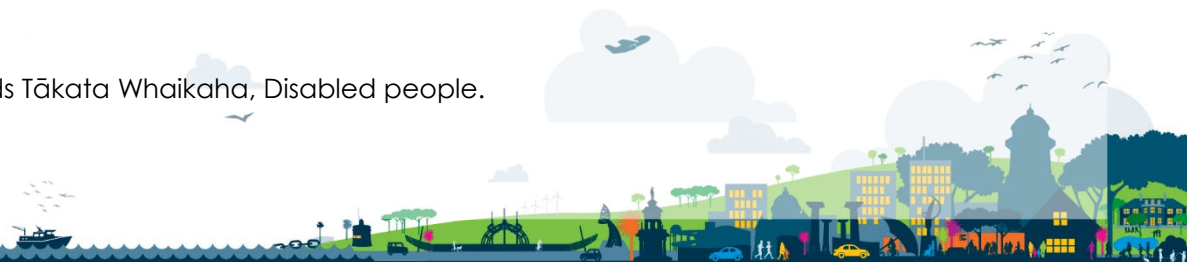
Events	means any organised public occasion that occurs either regularly (i.e. Council Meeting, Citizenship Ceremony, etc.) or is a one-off (i.e. Surf to City).
Facilities	means a Council place, amenity or piece of equipment that provides a certain purpose, for public use.
Human Rights	means Council will acknowledge and abide by the terms of the Human Rights Act 1993. The Act prohibits “unreasonable” discrimination on the grounds of disability (amongst other factors).
Information	means Council data that will aid in the understanding of a certain event, news update or document. This will likely be found by searching Council website, social media or phoning Council.
Invercargill City	means all the area covered by the Invercargill City Council, a Territorial Authority as per the Local Government Act 2002.
Partnerships	means strengthening and improving ongoing relationships with Iwi, disabled community, stakeholders and non-government organisations and groups associated with and known to Council.
Prevention	means measures that can be taken to remove potential danger and risk to the health and well-being of people on Council owned or operated land or reserve.
Programme	means planned series of events organised by Council.
Services	means a system supplying a public need such as transport, refuse and recycling or providing a utility such as water or sewerage treatment and disposal.
Social Media	means Council Facebook page and other social media platforms administered by Council.



Guiding principles

This policy acknowledges the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Te Tiriti o Waitangi and New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 in enabling the seven aspirational sections of this policy.

1. **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** promotes and protects the rights of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people and ensure their equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom.
2. **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** Principles for “Partnership”, “Participation” and “Protection” are acknowledged in this policy to guide Council when meeting the policy aspirations.
 - a. Partnership: Māori and the Crown have a relationship of good faith, mutual respect and understanding, and shared decision-making;
 - b. Participation: the Crown and Māori will work together to ensure Māori (including whānau, hapū, iwi and communities) participate at all levels of decision-making. This includes the right to seek opportunities for self-determination and self-management; and
 - c. Protection: the Crown actively contributes to improving the well-being of Māori, including support for independent living and the protection of Māori property and identity, in accordance with Māori values. Māori have the same rights and privileges as other citizens.
3. **New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026**, this policy acknowledges the Strategy and its principles to guide Council to ensure:
 - a. recognition of disability as a complex interaction between an individual’s health condition and the societal barriers that hinder their participation within the community,
 - b. equity to Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people, and
 - c. acknowledgement of human rights and fundamental needs Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people.



Policy Aspirations

This policy establishes seven overarching strategic aspirations to enable Council to ensure equity and access for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people. These aspirations are as follows:

1. Communication

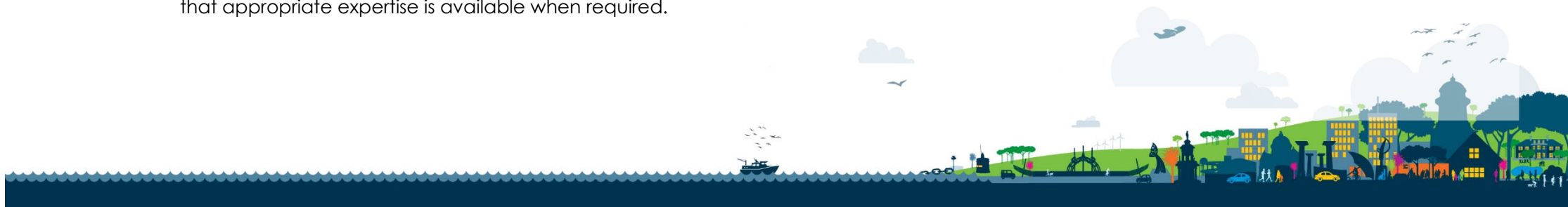
Council's strategic intent is to provide Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people equitable access to Council information, events, services and facilities. This will include:

- a. raising awareness amongst Council officers about the need to provide public information, where practicable or on request, in appropriate format to meet community demands,
- b. providing information, where practicable or on request, in alternative formats that are helpful or easier to understand and access,
- c. publicising information about Council services and events through disability groups known to Council, and
- d. ensuring Council facilities have clear signs and include internationally recognised symbols and indicators, where appropriate.

2. Consultation

Council's strategic intent is to provide Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people the opportunity to participate in Council's decision making. This will include:

- a. ensuring that consultation will enable the wider disability community to participate, particularly when decisions greatly affect them,
- b. recognising the needs of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people and their wider agencies and offer alternative formats and support to participate where appropriate, and
- c. encouraging Council officers to liaise with the Combined Disability Groups known to Council and other relevant disability organisations to ensure that appropriate expertise is available when required.



3. Accessibility

Council's strategic intent is to recognise the need for services and events to be accessible for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people. This includes:

- a. enabling all Council services, facilities, amenities and places of recreation to ensure opportunities for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people to attend and participate,
- b. where appropriate Housing Care Services are available (in terms of criteria), accessible (in terms of their physical characteristics and location) and safe (in terms of their design and equipment) and continue to maintain accessibility to rubbish and recycling collection services,
- c. providing physical accessibility needs for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people at Council organised events, programmes, services and facilities,
- d. ensuring the accessibility needs of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people are considered in Council procurement processes, including in new infrastructure design and event and programme delivery,
- e. ensuring Council's roading assets including footpaths, crossings, traffic signals, paved areas and streets are in line with meeting accessibility standards required under the relevant legislations,
- f. ensuring mobility parking in the CBD and wider community are physically accessible, appropriately located and are monitored,
- g. ensuring that any re-development or new building undertaken by Council has appropriate fittings and fixtures to ensure accessibility for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people and that they are compliant with the Building Act 2004 and the New Zealand Building Code,
- h. engaging with Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people, combined disability groups known to Council and their wider whānau in the early planning and design stages of Council's urban and build projects, and
- i. working with Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people to resolve accessibility issues identified within Invercargill City District.



4. Advocacy

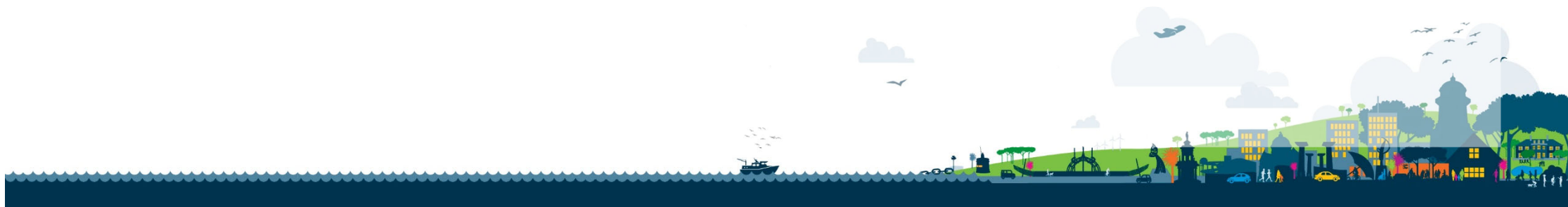
Council recognise that self-advocacy is the most effective form of advocacy. Council's strategic intent is to support Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people to advocate for improvements if issues arise that impacts access or infringe the right to equity. This includes:

- a. creating opportunities and support Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people to advocate on their own behalf,
- b. advocating for Council's policies, programmes, practices, and procedures to achieve equal opportunity for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people,
- c. monitoring and making recommendations about the updating and implementation of legislation and practices within Council to achieve the optimum approachability, accessibility and usability in architectural and environmental designs under relevant legislation,
- d. supporting and advocating the participation of commerce, industry, statutory and non-statutory agencies, individuals, territorial authorities, and central government in the provision of an accessible environment for everyone, and
- e. ensuring inclusive portrayal of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people in Council administered media platforms.

5. Partnerships

Council's strategic intend is to work in partnership with Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people, the wider disabled community private, public and voluntary sector organisations that supports disability to remove social barriers to participation to in all of community life. This includes:

- a. encouraging and supporting the formation and strengthening of organisations for Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people, whanau and/or advocates,
- b. establishing and maintaining ongoing communication and relationships with Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people, combined disability groups known to Council, disability advocacy and relevant government agencies to ensure the delivery and co-ordination of necessary services, and
- c. building the capacity of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people to take responsibility for governing, managing, advising and delivering services.



6. Prevention

Council's strategic intent is to work to reduce the prevalence and incidence of disability-related injuries, particularly in preventable situations. This includes:

- a. monitoring and enforcing regulations and safety standards under Council's jurisdiction to reduce risks to health and well-being,
- b. promoting road safety through monitoring traffic, parking and accidents patterns,
- c. measures to ensure the safe movement of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people between Council assets (for example the safe and unobstructed movement from a footpath to the street to a footpath) to meet legislative requirements,
- d. maintaining a civil defence capability to plan for and respond to emergencies,
- e. promoting recreation and leisure programmes that promote healthy lifestyles, and
- f. providing recreation and sports facilities that facilitate the provision of recreation programmes aimed at improving health.

7. Equal Employment Opportunities

Council has an Equal Employment Opportunities environment that encourages a diverse workforce and will work towards:

- a. encouraging and facilitating the employment and development of employees with disabilities,
- b. ensuring that reasonable accommodations are made to provide employees with disabilities access to appropriate communication services, resources, and flexible workplace options,
- c. ensuring that reasonable accommodations are made including job modification, skills training and on-the-job training,
- d. work with advocacy agencies regarding the removal of barriers to the recruitment and development of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people,
- e. ensuring managers are educated about the equal rights and obligations of employees with disabilities, issues of Tākata Whaikaha, Disabled people, removing barriers to employment and how to provide effective support, and
- f. ensuring that Council employees undertake applicable disability awareness training to increase understanding and responsiveness to the needs of Tākata Whaikaha, disabled people.



Revision History:	April 2017
Effective Date:	1 November 2024
Review Period:	This Policy will be reviewed every six (6) years, unless earlier review is required due to legislative changes, or is warranted by another reason requested by Council.
New Review Date:	2030
Associated Documents / References:	New Zealand Disability Strategy, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
Supersedes:	Equity and Access for People with disability policy 2017 (A1681534)
Reference Number:	A4051340
Policy Owner:	Manager - Customer Services
Relevant Roles	Tier 3 Managers and All roles

