

## Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited (Uniting) is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church that's worked alongside local communities across Victoria and Tasmania for over 100 years. The Uniting values; 'imaginative', 'bold', 'respectful', and 'compassionate' underpin our work and shape the nature of our relationships with consumers and other stakeholders.

Uniting celebrates diversity and welcomes all people regardless of ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity or sexual orientation. Uniting seeks to provide consumers with a service and environment which is welcoming, culturally safe and appreciates and recognises their diverse circumstances. Uniting strives to understand what cultural safety means to its consumers, staff and other stakeholder groups so that its people and processes can respond respectfully to individuals, families, communities and cultures within the communities in which it works.

Uniting is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to all eligible members of the community and to confronting the challenges or barriers to service access that may be experienced by some consumers.

Uniting will strive to recognise, affirm, value and preserve the human rights, dignity, diversity and identity of individuals, families, communities and cultures within the communities in which it works. Its people, and its procedures, structures and processes will respond respectfully to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and sexual and gender orientations.

To ensure that Uniting services and environments are culturally safe and inclusive for all consumers and staff, Uniting will:

- Comply with international, national and state conventions and declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and associated legislative instruments
- Advocate for reconciliation, diversity, equity and inclusion in its public policy and advocacy campaigns in accordance with its purpose and values and Strategic Plan 2018-2025
- Progress reconciliation via its Reconciliation Action Plan and learn new ways to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by recognising their right to self-determination
- Support relevant cultural competency training at all levels of the organisation, including allocating resources where possible to meet professional development needs
- Ensure systems are in place for consumers to influence what equity and culturally safe practice means to them and for this to be reflected in service development and delivery

- Comply with internal frameworks supporting consumer self-determination including the Consumer Partnerships Framework
- Ensure systems are in place to recruit and support an inclusive, culturally aware and competent workforce that both reflects and values the diversity of Uniting's consumers
- Provide training and development on relevant legislation, regulation and compliance, particularly in relation to discrimination and equal opportunity requirements
- Promote a culture of self-awareness and understanding of how personal and cultural values and beliefs influence practice, trust and relationships; understanding how service systems can create institutional discrimination that impacts negatively on consumers and taking measures to eliminate bias and discrimination

Uniting's commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity means that all people, regardless of ability, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation or socio-economic status, are able to access the Uniting programs and services to which they are entitled, based on need and free from any form of discrimination.

To ensure that its programs and services are accessible to all eligible members of the community, Uniting will:

- Work with consumers to overcome any barriers or special circumstances which may prevent them from accessing and utilising services
- Provide clear and accessible information regarding our programs and services in a range of formats and languages
- Ensure eligibility requirements and service access for all our programs and services are fair, ethical, non-discriminatory and transparent
- Have a priority (but not exclusive) focus on groups of people who are known to face challenges and systemic barriers in accessing services and achieving equitable outcomes due to a range of factors, including discrimination and social or cultural disadvantage. These groups include, but are not limited to:
  - Women
  - Older people
  - Children and young people
  - People who are experiencing or impacted by family and domestic violence
  - People who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
  - People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
  - People who are refugees and asylum seekers
  - People who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Queer (LGBTIQ)
  - People with a disability, mental illness or have health conditions
  - People who are socioeconomically disadvantaged
  - People who are or have been in prison
  - People in rural and isolated communities, and
  - Former residents of Uniting residential care services

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Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board (or the delegated Board Committee) is responsible for approving this policy, any changes to it and overseeing compliance with this policy</li> <li>Management are responsible for ensuring that policies are operating effectively and being adhered to</li> <li>In the first quarter of each financial year management will report to the Board regarding adherence to approved policies and any required improvement plans</li> </ul>
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## 2. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives
Advocacy	Advocacy is a set of organised activities designed to influence and shape the decisions and actions of individuals, particularly those in government roles, who make policies, regulations and laws, distribute resources, or make other decisions that impact on the wellbeing of people and communities. Advocacy is the deliberate process of directly or indirectly influencing change in order to address issues (e.g. related to equality, justice, inclusion, sustainability or safety) that impact on the lived experience of consumers and/or local communities
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Refers to people of diverse ethnic and other cultural backgrounds, who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are identified as Aboriginal and Torres Islander culture</li> <li>Were born overseas in a non-English speaking country</li> <li>Are Australian born with at least one parent born from a non-English speaking country or are Australian born and have a strong affiliation to a cultural and linguistic heritage that is not Anglo Celtic</li> <li>CALD is inclusive of those people who identify with the deaf community</li> </ul>
Child or Young Person	Includes all children and young people under the age of 18 years receiving Uniting services
Consumer	A person who is a current or potential user of Uniting’s services. Note: this term may vary across service streams, for example, client, customer, service user
Cultural safety	Respecting, accommodating and being responsive to the cultural and spiritual beliefs and needs of our consumers, staff and stakeholders; creating an

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	environment that is safe for people and free from discrimination, challenge or denial of their identity
Discrimination	The treating, or intention to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic or attribute protected by law, such as (but not limited to) sex, age, race or disability, and either directly or indirect
Diversity	Diversity celebrates, respects and values the unique contribution people can make because of their individual characteristics, backgrounds and perspectives. These characteristics include culture, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, religion, political or other belief
Equal Employment Opportunity	All people regardless of gender, race, age, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, disability or religious belief have the right to be given fair consideration for a job or other job-related benefits such as staff training and development
Equity	Fairness, justice and impartiality
Inclusion	The act of including many different types of people and treating them fairly and equally, whereby every person, irrespective of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual preference or nationality, can access and participate fully in all aspects of life in the same way as any other member of the community
Institutional discrimination	Unjust and discriminatory mistreatment of an individual or group of individuals by society and its institutions, through unequal selection or bias, intentional or unintentional; as opposed to individuals making a conscious choice to discriminate
Marginalisation	The treatment of a person or group of people as insignificant or peripheral
Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	A formal statement of commitment to reconciliation
Social Exclusion	Social exclusion occurs when someone experiences multiple overlapping problems, such as unemployment, poor health and inadequate education, which stop them fully participating in society
Self-determination	The entitlement of people to have control over their destiny and to be treated respectfully. This includes people being free to pursue their economic, social and cultural development

### 3. Related Legislation/Regulations

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)  
 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)  
 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)  
 Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)  
 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)  
 Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)

### 4. Related Documents

Consumer Partnership Framework  
 Community, Consumer Safety & Wellbeing Policy  
 Strategic Plan 2018-2025  
 Reconciliation Action Plan

Revision Record			
Version	Date	Document Writer	Revision Description
1.0	16/05/2017	Project Manager	First draft
1.2	29/05/2017	Project Manager	Transfer into new template
1.3	24/06/2019	Compliance & Policy team	Full review of policy in consultation with Senior Manager, Consumer Partnerships
1.4	26/06/2019	Compliance & Policy team	Incorporate feedback from Senior Manager, Consumer Partnerships
1.5	27/06/2019	Compliance & Policy team	Additional feedback from Senior Manager, Consumer Partnerships
1.6	17/07/2019	Compliance & Policy team	Revised policy statement added. Approved by EGM Strategy and Engagement
1.7	30/08/2019	Compliance & Policy team	Update to vulnerable groups as requested by Board
2.0	04/09/2019	Compliance & Policy team	Final version approved by the Board.