Policy – Anti-Discrimination

Introduction

Whittlesea U3A Inc. recognises that prohibiting discriminatory policies and practices is both a legal obligation and good practice.

Whittlesea U3A Inc. endorses diversity, supports equal rights and equal opportunity, and does not advocate, support or practice discrimination based on characteristics such as race, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability, whether covered by applicable legislation or not.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Whittlesea U3A Inc.'s anti-discrimination policy and the governance structures, responsibilities and processes to give effect to the policy and ensure the organisation complies with its obligations under legislation.

This policy aims to foster an organisation's culture that maximises access to membership and grows organisational performance.

Policy

1. *Discrimination* consists of treating an individual with a particular attribute less favourably than an individual without that attribute or with a different attribute under similar circumstances. It can also involve seeking to impose a condition or requirement on a person with an attribute who does not or cannot comply, while people without that attribute do/can comply.
2. *Equal Opportunity* consists of ensuring that all volunteers and members are given equal access to the services and benefits provided by Whittlesea U3A Inc.
3. *Victimisation* happens where a person is treated harshly or suffers detriment because they have made a complaint of discrimination. Victimisation will also happen if a person suffers detriment because they have provided information or evidence about a complaint.
4. Whittlesea U3A Inc. does not advocate, tolerate, condone or practise discrimination and regards as unfair, all forms of unlawful discrimination or vilification, including but not limited to that which relates to:
    - gender;
    - marital/domestic status;
    - disability;
    - race, colour, national extraction, social origin, descent and ethnic or national origin;
    - age;
    - family responsibilities, family status, status as a parent or carer;
    - sexuality, transsexuality or transgender;
    - religious or political beliefs or activities
    - physical features
    - medical record, including HIV/AIDS vilification
    - criminal record.
5. Whittlesea U3A Inc. is an equal opportunity manager of volunteers. In all cases no factors other than performance and competence will be used as the basis for training and development opportunities for volunteers and/or intending volunteers.

6. Whittlesea U3A Inc. will ensure that its programs, policies, procedures, practices, publications and forms accord with the principles expressed in this policy.
7. Whittlesea U3A Inc. will make all reasonable accommodations to allow people who experience difficulties in their dealings with it to benefit equally from its activities.
8. All of Whittlesea U3A Inc's members and volunteers will comply with the principles expressed in this policy.

Procedures

1. Whittlesea U3A Inc.'s Committee of Management will:
   - review the organisation's practices and processes to ensure that they adequately incorporate precautions against discrimination
   - conduct elections to positions on the Committee of Management that are free from discrimination and provide an equal opportunity for all members to stand for election
   - periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the systems established to remove and/or prevent discrimination
   - make reasonable accommodations to allow diverse groups to access benefits provided by membership of the organisation and its programs and activities
   - monitor the performance of office bearers and volunteers in regard to this policy
   - analyse all reported breaches to identify systematic trends and ensure that any adverse trends are addressed
   - ensure a culture of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity compliance is promoted across the organisation.

2. All members, volunteers and employees will be made aware of the organisation's anti- discrimination policy by its publication on the organisation's website and/or newsletter.

3. A person who believes they are being treated unfairly because of discrimination may report the matter to Whittlesea U3A Inc.'s Secretary. The Secretary will inform the President immediately.

4. A report of discrimination will be investigated promptly, confidentially and fairly, in accordance with the organisation's Grievance *Policy.*

Responsibilities

1. Whittlesea U3A Inc.'s Committee of Management is responsible for:
   - establishing, implementing, publishing, and reviewing this policy
   - fostering equal opportunity and setting an example by their own behaviour
   - ensuring that the organisation's practices and processes incorporate precautions against discrimination in such areas as selecting volunteers, admitting members and providing access to programs
   - ensuring reasonable accommodations are made to allow diverse groups to become members and
     participate in the organisation's programs and activities
   - ensuring that allegations of discrimination or vilification are properly investigated.
2. Whittlesea U3A Inc.'s Secretary is responsible for receiving complaints about a breach of this policy and to bring them to the attention of the President.
3. Whittlesea U3A Inc.'s President is responsible for ensuring that a complaint of a breach of

this policy is handled in accordance with Whittlesea U3A Inc.'s *Grievance Policy*.

4. It is the responsibility of all members and volunteers to:
   - treat each other with respect and without regard to non-relevant criteria or distinctions
   - familiarise themselves with this anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policy
   - where appropriate, suggest ways in which practices, systems and procedures could be improved to reduce the likelihood of discrimination occurring.

Authorisation

This Policy was updated by the Committee of Management of Whittlesea U3A Inc., and minuted as such, on the 11th May, 2026.

This policy will be published by the Committee of Management of Whittlesea U3A Inc. on its website within 4 weeks of the date of this authorisation.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually or when circumstances change.

Related Policies

- *Whittlesea U3A Inc. Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Whittlesea U3A Inc. Grievance Policy*
- *Whittlesea U3A Inc. Sexual – Harassment Policy*
- *Whittlesea U3A Inc. Bullying Policy.*