Access and Equity Policy

The Government is committed to funding appropriate services that recognise and embrace diversity. The Access and Equity Policy asks providers to to reduce barriers for vulnerable Australians and make sure that diversity is not a barrier for people engaging with government funded services.

Guidance is provided to help grant applicants consider whether services, projects, activities or events require adaptation, or if additional assistance should be provided to make sure that they:

• are accessible by all eligible participants
• are responsive to their needs, and
• deliver equitable outcomes.

The Government recognises that most grant recipients have policies and processes in place to actively engage with, and adapt service delivery to, accommodate clients who: are vulnerable, including people living with a disability, are culturally and linguistically diverse, identify as Indigenous, or are subject to violence.

A grant recipient delivering services to any of the following groups must consider ways in which service delivery can be inclusive. The following table is a general guide to accommodate groups that have been identified as experiencing barriers to services.

Population Cohort	Considerations for Service Delivery
People subject to emotional, physical and sexual violence	• Staff training to accommodate sensitivities when communicating with people who have been subject to violence. • Strict guidelines in place to help staff recognise when it is appropriate to contact authorities and the function of mandatory reporting.
Vulnerable people (e.g. children, or adults who are unable to protect themselves against exploitation)	• Appropriate screening for people (including sub-contractors and volunteers) who are working with, or are in contact with, vulnerable people. • Staff-to-client ratio adjustments relative to the complexity of the case load.
Indigenous Australians	• Understanding local and national Indigenous culture, including languages, customs and community structures. • Awareness of cultural sensitivities relating to gender roles, kinship structures, social dynamics and traditional practices. • Employing Indigenous staff members where appropriate. • Delivering cultural sensitivity training for all staff members • Consulting with local Indigenous elders where necessary and the creation of strong networks with local leaders and groups. • Aligning to the Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy and the Whole of Government Programs Framework.
Deaf	• Employing staff skilled in AUSLAN (Australian Sign Language), or providing training where necessary.

Population Cohort	Considerations for Service Delivery
	• Staff knowledge of when and how to organise a sign language interpreter for clients who communicate using AUSLAN. • Assistive listening systems (such as hearing loop) are available and staff understand how to organise and operate them. • Ensuring all website materials meet accessibility guidelines - WCAG2.0 Level AA compliance.
Mobility and access restriction	• Accommodating mobility needs, including ramp access and accessible facilities in service outlets, including access to toilets and kitchens where appropriate. • Designated and adequate disability parking or knowledge of local mobility transportation services. • Providing spare wheelchairs and other walking aids on-site. • Making sure services allow enough time for appointments to cater for restriction of access and mobility.
Blind or low vision	• Facilities built to accommodate low or nil vision, particularly for safe navigation. • Braille variants of materials, where appropriate. • Website materials supporting text-to-speech functionality - WCAG2.0 Level AA compliance.
Hard of hearing	• Contact details on website include a TTY email address for those who cannot operate standard phone services. • Staff have a working knowledge of how to organise and implement assistive listening systems (such as a hearing loop, live captioning and National Relay Services). • Making sure service outlets provide a noise free environment, where possible. • Making sure all website materials meet accessibility guidelines - WCAG2.0 Level AA compliance.
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and older people	• Making sure that people (including sub-contractors and volunteers) who are working with, or are in contact with, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people, including older people, are appropriately trained to have an understanding of CALD and ageing client needs. • Staff knowledge of the common languages and cultures within their service delivery area. • Considering the specific services needs of the aged, veterans, refugee and migrants using services. • Employing multilingual staff where necessary. • Providing credentialed translators and interpreters via face-to-face, telephone or video conference where appropriate. • Making sure that website and advertising material are clear, meet accessibility guidelines and cater to the multiple language options of client groups.
Intellectual impairment or disability	• Appropriate and respectful use of language, visuals and tone. • Materials available in appropriate accessible format and prepared in easy-English. • Clear contact details for further support or advice.
People who identify as gay,	• Making sure people (including sub-contractors and volunteers)

Population Cohort	Considerations for Service Delivery
lesbian, bi-sexual, transgendered, queer or intersex (LGBTI).	who are working with, or are in contact with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are appropriately trained to have an understanding of LGBTI client needs. • Appropriate and respectful use of language and visuals that do not assume heterosexuality or binary gender identification. • Staff having a working knowledge of the barriers that people who identify as LGBTI may encounter. • Creating a LGBTI inclusive environment.