



# Access Policy

Sutherland Shire Council

## Document review and approval

This document has been approved by

	Name	Minute No	Date approved
1	Community Services Committee – CSV006-96)	9	17 July, 1995
2			

## Revision history

Version	Author	Date	Revision
1	Manager Community Services	10 July, 1995	Original Version
2	Manager Communities	27 February, 2012	Policy currently under review, to be maintained until review completed

## **ACCESS POLICY**

### **ACCESS COMMITTEE OF SUTHERLAND SHIRE (ACSS)**

#### **BACKGROUND**

This policy document is a product of the Access Committee of Sutherland Shire (ACSS). ACSS is a sub committee of Council's Community Services Committee. Elected representatives and staff of Council, people with disabilities, carers and service providers participate in the Committee's activities. The Committee meets monthly and it is an open forum. This policy document identifies the broad objectives which the Committee will pursue in order to reduce the restrictions imposed on people with disabilities by both physical and human attitudinal barriers.

#### **DEFINITION OF DISABILITY**

For the purposes of this policy "disability" is defined according to the definition provided by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. It includes:

- \* Physical
- \* Intellectual
- \* Psychiatric
- \* Sensory
- \* Neurological
- \* Learning disabilities
- \* Physical disfigurement
- \* The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms

#### **INCIDENCE OF DISABILITY AND NEED FOR ACCESS**

A survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1988 has enabled the extent of disability within our community to be estimated at 15.6% of the total population. The total population of Sutherland Shire was 184,402 in 1991. By applying the 15.6% figure the incidence of total disability can be estimated in Sutherland Shire at 28,766. A study conducted by David Tait in 1990 for the State Government indicated that there were 5,546 persons in households in the Sutherland Shire with a severe handicap. The ABS survey of 1988 also identified that 92% of people with disabilities live in private homes in the community. The need for access to all aspects of society for those people with disabilities is no different from the rest of the population. These barriers must be eliminated to enable people to access the streets, shops, other public buildings, transport, recreational services, facilities such as parks, sporting amenities, and social opportunities such as employment, education, housing etc. The identified community need for greater access is also reinforced by the need to ensure that there is compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1992.

## **DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (DDA) 1992**

The DDA states that it is unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability in the following areas of life:

- \* Employment
- \* Education
- \* Access to premises used by the public
- \* Provision of goods, services and facilities
- \* Accommodation
- \* Buying land
- \* Clubs and associations
- \* Sport
- \* Administration of Commonwealth Government laws and programs.

In regards to access to places used by the public, the DDA makes it against the law for public places to be inaccessible to people with a disability. Places used by the public include:

- \* Public footpaths and walkways
- \* Education institutions
- \* Shops and department stores
- \* Banks, credit unions, building societies
- \* Parks, public swimming pools, public toilets and pedestrian malls
- \* Cafes, restaurants, pubs
- \* Theatres and other places of entertainment
- \* Lawyers offices and legal services
- \* Libraries
- \* Sporting venues
- \* Social and sporting clubs
- \* Government offices
- \* Public transport including trains, buses, ferries, boats, ships and aeroplanes
- \* Dentists and Doctors' surgeries
- \* Hospitals
- \* Hairdressers and beauty salons
- \* Travel agents
- \* Government run services

Any area which is used by the public should be accessible to people with disabilities. Access applies to existing places as well as places under construction. Existing places must be modified (except where this would involve "unjustifiable hardship").

## **AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS 7 BUILDING CODE OF AUSTRALIA**

The Australian Standard in conjunction with the Building Code of Australia are the basic measuring tools which must be used to ensure that access meets the minimum standards and preferably exceeds the minimum when the relevant policy objectives are pursued. In particular the following standards form the essential requirements for buildings and facilities: AS 1428.1 - General requirements for access to buildings and AS 1428.2 - Enhanced and additional requirements for buildings and facilities.

## **SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL ACCESS POLICY**

The intent of the Policy is to reduce barriers to access which prevent people with disabilities from accessing physical locations and social opportunities.

Council can only pursue the following objectives over time and within budget and resource constraints so that real gains in increasing access are achieved.

### **OBJECTIVE 1**

**TO ENSURE ACCESS TO ALL NEW PUBLIC BUILDINGS & FACILITIES PRIVATELY OR COUNCIL OWNED.**

- 1.1 The Australian Standard AS 1428.2 1992, Design for Access and Mobility , Part 2, Enhanced and additional Requirements, Buildings and Facilities, shall be the minimum requirement for all new Council buildings and facilities.

In any instance where no Enhanced Standard is detailed in AS 1428.2, the minimum requirement shall default to the appropriate Standard as detailed in the Australian Standard AS 1428.1 1993, Design for Access - Buildings.

- 1.2 The Australian Standard AS 1428.1 1993, Design for Access and Mobility , General Requirements for Access - Buildings, shall be the minimum requirement for all other new buildings and facilities.
- 1.3 The Australian Standard 1428 .2 1992, Design for Access and Mobility part 2, Enhanced and Additional Requirements, Buildings and Facilities, shall be actively encouraged for all other new buildings and facilities where practicable.
- 1.4 Installation of audio loop systems which assist people with hearing impairments will be provided in all new public meeting areas eg. theatres, cinemas, halls, meeting rooms, conference centres.
- 1.5 Signs and other information indicating access and services shall be provided through tactile communication methods in addition to visual methods to assist people with vision impairment and intellectual disabilities.
- 1.6 All new public toilet facilities provided by Council will ensure access according to the AS 1428.2. Further, these toilet facilities will be unisex to enable carers of opposite sex to enter. The toilet facilities will include a fold down change table to enable parents who have children with disabilities and who are incontinent to be changed. This will benefit all parents with young children.

### **OBJECTIVE 2**

**TO ENSURE ACCESS TO ALL EXISTING BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES PRIVATELY OR COUNCIL OWNED.**

- 2.1 Council shall ensure upgrading which will provide access according to the AS 1428.2 for all existing Council buildings and facilities where alterations are planned and it is practicable. This includes access to and throughout the building, toilets and kitchen areas where relevant.

In any instance where no Enhanced Standard is detailed, or the use of AS 1428.2 is deemed impractical, the minimum requirement shall default to the appropriate

Standard as detailed in the Australian Standard AS 1428.1 1993, Design for Access - Buildings.

- 2.2 Council buildings and facilities which have high public usage patterns shall be identified and included in forward estimates for renovation to ensure access in accordance with objective 2.1 of this policy. Identified buildings and facilities shall be upgraded in priority order as funds are allocated.
- 2.3 Where alterations are proposed to existing private buildings and facilities and adherence to the AS 1428.1 is practicable then Council shall require compliance with the standards in conjunction with the renovations to the building or facility.

### **OBJECTIVE 3**

**TO ENSURE ACCESS TO OPEN SPACES INCLUDING FOOTPATHS, RECREATIONAL SPACES, PARKS, WATERWAYS AND ROADS.**

- 3.1 Council shall provide kerb ramps from the footpath to the roadway at all intersections and through traffic islands where practicable. The kerb ramps will be flush with footpaths and roadways and will avoid ridges which create barriers for wheelchairs and child strollers. Tactile changes in the surface will indicate a kerb ramp for people with vision impairment.
- 3.2 Council shall provide where practicable access to open space, recreational areas and other public spaces including toilets, parking, ramps, picnic facilities. Signs shall indicate access in accordance with AS 1428.1.
- 3.3 Car parking shall comply with the AS 2890.1 and the Sutherland Shire Council Development Control Plan. The number of total car spaces to be provided for the vehicles of people with disabilities or their carers shall comply with the AS 2890.1 depending on the type of facility. The parking places will be as close to the public areas as possible and clearly identified. Overhanging obstructions such as vegetation should be avoided. Car spaces which are the direct responsibility of Council will be carefully monitored by Council Ordinance inspectors for illegal usage.
- 3.4 Installation of new children's playgrounds and upgrading of existing playgrounds will include equipment which promotes usage by children with disabilities. Although no formal Australian Standards exist, there are a number of organisations which provide design and/or design and installation services. There are also some publications which provide ideas and design guidelines.
- 3.5 Council shall ensure all replacement ground surfaces in major pedestrian areas such as central shopping areas, on Council properties and on major public property developments such as office and service buildings comply with safety standards and where appropriate are slip resistant, traversable by wheelchairs and indicate changes of grade by use of materials which provide a visual and tactile contrast to assist people with vision impairment.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4**

THROUGH EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY, INCREASE AWARENESS OF DISABILITY ISSUES AND THE RANGE OF PRACTICAL, SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

- 4.1 To increase awareness and the profile of access needs within Council, other government organisations and the community and recommend strategies to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- 4.2 In conjunction with EEO principles, personnel strategies and government employment funding programs, facilitate the employment of people with disabilities within Council.
- 4.3 Provide opportunities for Council staff to undertake training in relation to access issues and the needs of people with disabilities.
- 4.4 Council will encourage increased education and training supports within relevant organisations for people with disabilities.
- 4.5 Council will prioritise residents' identification of access barriers and develop short or longer term strategies which address the restrictions imposed by these barriers.
- 4.6 The Access Committee Of Sutherland Shire (ACSS) shall liaise with and encourage the Community Arts Sub Committee, the Sport and Recreation Division and other relevant sub committees and services within Council to develop activities and events which are accessible and which promote and facilitate utilisation of both active and passive leisure pursuits by people with disabilities.
- 4.7 The Access Committee in conjunction with Council's Environmental Services Division shall explore the potential to produce a Development Control Plan (DCP) in regards to "Design For Access and Mobility" The DCP will assist Council, developers and other members of the public to understand the requirements for a barrier free built environment. It would also be intended that the DCP be utilised to promote increased housing opportunities in medium and high density housing by increasing access to the buildings themselves and to a proportion of the dwellings within lower levels.
- 4.8 The Access Committee shall produce a Standards Checklist to assist Council, developers and other members of the public to understand the requirements for creating a barrier free environment.
- 4.9 The Access Committee in conjunction with the relevant Divisions of Council shall promote strategies which reduce barriers and increase accessibility.
- 4.10 The "Disability Target Plan" shall be examined and the "action plans" supported to assist the process of pursuing strategies which reduce barriers to access.