

U3A HIGHVALE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Anti-Discrimination

Overview

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 came into effect in August 2011. Equal Opportunity consists of ensuring that all volunteers and members are given equal access to the services and benefits provided by U3A Highvale.

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.

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 in connection with a complaint.

This section sets out U3A Highvale's anti-discrimination policy and the governance structures and responsibilities. Processes that give effect to the policy and ensure the association complies with its obligations under legislation are also covered.

Policy

U3A Highvale Inc. recognises that policies and procedures that prohibit discrimination are both a legal obligation and good practice. It has a positive obligation to eliminate discrimination and victimisation. Its policy aims to foster an organisational culture that maximises access to membership and grows organisational performance.

The association endorses diversity, supports equal rights and equal opportunity. It does not support discrimination based on characteristics such as race, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability, whether covered by applicable legislation or not. However it must be remembered that U3As are incorporated to provide services to a particular group, not to everyone in the population.

It 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
- pregnancy and potential pregnancy
- 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
- racial classification or caste
- sexuality, trans-sexuality or transgender
- religious or political beliefs or activities
- trade union or employer association membership or activities
- physical features
- occupation or calling
- medical record, including HIV/AIDS vilification
- criminal record.

U3A Highvale is an equal opportunity association made up 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.

The association will ensure that its programmes, policies, procedures, practices, publications and forms accord with the principles expressed in this policy. It will make all reasonable accommodations to allow people who experience difficulties in their dealings with it to benefit equally from its activities.

All of its members and volunteers will comply with the principles expressed in this policy.

Procedures

Implementation

Committee Members

1. Establish, implement, publish, and review this policy
2. Foster equal opportunity and set an example by their own behaviour
3. Ensure that the association's practices and processes incorporate precautions against discrimination in such areas as selecting volunteers, admitting members and providing access to programmes
4. Ensure reasonable accommodations are made to allow diverse groups to become members and participate in the association's programmes and activities.

5. Properly investigate allegations of discrimination or vilification.

Maintenance

Members

6. Treat each other with respect and without regard to non-relevant criteria or distinctions.
7. Become familiar with this anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policy.
8. Where appropriate, suggest ways in which practices, systems and procedures could be improved to reduce the likelihood of discrimination occurring.

Committee Members

9. Review the association's practices and processes to ensure that they adequately incorporate precautions against discrimination.
10. 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.
11. Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the systems established to remove and/or prevent discrimination.
12. Make reasonable accommodations to allow diverse groups to access benefits provided by membership of the association and its programmes and activities.
13. Monitor the performance of office bearers and volunteers in regard to this policy.
14. Analyse all reported breaches to identify systematic trends and ensure that any adverse trends are addressed.
15. Ensure a culture of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity compliance is promoted across the association.
16. Make all members, volunteers and employees aware of the association's anti-discrimination policy by its website publications and/or newsletter.

Complaints about Discrimination

Members or volunteers

17. A person who believes they are being treated unfairly as a result of discrimination may report the matter to the Secretary. The Secretary will inform the President immediately.

President

18. Investigate a report of discrimination promptly, confidentially and fairly, in accordance with the association's Grievance Process.