

Diversity & Inclusion Policy

1.Scope

This policy applies to all TassieCare employees, contractors, and volunteers.

2.Purpose

TassieCare Services is committed to developing and maintaining an inclusive workplace that celebrates diversity and inclusion, our vision is to provide a safe, inclusive, and diverse environment that is reflective of the community that we are part of.

This policy aims to ensure all persons involved with TassieCare Services are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their age, gender, race, language, disability, religion, political or other opinion, sexual orientation, national or social origin.

TassieCare Services promotes inclusive practices to ensure all our Participants including children and young people involved with our programs, services and/or activities feel safe and supported. At the heart of this are participatory engagement practices that integrate all aspects of diversity into the strategic planning, policy development, resourcing, and reporting processes in the delivery of our programs, services, and activities.

Central to this is a commitment to ensure all engagement and communications with all Participants including children, young people, their parents or care givers uphold values of inclusion, equity and diversity to support the equity and diversity of all Participants, including but not limited to supporting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, LGBTI and those unable to live at home.

TassieCare Services is committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents and care givers about the wellbeing and safety of their children and will seek to involve them whenever possible and practicable in shaping the services we provide to them and their children. We will promote and distribute information about our Safeguarding Children and Young People commitment as part of the information provided to children, young people and parents and care givers when they access any of our services.

This procedure supports all personnel in:

- acknowledging and respecting the rights of all Participants including children and young people to be provided with and participate in quality programs, services, and activities free from harm and discrimination.
- creating an environment that supports, reflects, and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices.
- creating a sense of belonging for all Participants, children, families, and personnel, where diverse identities, backgrounds, experiences, skills, and interests are respected, valued, and given opportunities to be expressed/developed.
- ensuring that programs, services, and activities are reflective of, and responsive to, the values and cultural beliefs of families using our organisations services, and of those within the local community and broader society.
- providing all children and young people with the opportunity to access programs with our organisation and recognising that all families are unique.
- regularly updating and supporting the knowledge, skills, practices and attitudes of personnel and children or young people to encourage and ensure inclusion and equity.
- seeking and incorporating input and feedback from children, young people, and their families to ensure continuous review and improvement of our services.

TassieCare Services abides by the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' and believes that everyone has the right to feel safe and be free from discrimination. All actions and behaviours from our personnel must be non-discriminatory and always in the best interests of the child.

3.Related policies

- Code of Conduct
- Appropriate Workplace behaviour policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People policy
- Reporting policy

4.Principals

TassieCare Services has stated objectives in the following focus areas:

- **Inclusion:** Ensuring all team members and participants feel a sense of inclusion and belonging enabled by inclusive leadership and flexible working culture.
- **Good balance:** Employing and empowering our team members to access and enjoy the same opportunities to build their careers at TassieCare Services, regardless of gender or gender identity.
- **Indigenous Australians:** Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres strait islanders people, participants, and the community to engage with TassieCare Services.
- **Accessibility:** Ensuring our workplaces remain accessible to all of our team members, Participants and the community, regardless of their disability or mobility issues are permanent or not.
- **Flexible working:** Supporting and empowering our team members to balance their work and life commitments, through a flexible working culture.
- **Pride:** Enabling our LGBTQI+ community to be their authentic selves and grow at TassieCare Services

4.1 TassieCare will:

- Apply diversity and inclusion principals to guide our community, including demonstrating leadership and vision we will consider inclusion in any process impacting our team members, participants, and the community as a whole.
- Ensure outcomes from our recruitment process, succession planning, and reward and recognition are solely based on fairness and merit.
- Ensure diversity and inclusion are included in programs and initiatives offering equal access to opportunities.
- Implement programs and policies which address impediments to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Empower team members to grow and develop in an inclusive, safe, and flexible way.
- Continue to ensure TassieCare Services is an equal opportunity employer.
- Observe all relevant state and territory laws.

4.2 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all persons within our organisation to promote equity and respect diversity by:

- Create and maintain an inclusive workplace environment by remodelling inclusive behaviour and communicating our commitment to the principals set out in this policy.
- Minimising bias in relation to decision making and ensuring consistency of approach.
- actively anticipating children and young people's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- informing children and young people of their rights and giving all children and young people access to information, support, and complaints processes.
- respecting the rights of children and young people to participate in decision making, paying appropriate attention to the needs of the following groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Children and young people with a disability
- Children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds LGBTI (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex)
- children and young people Children and young people who are unable to live at home.

| Position | Responsibility |
|--------------------------|---|
| Director | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively develop and maintain stakeholder relationships that promote a culture of inclusion and diversity. • Implement policies and procedures across the organisation that demonstrate diversity and inclusion. • Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures. • Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support and advice to understand and implement policies and procedures. |
| Workforce / HR / Quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders. • Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children and Young People framework and implementation. • Provide training and advice in the application of policies and procedures. |
| Managers / Supervisors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policies and procedures are followed and implemented. • Ensure that our team members adhere to the principals set out in this policy |
| Employees / Contractors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with policy and procedure. • Contributing and maintaining an inclusive workplace environment • Respecting the diversity of others and demonstrating inclusion |

5.Key Requirements

The overall aim of this policy is to develop a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that prioritises the participation of and communication with all personnel, participants, children and young people, and their parents and care givers in ways that respects and promotes principles of equity and diversity.

5.1 All personnel will promote equity and diversity through any form of engagement with children, young people, their parents and care givers, and other personnel.

Wherever possible, personnel are required to:

- uphold and respect the rights and dignity of all people in society and to encourage children and young people to do the same and participate actively and responsibly as individuals.
- ensure that their approach and interactions with children and young people are sensitive, respectful, and inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities.
- respect decisions that people make about their gender identity and consult and support children and young people to feel, and to be, safe.
- promote an organisational culture that is inclusive and respectful of the different ways that families are formed and structured.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who have a disability, LGBTIAQ+ and those who are unable to live at home.

- be sensitive to the needs and anticipate the requirements of children and young people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and diverse circumstances and be responsive to the individual needs and particular circumstances of individuals.
- report any discriminatory behaviours, actions, prejudiced attitudes to Line Manager/Service Delivery Manager

5.2 We will prioritise participatory and inclusive practices.

In ensuring equal access, inclusive practice and the right of every child and young person regardless of their circumstances to participate as active members in our programs, services and/or activities, TassieCare will:

- ensure its programs are designed and constructed to provide equal access to a wide range of learning opportunities for all children, young people, and their families.
- ensure modifications or adjustments are provided so all children and young people can participate fully in our services, activities, and programs with peers.
- assess any new (or substantially revised) policies, programs, or services for their direct impact on the lives of people from diverse circumstances prior to any decision to pursue such proposals.
- any new (or substantially revised) policies or programs that impact in different ways on the lives of people from diverse circumstances shall, wherever possible, be developed by TassieCare Services in consultation with people from those backgrounds. For any new (or substantially revised) policies or services, our organisation will develop a communication strategy sufficiently resourced to inform people from diverse circumstances and/or relevant cultural and linguistic backgrounds, differing abilities, age, stage and development of these changes.
- ensure publicly available resources and accessible information on our policies and procedures are communicated appropriately to people from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- where required, provide information in languages other than English, and through print, electronic media, and disability-appropriate methods of communication.
- provide a 'complaints/ reporting' mechanism and policy that enables people (regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, differing abilities, age, stage and development) to address issues and raise concerns about TassieCare Services personnel and performance.
- where possible, provide for the particular needs of children and young people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, differing abilities, age, stage and development by providing language assistance through the use of interpreters or facilitators.
- where possible, provide for the additional needs of children and young people in remote areas through developing outreach and community liaison arrangements.
- consider diversity and cultural and sensitivities in the design and delivery of any training programs provided.
- provide personnel with regular, relevant diversity and cultural sensitivity training so that they develop knowledge and skills in cultural competency.
- promote diversity in the membership of our board, committees and working groups.
- ensure all people have equal access to advertised positions, interviews, equipment, office accommodation, training, and promotion.
- Offer children, young people and their families through our enrolment forms, an opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs.

In considering principles of participation, we will ensure that:

- Children and young people are listened to.
- Children and young people are supported in expressing their views.
- Children and young people's views are taken into account.
- Children and young people are involved in decision making.
- Children and young people share power and responsibility for decision making.

5.3 We will ensure that all forms of communication are accessible and child friendly.

These principles entail the following:

- **Listen to young people:** Listening is a fundamental part of communicating. In other words, young people should be given opportunities to make their views known about what they do or don't want or need.
- **Understand the audience:** It is critically important to make efforts to understand the target audience—their needs, attitudes, and behaviours—before developing messages aimed at them. The diverse backgrounds of children, young people, their parents, and care givers should be considered as part of this.
- **Encourage participation:** young people should expect to be consulted about and participate in developing communication directed to them.
- **Create appropriate, relevant content:**
 - **Be brief:** young people and children appreciate a straightforward, brief and to-the-point message.
 - **Send positive, aspirational messages:** Often communication with children and young people is negative in nature and tone, focused on rules and logistics. Instead, consider the tone of the communication and ensure that it respects the individual it is speaking with.
 - **Check language and images:** Always pre-test communications before distributing more widely to check on audience understanding, and appropriateness of the language and images used.
- **Establish what's in it for young people:** Quickly establish that the communication is for young people and that it is a two-way conversation. Consider whether your communications can be created by or with young people, rather than just being a one-way channel of speaking to them. Create a conversational approach that is honest and respectful.
- **Empower the audience:** It is important to empower children and young people to have ownership of an issue and the conversation around it (in an age-appropriate manner). Consider safe, positive use of technology and how digital tools can support this.

Assess all communications through a lens of inclusion, equity, and diversity: commit resources to support the equity and diversity of the children and young people, including but not limited to supporting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, LGBTI, and those unable to live at home.

The methods used for communicating with children, young people, their parents, and care givers are:

- Policies and procedures
- Organisation website
- Posters available at service delivery sites
- Welcome Packs and other information booklets.
- Surveys, complaints forms or other feedback mechanisms.
- Formal and informal verbal communication through events, in-person discussions, webinars, etc

These methods will include information about our commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People including our Code of Conduct. Reporting policies will be made available for children and young people and their families including in developmentally appropriate language and languages used by the main communities that access our services.

At a minimum, we will commit to providing:

- Information to parents and care givers about our commitment and approach to safeguarding children and young people. This includes as a minimum, reference to our:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Reporting Policy
- Our Parents / Care Givers' Code of Conduct outlining the expected behaviours of them whilst engaged with our organisation.

Child-friendly versions of our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy that reflect the age, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children and young people to whom we deliver services. These include information to ensure children and young people are aware that they have a right to:

- feel safe at all times, when they are participating in our services.
- tell a particular person within our organisation about any situation in which they do not feel safe.
- be taken seriously if they disclose a situation in which they do or did not feel safe.
- Child-friendly information for children about their rights, the behaviours they can expect of personnel, and the behaviours our organisation expects of them. The information reflects the age, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children and young people to whom we deliver services.

6. Monitoring, Review and Communication

This document will be reviewed at least every 3 years, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Leadership team and/or Director. We retain records to document each review undertaken including minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

External audit and verification based on a sample, conducted by the Australian Childhood Foundation shall occur at 3 yearly intervals. (For accredited organisations)

We communicate our Diversity and inclusion policy and its requirements to children, young people and their families and our personnel. Our organisation ensures all new personnel are informed and supported to understand our organisations safeguarding children and young people policies and procedures, paying particular attention to the practices detailed in this policy.

Copies of this Diversity and inclusion policy and our organisation's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Code of Conduct are provided directly to personnel; they are also publicly accessible and available in child-friendly versions.

7. Supporting Resources

- E.g. Information for parents and care givers - posters, brochures
- E.g. Information for children and young people - posters, brochures
- E.g. Other frameworks and toolkits:
- Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations <https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SNAICC-VACCA-OCS-ChildSafeReport-LRwith-alt-tags-May2021.pdf>
- LGBTI Inclusive Practice <https://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au/media/pages/rainbowtick/2565067543-1650953507/rainbow-tick-guide-to-lgbti-inclusive-practice-web.pdf>

8. References

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Commonwealth)

- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (TAS)
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Commonwealth)
- NDIS (Practice Standards - Worker Screening) Rules 2018
- NDIS (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024 (TAS)

9. Breach of this policy

Any behaviour that is not consistent with this policy will be investigated, if the Team Member is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

For clarification regarding this policy, please contact:

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