

Northern Beaches Women's Shelter Diversity and Cultural Inclusion Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to outline and define the framework that informs how Northern Beaches Women's Shelter (NBWS) ensures its services are accessible to all clients seeking support, regardless of the diverse circumstances they may face. This policy applies to all staff members, volunteers, and the Shelter's Board.

2. Policy

NBWS is committed to:

- Creating an inclusive workplace that honours and respects the diversity of customs, cultures, and beliefs.
- Ensuring that services are delivered in a manner that values and respects the individual customs, cultures, and beliefs of clients.
- Preventing harassment or discrimination of any kind, particularly discrimination based on protected attributes (as outlined in the Fair Work Act 2009).

3. Definitions

Cultural diversity and inclusion refer to creating and maintaining an environment that respects all people, especially:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Individuals from diverse racial, religious, or cultural backgrounds

Protected attributes under the Fair Work Act 2009 include:

- Race
- Colour
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Physical or mental disability
- Marital status
- Family or carer responsibilities
- Pregnancy
- Religion
- Political opinion
- National origin
- Social origin
- Breastfeeding
- Gender identity
- Intersex status

Board: Refers to the Shelter's Management Committee.

4. Policy Context

This policy is linked to:

- **ASES Standard:**
 - Standard 7: Service Outcomes
 - Requirement 7.1: Outcomes Monitored Standards
 - Standard 8: Consumer Outcomes
 - Requirement 8.1: Consumer and Community Engagement Standards
 - Requirement 8.2: Consumer Feedback and Complaints Standards
- **NSW Department of Communities and Justice Funding Deed**
- Relevant legislation:
 - Racial Discrimination Act 1975
 - Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1992
 - Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
 - Fair Work Act 2009

5. Procedure

NBWS actively works towards:

- Incorporating diversity and cultural inclusion into staff, volunteer and Board orientation processes.
- Providing staff with training in cultural competence and safety, ensuring that these principles are embedded in the organisation's practices, policies, and service delivery.
- Actively recruiting staff from diverse backgrounds, or those with experience working with people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.
- Making information about services and programs available in languages other than English, reflecting the demographic needs of the area NBWS serves.
- Engaging people from diverse backgrounds in service planning to identify and address their needs.
- Regularly reviewing policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers for individuals from CALD backgrounds.
- Zero tolerance for harassment or discrimination, ensuring internal and legal protocols are followed to address or prevent such behaviour.
- Adopting flexible service approaches to meet client's cultural and linguistic needs.

NBWS aims for its staff to:

- Demonstrate respect for clients' cultural and religious customs, health practices, and beliefs.

- Provide interpreters (including sign language interpreters) when clients are unable to communicate easily in English.
- Conduct assessments for clients from CALD backgrounds or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a manner that is culturally appropriate. This may involve accredited interpreters or engaging extended family members as required by the client.
- Seek information from clients (or their family/carer) about their customs, culture, and beliefs, especially when these may influence service provision (e.g., dietary preferences or religious rituals).
- Endeavour to meet specific client requests that show respect for their cultural practices (e.g., supporting religious practices or facilitating social networks).
- Where possible, provide clients access to staff from similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

Authorisation

This policy has been authorised by the Board Chairperson or CEO of NBWS.

Version	Approved	Review date
1.0	2024	2027

Signed by CEO

Narelle Hand
