

# Policy on Access for People with Impairments or Disabilities

## **Background**

The Anti-Discrimination Act aims to protect people in Queensland from unfair discrimination (direct or indirect), sexual harassment and other objectionable conduct and provides a means to bring a complaint and have it resolved.

Protections under the legislation include but are not limited to sex, sexuality, age, race, religious beliefs or activity, impairment, political beliefs or activity, family responsibilities, discriminatory advertising or unlawful requests for information. The Act prohibits discrimination in areas which may apply to U3A such as Education, Goods and Services and Club Membership and affairs.

U3A associations are not for profit bodies managed by volunteers. U3As deliver their programs through the service of volunteer tutors. The objective of the U3A movement is to provide programs to those in their third age. The program is intended to provide persons in their third age with activities designed to offer intellectual stimulation, improved physical health and well-being and opportunities for social engagement.

## **Purpose of the Policy**

The policy is intended to encourage understanding of the obligations of U3A personnel under the Act which requires the equal treatment of all potential members of U3A regardless of age, impairment or attributes such as sex, race, religion or individual circumstance.

## **Policy**

U3A will provide an accepting, caring, friendly, inclusive, safe and comfortable environment for all members, in which every person will be treated without bias or prejudice and where every endeavor will be made to accommodate those with impairments or special needs.

# Procedures for the Management of Access for People with Impairments or Disabilities

## **Responsibilities**

The Management Committee will:

- promote a culture of effective policy compliance across the organisation;
- actively promote anti-discrimination policy and practice and monitor performance in enactment of the policy;
- appoint a liaison officer whose role is to facilitate the accommodation and acceptance of persons with a disability and to initially deal with issues raised by those feeling discriminated against and/or those who have been accused of discriminatory behaviour;
- ensure that any adverse practice or performance is addressed;
- identify the need for and provide additional support for those who require it, discuss the need with the applicant and make changes provided that those changes do not impose unjustifiable hardship on U3A;and
- investigate all insurance requirements and ensure that they have been met.

All office holders, tutors and members will:

- ensure that they are aware of the organisation's policy against discrimination;
- refrain from acting in a manner which could be considered discriminatory;
- offer assistance and where necessary, mentoring, to those who require it; and
- report immediately to the Liaison Officer any instances of behaviour that may need to be addressed.

Applicants with a disability or special need, or their agents:

- will identify, where necessary, any potential adjustment required to courses or premises to enable participation in activities and/or classes;

- discuss the special needs of the applicant with the U3A Liaison Officer and with the permission of the applicant the Liaison Officer will review details with relevant people such as the tutor;
- may be accompanied at a class or activity by a carer who can facilitate their participation in the activity;
- must if they rely on a carer, have their carer present at all times during a U3A class or activity.

## Processes

- The Membership application forms will provide an opportunity for a prospective member with a disability to identify any special needs using words such as: *Do you need adjustments to accommodate a disability? (response optional)*;
- With the tutor's cooperation any necessary adjustments are made to the course/es in which the applicant seeks to enrol, provided that the adjustments can be reasonably accommodated, do not change the basic nature of the course, do not require a change of venue that cannot be accommodated because of cost or unavailability or do not require a change to the timetable that cannot be reasonably accommodated;
- If adjustments require structural modifications to premises the matter is referred to the Management Committee;
- The Management Committee will assess the request for adjustment and determine whether it is a reasonable adjustment that can be accommodated, or an unjustifiable hardship that cannot be accommodated. The Committee may need to seek legal advice in such a determination;
- In the event that the applicant/member feels that his/her special needs have not been adequately made provision for, he/she can take their grievance to the Liaison Officer who will attempt to resolve the grievance;
- If the Liaison Officer is unable to resolve the situation it will be dealt with by the Management Committee in accord with the Grievance Policy and Procedures/Constitution and By-Laws/ Code of Conduct;
- A person who believes that their complaint about discrimination has not been adequately addressed by the U3A is able to take their complaint to the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland.