

Community Development & Services Policy

Policy Statement

Northern Beaches Council acts principally as a facilitator and enabler of community development and services, with activities carried out in collaboration with service providers including community groups, charitable organisations, government and non-government agencies, and neighbouring Councils.

Council is involved in community planning, research, advocacy, promoting social cohesion and participation, information provision, grant funding and as a facilitator of services and provider of affordable and subsidised facilities. Through these activities Council will work strategically with local services to maximise the efficiency and quality of service delivery to the Northern Beaches community.

Council encourages, enables and assists local groups and organisations to provide relevant services and activities for residents of the Northern Beaches and will consider providing services directly when there is an identified priority and where no other organisation has the capacity or ability to provide the required service.

Principles

Community development and service activities will be conducted in accordance with the following foundational social justice and sustainability principles outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan (Shape 2028):

Equity

There should be fairness in decision making, prioritising, and allocation of resources, particularly for those in need. Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community. The planning process should take particular care to involve and protect the interests of people in vulnerable circumstances

Intergenerational Equity

Planning and decision making should ensure short term solutions do not compromise long term conditions and opportunities. The health, diversity and productivity of the environment must be maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

Precautionary Principle

Lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent any risks of serious harm to people or the environment.

Access

Everyone should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Participation

Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.

Rights

Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities for people from diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

The Community Development & Services Policy also includes the following principle:

Inclusion

Ensuring all members of the community feel safe, supported, valued, and given opportunities to participate meaningfully in community life.

Scope and application

The Community Development and Services Policy provides a clear framework for Council and the local community to maximise the quality and effectiveness of services, relevant to community priorities, contributing to the vision of the Community Strategic Plan (Shape 2028):

‘A safe, inclusive and connected community that lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment.’

The implementation of this Policy includes the following activities for community development and services:

1. Community / Social Planning

Community and social planning provides a strategic planning framework for community development, services and facilities in the Northern Beaches area. Council will investigate and document local priorities, in consultation with service providers and local residents. Council also makes available important research and planning information to assist other agencies, particularly community-based organisations, to effectively plan their services and programs.

2. Leadership & Advocacy

Council acknowledges its strategic capacity to influence decision-making in other levels of government and the wider community, in ways that can enhance the quality of life of the Northern Beaches community. As a result, Council will play an advocacy role to other levels of government, agencies and businesses and contribute to regional interagencies and forums.

3. Promoting Social Cohesion & Volunteering

Council supports, facilitates and provides funding for social and cultural activities through strategic activations and programs as an important means of promoting social cohesion. Council supports volunteering within Council and acts as an advocate for volunteering in the broader community.

4. Information Provision

Council informs the community about community development and services through the provision of a broad range of information through Council’s website, libraries, community centres and customer service centres, e-newsletters, a range of media, poster, banners, brochures and by word of mouth through Council staff. Council will facilitate the sharing of information within the community and between service providers and agencies to promote access to community services and activities.

5. Collaboration & Support

Council will facilitate, support and encourage program and service delivery through effective collaboration with other levels of government, other councils, service providers and community based organisations and groups. Council supports community organisations through grants programs as well as information sharing, collaborative projects and community interagencies. Council will work strategically and support local service providers to maximise the efficiency and quality of service delivery as supported community organisations contribute to a well-served community and assists the capacity of the community to determine and achieve its own outcomes.

6. Community Facilities & Subsidised Accommodation

Council will manage and maintain community facilities that are responsive to community priorities and support community organisations through the provision of facilities at a subsidised rate, if and when available. As public trustee and guardian of public and community assets Council will provide access for all members of the community. Council will actively pursue innovative ways to maximise the use of public and community assets, including co-location of services and the provision of community service hubs.

7. Provision of direct Community Services

Council will consider and continue to provide appropriate direct community services that are responsive to the strategic priorities of the local community if another government or non-government agency is unable to provide an accessible and equitable service to residents of the Northern Beaches. This will include an assessment of:

- The importance of the service to the Northern Beaches community in terms of contribution to community wellbeing, connections and quality of life.
- The ability of an external organisation to provide an effective and efficient service.
- The ability of an organisation to demonstrate quality outcomes for the Northern Beaches community, with particular reference to disadvantaged residents.
- The availability of relevant resources.

This policy covers all activities undertaken in the area of community services, with the exception of children's services, governed by the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and library services, governed by the Library Act 1939.

References and related documents

- NSW Office of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework (2009)
- Local Government Act 1993, Chapter 3, Section 8 & Chapter 6
- Northern Beaches Council Community Strategic Plan (Shape 2028) 2018-2028
- Northern Beaches Council Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2017-2021
- Northern Beaches Council Arts & Creativity Strategy 2018-2028 (Draft)
- Northern Beaches Council Community Centres Strategy 2019 (under development)
- Northern Beaches Council Social Infrastructure Study (under development)
- Northern Beaches Council Social Plan (under development)

Previous Council Strategies;

- Pittwater Social Plan 2012-2016 – Pittwater Council
- Manly Youth Strategy 2014 - Manly Council
- Warringah Youth Strategy 2013-2023– Warringah Council
- Living Well - Warringah Ageing Strategy 2014 – Warringah Council
- Creative Warringah Strategy 2014-2020 – Warringah Council
- Warringah Multicultural Strategy 2015–2020 – Warringah Council

Definitions

Community Development: working with communities to enhance well-being and build a stronger and more connected community. Community development principles include inclusion, empowerment, social justice, human rights, self-determination and collective action. Community development activities are aimed at reducing social isolation and empowering individuals to live within a supported community.

Community Services: are direct services that are provided to the most vulnerable in our community, including services for seniors, youth, children and families, people with disabilities and carers, communities and in the areas of mental health, housing support, legal aid, migrant support and domestic violence. Direct services are generally funded and within the remit of the NSW Department of Family & Community Services (FaCS) and the Federal Department of Social Services.

Responsible Officer

Executive Manager Community, Arts & Culture

Review Date

March 2023

Revision History

Revision	Date	Status	TRIM Ref
1	5 Feb 2019	First draft Community Development & Services policy	2019/062915
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