Participation & Inclusion Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the Life Skills & Adventures' commitment to promote participation and inclusion through programs and services, planning and reporting processes, marketing and communications, and volunteer and employment opportunities. This policy also seeks to identify and remove barriers to participation in all aspects of the organisation and its services and aims to positively change attitudes and practices.

2. DEFINITIONS

Participation

Participation is the right and the choice of individuals to have a 'share in' or 'to take part in'. Within a community context this involves equitable and active involvement in community and the ability to participate (opportunity, choice, and capability) to:

Learn – participate in education and training
Work – participate in employment
Engage – connect with people, use local services and participate in local, cultural, civic and recreational activities
Have a Voice – influence decisions that affect them; and
Belong – being part of a social network and a community makes people feel valued and included and has a strong protective effect on health and wellbeing.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about ALL of us living full lives. Inclusion treasures diversity and builds community.

The vision of a socially inclusive society is one in which all Australian's feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our society. *A Stronger, Fairer Australia – Commonwealth Government 2010*

VicHealth defines a socially inclusive society as one 'where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community.'

Access

Access refers to the opportunity all people have to engage independently with their environment. The basic requirement of good access is that the physical, sensual, information and attitudinal environments are barrier-free.

The term 'access' refers to any outcome that is achieved by the removal of 'barriers' or obstacles that may impede an individual's rights to participate in their community.

3. SCOPE

The scope of this policy applies to all approved Camp Programs undertaken by Life Skills & Adventures.

Life Skills & Advenutures supports the approach that inclusion and participation is a fundamental objective of all areas of operation. These include, but are not limited to:

- Programs and Services
- Community Recreation
- Community Strengthening
- Camping and Outdoor Education
- Youth Development and Leadership
- Financial Management
- Communication and Marketing
- Human Resource Management
- Risk Management

By providing and supporting opportunities for participation, Life Skills & Adventures is well positioned to positively impact the quality of numerous lives every year. This Policy aims to meet LSA's and the community's needs in order to achieve the overall policy objective of *Participation, Inclusion and Connection.*

Life Skills & Adventures aims to enhance access and inclusion to all members of the community which we serve, regardless of age, gender, ability, health, race, culture, religion, sexuality and background. This policy specifically identifies population groups experiencing social exclusion including but not limited to:

- Low socio-economic populations
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Cultural and linguistically diverse and newly arrived populations
- Regional and remote communities
- Sole parent families
- Young people
- Older adults
- People with a mental illness
- People with a disability
- Impairment due to a medical condition, illness or injury

4. POLICY

Life Skills & Adventures has a legal, moral and Mission-driven responsibility to be inclusive of all people. LSA is committed to optimising participation by providing opportunities and environments that are welcoming and inclusive. Respect for each and every individual is paramount and diversity is valued.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Area	**Role/Responsibility**
Directors/Managers	Be responsible to implement and monitor the relevant tasks required to ensure an inclusive environment and respond in an appropriate and timely manner to any participation and inclusion issues within the organisation and the programs run in the community.
Staff and Volunteers	LSA Camp Leaders (staff and volunteers) will be ambassadors/advocates for health, happiness, inclusion and connection in their local community
Governance	Directors will be responsible for compliance with related legislations, regulations and standards.

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The ongoing monitoring and compliance of this policy will be overseen by the LSA Director. Each program will complete an annual self-assessment against this procedure, associated policy and the legislated standards from which it was drawn.

The evaluation of the policy will be facilitated by the LSA Director using stakeholder feedback to drive continuous improvement and reflect service users' comments where practical.

7. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (LINKS TO PROCEDURES, LEGISLATION, FORMS, WORK PRACTICES)

Participation and Inclusion is linked with a number of existing policies, strategies and pieces of work including Program Principles and Life Skills & Adventures' benevolent activities.

The Participation and Inclusion Policy demonstrates LSA's compliance with related legislation, regulations and standards including, but not limited to:

International Law

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights 1966
- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966,
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2001
- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Federal Government Legislation and Standards

A Stronger, Fairer Australia – a new social inclusion strategy 2010

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- The Disability Act 2006
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999
- Age Discrimination Act 2004.

State Government Legislation and Standards

- The Victoria Charter of Human Rights Act 2006
- The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- The Victorin State Disability Plan 2002-2012
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2004

Internal Policies

- Occupation Health and Safety

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