

Implementing a social/community plan

Step one – incorporate access and equity activities in the management plan.

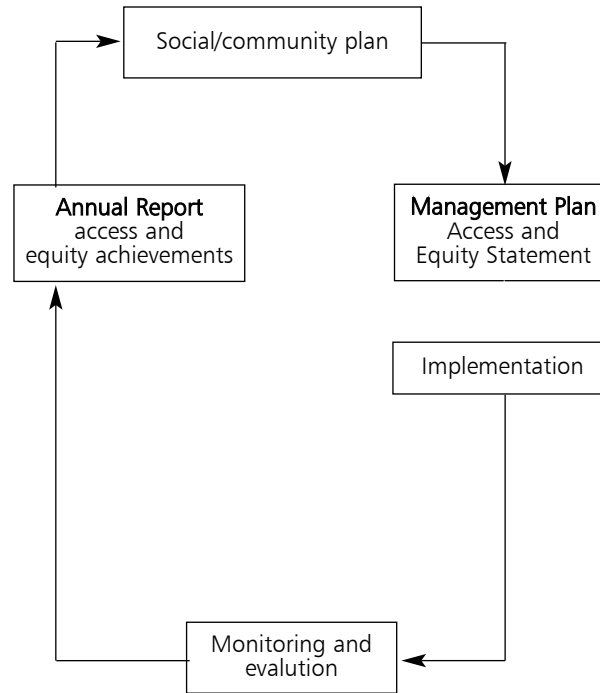
Step two – work with relevant agencies to implement these access and equity activities.

Step three – monitor and evaluate the activities to check that they are implemented as planned and are having the desired effect on the community.

Reporting requirements

A council's annual report must include:

- a comparison of the actual and projected performance of their access and equity activities, including reasons for any differences
- details of activities undertaken to develop and promote services and programs that provide for the needs of each of the target groups
- details of how the three key result areas (social justice, community harmony, and economic and cultural opportunities) apply to each activity aimed at assisting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Need more information?

For more information, please see the revised social/community planning guidelines and manual issued by the Department of Local Government in late 2002.

They are available on our website at: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

You can also contact the Department by phone on (02) 4428 4100.

Social and Community Planning A whole of community approach

Helping councils to understand and respond to the needs and concerns of their local communities

The Local Government (General) Regulation 1999 requires all councils in NSW to:

- develop a social/community plan at least once every 5 years
- include a statement about proposed access and equity activities in their management plan
- report on these access and equity activities in their annual report.

What is a social/community plan?

A social/community plan identifies and addresses the needs of the local community by:

- describing who makes up the community
- summarising key priority issues
- assessing the effectiveness of any previous plans
- recommending strategic ways for council and other government and non-government agencies to meet community needs.

Social/community planning is based on social justice principles such as:

- Equity – fairness in resource distribution
- Access – fairer access for everyone to the resources and services essential to meet basic needs and improve their quality of life that affect their daily lives
- Rights - recognition and promotion of civil rights

- Participation – better opportunities for everyone to participate in decisions

Access and equity activities include:

- a council's welfare, health, cultural and recreation activities
- the access and equity aspects of other council activities such as providing infrastructure and services, planning and regulatory activities, providing information and levying rates.

A social/community plan should therefore be developed using a 'whole-of-council' approach that involves all relevant sections of council.

Social/community planning is important for councils because it:

- develops a positive role for council as a leader in addressing social issues
- enhances the everyday lives of residents through improved services and facilities
- produces economic benefits by encouraging a planned and orderly approach to delivering services
- improves risk management and compliance with relevant legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act
- promotes partnerships between various agencies and the community

- provides environmental benefits such as community input into environmental planning processes and the development of local environment projects.

The social/community plan must identify and address the needs of:

- children
- young people
- women
- older people
- people with disabilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Councils may also include any other groups in the community identified as having special needs.

All stakeholders, including local residents, businesses, community groups and government and non-government agencies, must be given an opportunity to participate in the development of the plan and contribute their views.

Councils could also consider a regional social/community planning process with neighbouring councils to help form partnerships and optimise the use of resources.