



**Social / Community
Planning and Reporting
*MANUAL***

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose of this manual

The Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998 requires all councils in NSW to develop a social/community plan or its equivalent by June 1999 and include information about access and equity activities in their management plan and annual report.

The Department of Local Government has prepared 'Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines' to provide Councils with detailed information about the requirements of this new regulation.

This 'Social and Community Planning Manual' has also been developed to help Councils implement the new regulation. It should be read in conjunction with the 'Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines'.

Unlike the guidelines, this manual contains information which councils should consider when developing their social/community plans and organising other social planning activities, rather than requirements that they must follow. It should be particularly useful for councils who are developing their first social/community plan.

2. Suggested format for a social/community plan

A social/community plan could contain the following chapters.

Chapter 1 – an outline of the aims of the social/community plan and the planning principles used to develop the plan.

Chapter 2 - an outline of the process used to develop the plan.

Chapter 3 – a community profile based on key demographic data relating to the local government area or region.

Chapter 4 onwards – based on key community issues and/or specific target groups.

3. Suggested steps for developing a social/community plan

The five suggested steps are:

1. Decide on a methodology for developing the social/community plan
2. Develop a statistical profile of the community
3. Conduct a needs assessment which includes:
 - a) auditing existing available information about community needs and target groups
 - b) reviewing current Council services and other key services to determine their appropriateness and accessibility
 - c) consulting members of target groups and other key stakeholders
 - d) prioritising needs
4. Formulate strategies and set goals and targets
5. Consult on draft plan

These steps are outlined in more detail in the manual.

4. Further information

The reference section at the end of this manual suggests a range of books and reports which provide more detailed information about the social/community planning process and the needs of particular groups within the community.

Social/Community Planning Manual

1. Background

Councils should make sure that they are familiar with the approach and requirements outlined in the Social/Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines before starting to develop their social plan.

A social/community plan should help councils, in conjunction with their community, to:

- ◆ *promote fairness in the distribution of resources, particularly for those most in need*
- ◆ *recognise and promote people's rights and improve the accountability of decision makers*
- ◆ *ensure that people have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life*
- ◆ *give people better opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.*

A social/community plan examines the needs of the local community, including groups which may be disadvantaged in some way, and formulates strategies which Council and/or other agencies could implement to address identified needs. The plan informs Council's strategic planning process across a range of functions and helps to make sure that Council services are responsive and accessible to all residents, as far as possible.

2 Important Social Planning Factors

- ◆ Developing and implementing a high quality social/community plan is an evolving process and should not stop once councils have completed their first plan. Fine tuning a social/community planning document and activities to maximise their efficiency and effectiveness will take time but will help councils make incremental progress towards achieving long term goals.
- ◆ The participatory processes used to develop a social/community plan are critical for its long term success. The plan should be developed in consultation with local residents, commercial and social groups, and other government and non-government agencies. Developing collaborative working relationships with these other groups, especially Commonwealth and State government agencies, and ensuring that their existing plans are taken into account, gives councils the opportunity to have input into other planning processes and work in partnership to deliver coordinated and complementary services to the local community.
- ◆ The social/community plan is an important management tool to help councils meet their other planning responsibilities. The information and strategies identified in the plan can help councils develop their management plans, business unit/service plans, equal employment opportunity plans, environmental plans, section 94 community facilities contribution plans and residential development plans. Other specialised planning documents which councils may have that examine particular themes in more detail will, in turn, be able to inform the content of the social/community plan.
- ◆ It is not realistic to expect that councils, in conjunction with other local community resources, will be able to meet all the needs identified in the social/community plan in the short term. Priority recommendations will have to be identified and implemented in a staged fashion depending on the level of resources available.

2.1 Possible approaches to social/community planning

There is no one prescribed format or method for preparing a social/community plan and different councils across NSW have developed and used a range of innovative planning models. Some councils have decided to adopt a regional approach and work with other neighbouring councils to develop their social/community plan.

Although developing a comprehensive social/community plan can be a complex and resource intensive process, the level of resources required can be tailored to the circumstances of individual councils.

Councils new to social/community planning should find the suggested steps outlined in section 4 of this manual a useful guide for developing a social/community plan.

2.2 Specific target groups

As well as information about the broad community, social/community plans must include data and information about the needs of particular target groups.

The seven mandatory target groups are:

- ◆ Children
- ◆ Young people
- ◆ Women
- ◆ Older people
- ◆ People with disabilities including those with HIV/AIDS
- ◆ Aboriginal people
- ◆ People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Councils may also include information about other specific groups in their community such as low income earners, gay/lesbian and transgender people, families, new residents and unemployed people.

Councils also need to consider specific legal requirements that will affect their planning for particular groups in the community. Part D of the Department's Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines contains details of councils' obligations under the Local Government Act, the Ethnic Affairs Commission Act and Disability Discrimination legislation.

Councils should also note the existence of state and commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation covering councils outlined in Part D of the Department's Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines. Although gays and lesbians are not one of the seven mandatory target groups, Councils should make sure that their planning takes their needs into account and council does not inadvertently discriminate against these groups. Appendix A contains more information about planning to assist sexual minority citizens.

3. Suggested Format for a social/community plan

Councils developing their first few social/community plans may find this a useful format.

Chapter 1

This chapter could contain an outline of the aims of the social/community plan and the planning principles Council used when developing the plan.

It could include information such as:

- ◆ The need for councils to help meet the state government's social justice commitments and:
 - ◆ promote fairness in the distribution of resources, particularly for those most in need
 - ◆ recognise and promote people's rights and improve the accountability of decision makers
 - ◆ ensure that people have fairer access to the economic resources and services essential to meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life
 - ◆ give people better opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.
- ◆ Developing a social/community plan is an evolving process and the plan will need updating and fine tuning over time.
- ◆ The plan is a product of a participatory process which aims to forge working relationships between Council, other key government and non-government agencies, and community and business groups so that important community issues can be identified and tackled in a cooperative way.
- ◆ Identifying community issues will help Council formulate its management and business plans across the range of council functions and make sure its services, facilities and processes are, as far as possible, accessible and responsive to all members of the community.
- ◆ Although identifying and documenting community needs is an important first step, realistic expectations need to be maintained. Councils and/or other agencies will not be able to meet all identified needs in the short term. Priority recommendations will have to be identified and implemented in a staged fashion depending on the level of resources available.

Chapter 2

This chapter could contain an outline of the process which council used, in conjunction with the community, to develop the social/community plan. It should show how a participatory needs assessment was done involving key stakeholders, representatives of the mandatory target groups, and other community groups.

This chapter could also outline any changes Council plans to make to its future social/community planning processes and note that the social/community plan will be updated within the next five years.

Chapter 3

This chapter could contain a community profile based on key demographic data relating to the local government area or region. The more detailed demographic data on particular issues and/or target groups could be put at the beginning of the specific chapters for each issue or group.

Chapter 4 onwards

The remaining chapters in the plan could contain details about key community issues and /or the seven mandatory target groups, and other relevant target groups. The identified key community issues will vary according to the circumstances of each local government area but may cover issues such as transport, recreation, employment and affordable housing.

Information about the different target groups can be covered in separate chapters, integrated into key issue chapters, or a combination of both.

Each chapter should have a short summary of the key issue and/or target group it covers. This summary page should also include any recommendations about the issue or target group which were seen as a high priority to the community and which could be implemented by Council and/or other community groups to address the identified need. These summaries will help each council when they prepare their social/community planning executive summary.

4. Suggested Steps for Developing a Social/Community Plan

The five suggested steps are:

1. Decide on a methodology for developing the social/community plan
2. Develop a statistical profile of the community
3. Conduct a needs assessment which includes:
 - a) auditing existing information available about community needs and target groups
 - b) reviewing current Council services and other key services to determine their appropriateness and accessibility
 - c) consulting members of target groups and other key stakeholders
 - d) prioritising needs.
4. Formulate strategies and set goals and targets
5. Consult on draft plan

The steps contain some strongly recommended actions and some desirable ones.

Strongly recommended actions should be given priority over desirable ones if councils are unable to do both.

4.1 Step 1 – Decide on a methodology for developing the social/community plan

Strongly Recommended

Councils will first need to set rigorous boundaries for the social/community planning task ahead. They need to decide if the social/community plan is going to be developed in-house or sourced externally, the amount of resources to be allocated for this task, and the time frame required. Making these decisions 'up front' will help councils manage community expectations and avoid a protracted consultation phase which exceeds the allocated resources.

If Council staff will be developing the plan, a decision needs to be made as to whether a single person or a multi-disciplinary team will be used to drive this process plus who will have executive responsibility for the plan being completed. Regardless of who is given the task of driving the process, it is a corporate responsibility to make sure that the plan is developed. Council staff across the full range of departments/sections should be involved in identifying issues and making recommendations to be included in the plan.

It is also important to make sure that the designated social/community planners clearly understand the purpose of the needs assessment process before collecting any information about their local government area.

Desirable

Councils may also consider establishing an advisory group or groups to help prepare a methodology for developing the social/community plan.

If Councils decide to develop the social/community plan in house and adopt a consultation strategy relying on public meetings or focus groups, they need to make sure they have an experienced facilitator who is skilled in chairing such meetings. This facilitator should also have credibility with the

target group being consulted. Depending on staffing resources, it may be useful for council staff to co-facilitate these meetings with an experienced and credible community leader or for council to employ a consultant facilitator for particular tasks.

4.2 Step 2 - Develop a statistical profile of the community

A statistical profile is an objective set of statistics on a community, compiled to give a clear understanding of the composition of that community.

Strongly recommended

Councils must undertake an analysis of the demographic statistical information available about their local government area (LGA) including information on the seven mandatory target groups.

These groups are:

- ◆ **Children** (ie. those aged 0-11)
- ◆ **Young people** (ie those aged between 12 and 24)
- ◆ **Women**
- ◆ **Older people** (ie people aged 55 years and over)
- ◆ **People with disabilities** (this term covers all types of disabilities, including those with HIV/AIDS)
- ◆ **Aboriginal people** (ie those who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identify as such, and are accepted by the respective Aboriginal or TSI community)
- ◆ **People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds** (including racial, ethnic and ethno- religious minority groups)

Councils may also include information about other specific groups in their community such as low income earners, gay/lesbian and transgender people, families, new residents and unemployed people.

Most of this information can be obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and supplemented with information from the NSW Ageing and Disability Department, the Commonwealth Department of Social Security and the Department of Immigration.

There are two options for collecting and analysing this statistical information:

- a) Councils can choose to develop the community profile in-house. Appendix B contains additional information to help councils meet the minimum requirements of this task.
- b) Alternatively, councils can purchase a statistical package from the ABS that provides a standard Regional Profile for LGAs. This profile has been specifically designed to help councils develop a statistical profile of their community.

The ABS Regional Profile aims to provide councils with relevant data in a format that is easy to use and understand. The profile contains tables and graphs covering key census data (eg. sex-age structure, family types, ethnicity indicators) as well as additional socio-economic data from both the ABS and other government agencies. Comparisons with the State and time-series data are also included.

The package will be available from the Sydney office of the ABS from July 1998 at a cost of approximately \$200.

Desirable

The ABS produces a wide range of census products, including community profiles and thematic profiles, which provide more detailed census tables on various topics. These may be useful in providing additional information on the community if councils want to examine other topics beyond those in the LGA Regional Profile.

4.3 Step 3 - Conduct a needs assessment

This step involves collecting information about key issues and needs faced by the people living within the LGA or region. A broad definition of need should be used so that it includes any issues, commonly experienced by members of the community or a target group, which negatively impact on a person's quality of life. This means that a lot of the issues identified may not be directly related to Council's current services and facilities.

Councils should include qualitative as well as quantitative information about the needs of their community as information about people's perceptions of needs and issues is also important. This can be used to supplement findings that can be backed up by statistics and numbers.

The needs of all mandatory groups should be examined, regardless of each group's estimated numbers within the LGA. For example, quantitative information about people with disabilities is limited so councils need to make sure that the needs of people with disabilities are adequately assessed in this process.

There are various ways to conduct a needs assessment but as a minimum requirement councils should, in conjunction with other agencies and community representatives, carry out four main tasks.

These tasks involve:

- a) **Auditing existing information available about community needs and target groups.**

Strongly recommended

Councils should make sure that they access existing local and regional information about key issues and target groups within their community. This information can be obtained from a variety of sources including local, state and commonwealth government documents, community documents and media and local knowledge. Further research may be needed if information about certain issues or groups is not found in these documents.

Councils should examine a range of needs based plans including:

- ◆ the local Department of Housing's Regional 'Housing Area Plan' or Local Housing Strategy statements
- ◆ the local Department of Community Services' 'Integrated Community Services Area Plan' plus the minutes of any consultations held
- ◆ existing Ageing and Disability Department needs based plans for the Home and Community Care and Disability Services Programs
- ◆ any Area Assistance Plans developed within the last five years involving the local government area
- ◆ the social /community plans of neighbouring councils facing similar community issues to help Council obtain a regional overview
- ◆ local Area Health Service strategic plans
- ◆ local Department of Sport and Recreation strategic plans if one exists
- ◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) regional plans to supplement information obtained from the local Aboriginal Land Council
- ◆ Migrant Resource Centre's Settlement Needs Analysis Reports
- ◆ Cities of 21st Century- DUAP planning document for Sydney , Newcastle Central Coast and Wollongong (where relevant)
- ◆ Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health Regional Plans
- ◆ Tolerance Report, by Bird C and Coco B, 1996 Crossroads Community Care Sydney, and
- ◆ the local government section of the Street Watch Report, Anti-discrimination Board, Sydney

Further information about potential needs and issues facing members of the local community or a general overview of target group issues may also be obtained by writing to the following NSW government departments or agencies.

- ◆ Department of Juvenile Justice
- ◆ Department for Women
- ◆ Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- ◆ The Ethnic Affairs Commission
- ◆ Regional Organisations of Councils
- ◆ Premier Department's appropriate Regional Coordinator

After doing an audit of existing information on community needs, Councils may decide to use the findings of other organisations' research and consultations to explore the needs of the general community and /or specific target groups. In these cases, it is important to check that any information cited in the social/community plan is still current and acknowledge the sources of this information.

b) Reviewing current Council services and other key services within the community to determine their appropriateness and accessibility

Strongly recommended

Councils could conduct a review or audit of the way in which their practices might restrict people's access to their services.

For example, Councils should consider whether all adult residents including those falling within the seven mandatory target groups and those covered by anti-discrimination legislation :

- ◆ have access to the information issued by Council
- ◆ are able to use services provided by Council
- ◆ can participate in or attend Council meetings, open days and surveys.

Councils will need this information so that they can try to remedy any existing deficiencies in service provision and/or prevent future deficiencies.

The data collected when doing a review should, where possible, include a measure of the actual or perceived frequency with which people from the identified target groups use Council's services. This data will help Council identify any unintentional discriminatory practices that may be detrimentally affecting residents.

Most councils have not collected this kind of information in the past, so they will probably need to conduct a specific review by target group to examine each Council department and function. This review could use the same methods that Council would use to conduct a service performance review. For example, examine current performance level, identify areas in need of change, and develop realistic strategies, targets and goals.

Desirable

It would also be useful for councils to conduct an audit of all key services and resources available in the locality which are relevant to their key issues and target groups. This helps these services become involved in the needs and strategy identification process and ensures that relevant recommendations are formulated.

c) Consulting members of target groups and other key stakeholders

There are a range of different consultation methods which can be used to determine the key issues and needs of people within the local community, including those falling within the seven mandatory target groups. These methods include surveys, requests for submissions, confidential phone-ins, small focus groups with representatives of the target group in question, and community meetings by specific or general invitation. Councils may also need to consider other consultative strategies and aids such as providing a hearing loop and sign or language interpreters during consultations. Each potential consultation method has its strengths and weaknesses which Councils will need to consider when selecting the method or methods they will use.

Consultation also has the added benefit of actively engaging key government departments, other agencies and local community members in social planning and community development. This maximises the use of local skills and resources to develop local solutions to local problems.

Strongly recommended

Councils are advised to take full advantage of existing committees and consultative structures to help with their needs identification process.

They should develop a list of key agencies, groups, consumer representatives and community leaders who have detailed knowledge about the issues and target groups to be examined in the social / community plan. Community services directories or the local telephone book can help provide a list of contact people with knowledge about specific target group issues.

Information about the priority issues and needs faced by members of the target groups can then be obtained by phoning or talking face to face with a selection of people on this list. Councils should also ask these people to suggest other appropriate strategies for canvassing the views of the target group and other key stakeholders.

An appropriate consultation strategy for each issue and /or target group should then be developed in conjunction with the relevant community leaders. For example, just placing an advertisement in the local paper to attend a consultation or obtaining a copy of a survey would generally not be seen as appropriate.

Depending on the issue or target group being consulted, Councils could consider consultative strategies such as:

- ◆ After gaining the consent of the service, issuing a supply of invitations or surveys to services working with a particular issue and/or target group
- ◆ Using wheelchair accessible venues and organising transport, particularly if a meeting is being organised targeting people with disabilities or the frail aged
- ◆ Organising multi-lingual invitations/ information/ surveys and using ethnic radio and newspapers as well as contacting organisations such as the Ethnic Communities Council to promote a survey, meeting or phone-in
- ◆ Choosing a venue that is commonly used by members of the target group when organising a meeting or providing information
- ◆ Making sign or language interpreters available for focus group consultations where relevant
- ◆ Providing bilingual/bi cultural facilitators to ensure the use of a culturally appropriate process
- ◆ Organising confidential phone-ins and /or advertising through the gay and lesbian media as well as sending invitations to the nearest local gay and lesbian support groups.

It is important to remember that there may be numerous subgroups of people falling within a specific target group. Councils need to recognise that there could be a great diversity of group views and protocols within a single target group in one geographical community.

When convening a meeting with key agencies and members of the community to explore the issues relevant to particular target groups, it may be necessary to hold separate meetings or smaller workshops within the one large meeting. These smaller meetings should be based on the sub groups identified by community leaders.

Smaller groups are often better at exploring the full range of community issues and maximising the participation of people who feel uncomfortable speaking in large groups. A nominated minute taker and spokesperson for the group would generally then report back to the larger group or give the information to a Council staff member or contact person.

Some references at the end of this manual contain further information about organising community consultations.

d) Prioritising needs

Strongly recommended

It is important that Councils encourage participants in the community consultative process to rank their concerns according to perceived importance rather than just develop one long "wish" list.

Prioritising needs and recommendations is a difficult task but councils will eventually have to decide which recommendations to implement in which order. However, prioritising needs should not be solely based on the perceived number of people affected by an identified issue or falling within a particular target group. This perception may be inaccurate and, regardless of the accuracy of the estimated population, it is also important to assess the impact of that unmet need on the community or target group.

Appendix C contains information about a more structured approach to prioritising needs.

4.4 Step 4 - Formulate strategies and set goals and targets

Once the key issues have been identified, strategies need to be developed that could be implemented by council or other groups or agencies. These strategies should describe ways of improving the general quality of life experienced by people in the broad community and designated target groups in addition to ensuring that Council services are accessible and appropriate to all. Councils can then consider these strategies when preparing their management plans.

The strategies formulated will depend on the issues and unmet needs identified and the circumstances facing the particular council and community.

Many of the issues identified within a social/community plan may fall outside the responsibility or resources of Council. It may therefore be necessary to formulate some strategies which involve Council writing to a relevant authority or community group, or forming a working partnership with a relevant agency or group, to address the identified need.

For example, Council and the community may have identified that there is a general lack of awareness about the needs of people from a diverse cultural and linguistic background which prevents them from readily accessing Council information and other community services or government departments. Strategies to address this issue might include the provision of training for Council staff as part of developing a LEAPS Program as well as Council writing to other identified community services and government departments.

If Council and the community identify that people with a disability are discouraged from using services because of physical barriers, then strategies relating to the elimination of these physical barriers will obviously be required.

Strongly recommended

All Council business units should be involved in identifying potential access and equity strategies which could be included as recommendations in the social/community plan. These strategies could include in-service training, consultation processes, service reviews and audits, project/facilities development and anticipated capital works. Each business unit within Council should be asked to suggest strategies which would benefit the broader community as well as strategies for the mandatory target groups.

Councils should also involve key agencies and residents from the general community and specific target groups when formulating strategies. This will help to ensure that appropriate strategies are canvassed and Council does not unnecessarily duplicate existing initiatives already taking place in the community. The latter part of any consultations could be devoted to formulating strategies so that another separate consultation doesn't have to be organised at a later date.

Desirable

It is useful if each strategy included in the social/community plan identifies a specific goal and/or target. This will help Council monitor the achievement of the strategy if it is included in the management plan and/ or its business unit/operational plans for implementation.

4.5 Step 5 - Consulting on the draft plan

Strongly recommended

The community and other interested parties should be given an opportunity to comment on the draft social/community plan before it is adopted by Council. This can be done in a number of ways including public exhibition, advertising the draft and mailing out copies on request, and/or organising meetings to discuss particular areas of the plan.

If Councils have included information from other agencies in their social/community plan, they should consult with these agencies and check that the information is still current.

Desirable

Councils should try to consult the community and relevant agencies on the initial draft of the social/community plan as well as the final draft.

Relevant sections of the first draft of the plan could be sent to community participants for their comments or suggested changes. The designated person writing up the final report would then be able to consider these comments.

In the letter sent to participants asking them to comment on the draft, councils could also inform them that:

- a) Council will be considering the final social /community plan for the next five years, unless another is developed within that timeframe, to help prepare its annual management plan and/or business unit or operational plans.
- b) Council will have to include a section within the draft management plan specifying the access and equity activities that Council intends to implement to assist the community and people within the designated target groups covered by the plan.
- c) Members of the community will have an opportunity to comment on this draft management plan.
- d) Council will be required to report on its progress in implementing the adopted access and equity activities in their annual report each year.

If a decision is made not to include certain suggested changes in the final draft of the plan, a summary of key concerns, issues and comments arising from the development of the social/community plan could be included as an appendix to the final document.

5. Implementing a social/community plan

The desired outcome of a social/community plan is the adoption of certain identified high priority strategies into Council's management plans and/or business plans.

Therefore, when formulating their management plans, Councils will need to decide which if any of the recommended strategies in the social/community plan or executive summary will be implemented by Council in the following year. The strategies that are included in the management plan will be referred to as 'access and equity activities'.

Councils will also need to devise performance targets for each access and equity activity included in the management plan.

The implementation of the access and equity activities will then be monitored and evaluated as part of Council's annual report preparation.

For more information on implementing the recommendations of a social/community plan, please refer to the Department of Local Government's Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines issued with this manual.

6. Recommended Reading

The manuals and reports listed below provide further information to help local government staff prepare social and community plans and formulate strategies to assist particular groups within the community.

Detailed Social Planning Manual

- ◆ Ground Rules, A Social Planning Handbook for Local Government, Colin Menzies for the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW, NSW Local Government Industry Committee and NSW Department of Planning. LGSA, Sydney, 1993

Planning for People with Disabilities

- ◆ The NSW Government's Disability Policy Framework, Ageing and Disability Department and NSW Health, 1998
- ◆ Guidelines to assist agencies to develop disability action plans, Ageing and Disability Department and NSW Health, 1998.
- ◆ Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans: A Guide for Local Government, P Griffiths. Australian Local Government Association, Deakin, ACT, 1995
- ◆ Consultation and People with a Disability- Issues for Public Sector Managers in NSW, Ian Scales. The Disability Council of NSW, Sydney, 1997

Planning for Aboriginal People

- ◆ Building a Partnership Between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Local Government. Australian Local Government Association, Deakin, ACT, 1994

Planning for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

- ◆ For One and All- Access and Equity in Local Government: a Guide to Customer Service in a Multicultural Society. Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW, Sydney, 1994
- ◆ Building on our Cultural Diversity. Report of the Review of the Ethnic Affairs Commission Act 1979 and the Development of an Ethnic Affairs Action Plan 2000 White Paper, Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, Ashfield, NSW, 1996
- ◆ The Charter of Principles for a Cultural Diverse Society. Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW, Ashfield, NSW

Planning for Young People

- ◆ A Report on the Findings of Council Surveys Regarding Youth Consultation –NSW Department of Local Government Council Circular 97/63. NSW Department of Local Government, Bankstown, NSW, 1997

Planning to assist sexual minorities (including gay men and lesbians)

- ◆ More than Tolerance -Strategies to Improve Planning and Service Provision to Assist People from Sexual Minorities, Intersection, May 1997, (PO Box 380 , Broadway 2007_)
- ◆ Tolerance Report, Bird C and Coco, B. Crossroads Community Care, Sydney, 1996
(examines gay and lesbian issues in Sutherland Shire but has broad recommendations relevant to other councils as well. Phone Crossroads Community Care Centre Inc on 02 9525 3790 to obtain a copy)
- ◆ Out for Justice – education modules and material for organisations in understanding the issues that impact on lesbians and in developing strategies to improve access and equity , COAL (Coalition of Activist Lesbians), Sydney , 1997 (PO Box 424 Thirroul 2515)
- ◆ The Final Report of the Street Watch Implementation Advisory Committee -(Section on Local Government). Anti-Discrimination Board, Sydney,1996
- ◆ Gay and Lesbian Community Consultation, the Visibility Report. South Sydney City Council, Zetland, NSW
- ◆ Social Planning Kit , Intersection, 1998

To obtain a copy or get additional information about these reports, please contact Crossroads Community Care on 02 9525 3790.

Planning to assist women

- ◆ Gender Lens: A Guide to Inclusive Policy and Program Development. On the Internet at http://www.weq.gov.bc.ca/GENERAL/Gender_Lens/intro
- ◆ The Full Picture: Guidelines for Gender Analysis. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Wellington, New Zealand
- ◆ Gender Based Analysis – A Guide for Policy-Making. The Status of Women, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Internet E-mail address :swc-cfc@vli.ca

To obtain a copy or get additional information about these reports, please contact the Department for Women on 02 9334 1160.

Appendices

Appendix A

Planning to Assist Sexual Minority Citizens

This information will help councils to make sure that their planning takes into account the needs of sexual minority citizens living within their community and they comply with State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation.

Councils should be aware of privacy concerns when conducting a needs analysis for this target group. Many people within this group face direct or indirect discrimination as a result of their sexual preference so councils need to be sensitive to these issues when assessing their needs.

When formulating and reviewing their planning processes, Councils should:

A. Identify the degree to which gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people are isolated.

- ◆ Do Council funded or operated community information services include information on services and issues appropriate to their needs?
- ◆ Are any Council facilities targeted for these groups to use for meetings, cultural events etc?
- ◆ Has Council provided or funded any cultural activities, events or festivals for this population group?
- ◆ Are the problems of harassment and violence included in any Council reports, activities or committee/forum discussions on local safety needs?
- ◆ Do Council libraries include a range of written, audio and visual resources appropriate to their needs?
- ◆ Are Council consultations on community needs and issues involving, and providing information on, this target group?

B. Identify the barriers experienced by gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people in accessing council facilities, services and processes.

- ◆ Has there been any advocacy by local community service providers, school counsellors, police and health service providers of the needs of this population group?
- ◆ Are council services personnel and consulting service providers saying that there are no gays, lesbians or transgender people using their services or that there are so few as not to require needs identification? If so, what are the rationales used to support these beliefs?
- ◆ Are Council staff sensitive to the needs of this population and have they received any training in working with, or being aware of, their needs?
- ◆ Are staff including references to these needs and issues in their work and developing resources which can also be used by gays, lesbians and transgender people?
- ◆ Do Council policies provide for equality of access for these citizens?
- ◆ Is there a staff development plan to look at access and equity activities, including training, to overcome the barriers experienced by this population group?

Appendix B

Developing an in-house Statistical Profile of the Community

If councils decide to develop their own statistical package, rather than purchasing the ABS Local Government standard profile, they should access the following sources of data about the community and the mandatory seven target groups.

The information in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data on "Community Profiles" and "Thematic Profiles" will be particularly useful. For example, the basic community profile covers information such as age-sex profile, family structure, ethnicity indicators and social-economic characteristics. The usual residents profile provides data on people who usually live in the area while the time series profile compares census data between 1986, 1991 and 1996.

Statistics about the number of people with disabilities will need to be estimated. These estimates should be based on the ABS disability and carers survey, local or regional data provided by the Department of Social Security and the Ageing and Disability Department, and settlement planning data from the Department of Immigration.

It can be useful to put local statistics in context by comparing them, if possible, with statistics referring to the state averages. Councils should also consider including time series data to help determine socio-economic trends within their local government area.

Many councils have already completed statistical profiles, so examining the style and format of these can be helpful. Councils should also check whether other agencies, such as the Department of Community Services, have developed recent statistical overviews of the area.

Councils may also wish to examine local area youth profiles, produced by the Office of Youth Affairs, that present census and other youth statistics collected by government departments for each local government area.

Appendix C

Prioritising Needs

Determining priorities is a difficult task. For example, when planning for aged and disabled persons should the disabled young be given preference over the disabled elderly? The intellectually disabled over the physically disabled? Health care services over home help services? The list could go on. Deciding on priorities is about making choices and imposing judgements of what is important on an identified array of needs.

Given the value-laden nature of needs assessment, perfect agreement on needs priorities is unlikely to occur. However the following procedures and criteria may help to strengthen and standardise the process.

The basic criteria for setting needs priorities should be fairness. This can be done by:

- ◆ involving representatives from all interest groups in the decision making process
- ◆ guaranteeing everyone has an opportunity to participate openly
- ◆ making sure choices are made in an impartial manner
- ◆ adopting methods and procedures to guarantee that everyone has an equal opportunity to make their choices without undue influence or pressure.

Appropriate explicit decision criteria should be established to determine the priorities of competing needs. Without such criteria the setting of priorities becomes an arbitrary process.

Table 1: Suggested Criteria for Determining Needs Priorities

<p>1. <i>This need is experienced by:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. very few people 2. a minority of people 3. half the people 4. a majority 5. everyone <p>2. <i>In the next ten years, this need is going to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. go away 2. get better 3. stay the same 4. get worse 5. get much worse <p>3. <i>Left unattended, this need:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. will go away 2. is likely to go away 3. will stay the same 4. is unlikely to go away 5. will not go away <p>4. <i>The pain, discomfort, and/or inconvenience caused by this need is:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. none 2. little 3. appreciable 4. serious 5. very serious 	<p>5. <i>The amount of distress or danger to others caused by this need is:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. none 2. little 3. appreciable 4. serious 5. very serious <p>6. <i>Public interest in this need is:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. very low 2. low 3. average 4. high 5. very high <p>7. <i>Public attitude toward groups with this need is:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. antagonistic 2. disapproving 3. indifferent 4. sympathetic 5. deeply concerned <p>8. <i>Trained personnel available to cope with this need are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. extremely short 2. less than adequate 3. sufficient 4. abundant 5. overabundant
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These decision criteria can be used in two ways:

- (a) The answers given to the questions for each need can be directly scored and the results totalled. Equal or differential weightings can be assigned to the selected criteria. Top priority is given to the need with the highest score, second priority to the need with the next highest score, and so on.
- (b) Instead of formally scoring the answers, the criteria can be used to "sensitise" the decision-making group to key dimensions of the needs. With these points in mind, various methods can then be used to rate/rank the needs.

The material in this appendix was presented in a paper titled "Methods of Needs Assessment for Community Services Planning" by Kevin McCracken, Macquarie University, presented at the 27th International Geographical Congress, Washington DC , August 1992.