**Brunswick Neighbourhood House**

**Co-operative**

Revised Disability Action Plan

**2009-2011**

**Foreword**

The Brunswick Neighbourhood House will within all policy and procedure statements work within the Brunswick Neighbourhood House vision, mission, aims and guiding principles.

**MISSION**

Brunswick Neighbourhood House is a community based organisation committed to building a stronger local community by providing community education, training, recreational activities, community support and services for all community members.

**VISION**

Our vision is to bring people in our community to the Brunswick Neighbourhood House in order to build community spirit. We will strive to respond to the needs of the community through encouraging members to participate in house activities and help develop new opportunities to benefit the community as a whole.

**AIMS**

The Brunswick Neighbourhood House aims to:

* Play a significant role in linking the Brunswick community by providing programs, training and activities for all community members
* Offer people a link to the community, to increase community participation, to encourage social interaction and build a connection to their local municipality.
* Increase people’s skills to improve their lives and environment
* Provide an accessible and quality community education service to adults from diverse social, cultural and economic background
* Provide a range of social and recreational opportunities to help overcome social isolation.
* Provide quality childcare and children's programmes, thus making activities and participation accessible to members of the community
* Participate in partnerships and networks with other relevant organisations to increase understanding of community needs.
* Advocate for the needs of our community and the neighbourhood house sector

**Our work is guided by the following principles:**

* Empowering people experiencing disadvantage
* Enhancing community participation in our organisation
* Demonstrating Community Leadership
* Fostering environmentally sustainable outcomes
* Using technology innovatively
* Working within a community development framework
* Fostering volunteering opportunities
* Evidence based decision making

Monitoring and Evaluation will reflect these guiding principles.

**The Brunswick Neighbourhood House Cooperative embraces the sector’s principles of Community Ownership, Participation, Empowerment, Access and Equity, Life Long Learning, Inclusion, Networking, Advocacy, Self Help and Social Action.**

The Disability Action Plan 2009-2011 provides an important component in the realisation of this mission for our students and staff with a disability. The plan reflects the values which underpin and guide our future development and the day-to-day teaching, learning, community building and other activities that make us a neighbourhood house.

By developing a Disability Action Plan, Brunswick Neighbourhood House demonstrates its commitment to students and staff with a disability and reflects the philosophy of cultural competence and the acceptance of and respect for difference.

The Disability Action Plan 2009-2011 has been designed in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Disability Education Standards (2005) and will be lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

#### Introduction

### Purpose of the Disability Action Plan

A Disability Action Plan is required to remove identified barriers to access and participation and develop new strategies for further improving resources, and reflects Brunswick Neighbourhood House’s stated commitment to ensuring that it provides a supportive and inclusive educational and employment experience for people with a disability.

**Consultation**

BNH consults with students, staff, City of Moreland staff, peak bodies within the ACE Sector and a variety of disability services in an informal sharing of information on a regular ongoing basis.

### Legislative Context

Both State and Federal legislation provide protection against direct and indirect discrimination for people with a disability. The principles and objects of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) signalled an important advancement of the rights of people with a disability and a recognition that it is the responsibility of all individuals and organisations covered by the Act to be pro-active in identifying and removing discriminatory barriers and practices.

The DDA makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful in a number of areas applicable to universities. These include:

* education;
* employment;
* sport;
* access to premises used by the public;
* provision of goods, services and facilities;
* residential accommodation, clubs and associa­tions; and
* administration of Commonwealth Government laws and programs.

The DDA also aims to ensure, as far as practicable, that people with a disability have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and to promote recognition and acceptance with the community of the principle that people with a disability have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

The definition of 'disability' in the DDA is very broad. It encompasses the physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and aural conditions and also physical disfigure­ment and the presence in the body of an organism causing disease. The definition covers both temporary and permanent disability and includes:

* people who have had a disability in the past (such as an episode of mental illness):
* people who may have a disability in the future (for example, where there is a family history of disability); and
* people who are believed to have a disability (for example, if someone is thought to have HIV-AIDS).

The Act describes both direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably because of a disability arising from an impairment or medical condition. Indirect discrimination occurs where a general rule, practice or policy appears to be neutral or the same for everyone but, actually, has a disproportionate impact on people with a disability. Whether unlawful discrimination has occurred can only be decided with reference to all the circumstances of the case.

For example, if a student is refused enrolment in a course because the student has epilepsy, the neighbourhood house would be discriminating directly against the student on the ground of disability. If, however, it could be demonstrated that the student’s medical condition may place her or others at risk in the particular course, then such a decision may not be seen as direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination might arise, for example, where the possession of a driver’s licence is included in the selection criteria for an administrative position. Greater proportions of people with a disability are unable to obtain a driver’s licence and are thus excluded from employment. If, however, driving between venues is an essential requirement of the position, then the stipulation of a driver’s licence in the selection criteria is unlikely to constitute indirect discrimination.

Under the DDA an educational organisation such as BNH is required to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability if that person meets the essential entry requirements for admission to a course. In other words, a university has a legal obligation to make 'reasonable' adjustments. An adjustment could be regarded as unreasonable if it undermined the core role or imposed other 'unjustifiable hardship' such as very high costs.

As an employer, BNH’s obligations to people with a disability extend to recruitment and selection processes, terms and conditions and access to benefits such as promotion and training. The House is obliged to provide reasonable adjustments for a staff member with a disability to enable him or her to carry out the inherent requirements of the job.

The Disability Standards for Education (2005) have been formulated to clarify the rights of students and responsibilities of education providers under the DDA. The intention and effect of the Standards is to give students with a disability the same rights as other students. They are based on the position that:

… all students, including students with a disability, should be treated with dignity and enjoy the benefits of education and training in an educationally supportive environment that values and encourages participation by all students, including students with a disability.

The goals and targets set out for students below are designed to incorporate these standards into BNH’s programs and practice. The Standards came into effect in August 2005.

In addition to the HREOC compliance framework this Plan also embodies the Principles of the revised Commonwealth Disability Strategy

**Equity:** people with disabilities have the right to participate in all aspects of the community including the opportunity to contribute to its social, political, economic and cultural life;

**Inclusion:** all mainstream Commonwealth programs, services and facilities should be available to people with disabilities. The requirements of people with disabilities should be taken into account at all stages in the development and delivery of these programs and services;

**Participation:** people with disabilities have the right to participate on an equal basis in all decision making processes that affect their lives;

**Access:** people with disabilities should have access to information in appropriate formats about the programs and services they use; and

**Accountability:** all areas of Commonwealth organisations should be clearly accountable for the provision of access to their programs, facilities and services for people with disabilities. This includes specifying the outcomes to be achieved, establishing performance indicators and linking reporting outcomes of the Strategy to mainstream reporting mechanisms.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

The Management at BNH will be responsible for ensuring that all staff, including volunteers, comply at all times with Government legislation and policies.

#### Goals for staff and students

### Access to the Physical Environment

A physical environment which enables people with a disability to participate safely at BNH on the same basis as people without a disability

##### Action

* 1. Develop ongoing Access Audit of all BNH venues.
	2. Develop a plan in conjunction with Council for making all existing facilities accessible for people with a disability
	3. Take account of the needs of people with a disability in design of evacuation procedures.

**Timeframe**

Audit by June 2011 and review annually.

Ongoing discussion with Council, including AAA worker.

**Responsibility**

Board of Directors BNH

Staff of BNH

MCC staff as appropriate

### Access to Information

Information published by BNH to be accessible to people with a disability.

##### Action

2.1 Ensure if possible that publications, brochures and all BNH events are accessible or available in alternative formats if required.

2.2 Identify costs and benefits of making teaching materials available in electronic or other alternative format.

**Timeframe**

Costs and feasibility identified by June 2011 and review annually.

**Responsibility**

Board of Directors BNH

Staff of BNH

Community agency staff as appropriate

### Prospective Students

Prospective students with a disability are able to gain access to BNH on the same basis as prospective students without a disability

# Action

3.1Liaise with the appropriate personnel at agencies to assist people with a disability to apply for appropriate courses

* 1. Provide advice to prospective students with a disability on the requirements of courses to assist decision-making based on their needs and aspirations.

**Timeframe**

Needs and feasibility identified by June 2011 and review annually.

**Responsibility**

Board of Directors BNH

Staff of BNH

Community agency staff as appropriate

### Selection and Enrolment

Students with a disability can be selected for courses and enrol in BNH on the same basis as students without a disability

**Action**

4.1 Review enrolment procedures to ensure that students with a disability may complete them without undue difficulty.

**Timeframe**

June 2011 and review annually.

**Responsibility**

Board of Directors BNH

Staff of BNH

Community agency staff as appropriate

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

1. Access to physical environment

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|  **ISSUE** | **ACTION** | **PERSON RESPONSIBLE** | **COMPLETION DATE (If applicable)** |
| Develop ongoing Access Audit of all BNH venues.  | Develop with MCC staff and review annually | Board of DirectorsManagers | June 2011 |
| Develop a plan in conjunction with Council for making all existing facilities accessible for people with a disability | Develop with MCC staff, AAA worker and BNH staffOngoing review annually | Board of DirectorsManagers | Completed |
| Take account of the needs of people with a disability in design of evacuation procedures. | Ongoing | Board of DirectorsManagers | June 2011 |

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

1. Access to information

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|  **ISSUE** | **ACTION** | **PERSON RESPONSIBLE** | **COMPLETION DATE (If applicable)** |
| Ensure if possible that publications, brochures and all BNH events are accessible or available in alternative formats if required.  | Develop and review annually | Board of DirectorsManagersStaff BNH | June 2011 |
| Identify costs and benefits of making teaching materials available in electronic or other alternative format. | Disability worker and BNH staffOngoing review annually | Board of DirectorsManagers |  |
| Ensure if possible that publications, brochures and all BNH events are accessible or available in alternative formats if required.  | Disability worker and BNH staffOngoing | Board of DirectorsManagers |  |

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

1. Prospective students

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|  **ISSUE** | **ACTION** | **PERSON RESPONSIBLE** | **COMPLETION DATE (If applicable)** |
| Prospective students with a disability are able to gain access to BNH on the same basis as prospective students without a disability | Liaise with the appropriate personnel at agencies to assist people with a disability to apply for appropriate courses | Board of DirectorsManagersStaff BNH | June 2011 |
| Provide advice to prospective students with a disability on the requirements of courses to assist decision-making based on their needs and aspirations. | BNH staffOngoing review annually | Board of DirectorsManagers |  |
| Ensure if possible that publications, brochures and all BNH events are accessible or available in alternative formats if required.  | Disability workers and BNH staffOngoing | Board of DirectorsManagers |  |

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

1. Prospective students

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|  **ISSUE** | **ACTION** | **PERSON RESPONSIBLE** | **COMPLETION DATE (If applicable)** |
| Prospective students with a disability are able to gain access to BNH on the same basis as prospective students without a disability | Liaise with the appropriate personnel at agencies to assist people with a disability to apply for appropriate courses | Board of DirectorsManagersStaff BNH | June 2011 |
| Provide advice to prospective students with a disability on the requirements of courses to assist decision-making based on their needs and aspirations. | BNH staffOngoing review annually | Board of DirectorsManagers |  |
| Review enrolment procedures to ensure that students with a disability may complete them without undue difficulty. | BNH staffOngoing | Board of DirectorsManagers |  |