

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Introduction

1. U3A Bendigo Incorporated recognises that prohibiting discriminatory policies and practices is both a legal obligation and good practice.
2. U3A Bendigo endorses diversity, supports equal rights and equal opportunity, and does not advocate, support or practice discrimination based on characteristics such as race, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability, whether covered by applicable legislation or not.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. set out the U3A Bendigo anti-discrimination policy and the governance structures, responsibilities and processes to give effect to the policy and ensure the organisation complies with its obligations under legislation.
2. encourage and foster an organisation culture that maximises access to the benefits of membership and builds organisational performance.

Discrimination, Equal Opportunity and Victimisation

Discrimination consists of treating an individual with a particular attribute less favourably than an individual without that attribute or with a different attribute under similar circumstances.

It can also involve seeking to impose a condition or requirement on a person with an attribute who does not or cannot comply, while people without that attribute do/can comply.

Equal Opportunity consists of ensuring that all volunteers and members are given equal access to the activities, services and benefits provided by U3A Bendigo.

Victimisation happens where a person is treated harshly or suffers detriment because they have made a complaint of discrimination. Victimisation will also happen if a person suffers detriment because they have provided information or evidence in connection with a complaint.

Policy

1. U3A Bendigo does not advocate, tolerate, condone or practise discrimination and regards as unfair, all forms of unlawful discrimination or vilification, including but not limited to that which relates to:
 - gender
 - marital/domestic status
 - disability

- race, colour, national extraction, social origin, descent, and ethnic or national origin
 - age
 - family responsibilities, family status, status as a parent or carer
 - racial classification or caste
 - sexuality, transsexuality or transgender
 - religious or political beliefs or activities
 - physical features
 - occupation or calling
2. U3A Bendigo is an equal opportunity manager of volunteers. In all cases no factors other than performance and competence will be used as the basis for training and development opportunities for volunteers and/or intending volunteers.
 3. U3A Bendigo will ensure that its programs, policies, procedures, practices, publications and forms accord with the principles expressed in this policy.
 4. U3A Bendigo will make all reasonable accommodations to allow people who experience difficulties in their dealings with it to benefit equally from its activities.
 5. All U3A Bendigo members and volunteers will comply with the principles expressed in this policy.

Procedures

The U3A Bendigo Committee of Management will:

1. review the organisation's practices and processes to ensure that they adequately incorporate precautions against discrimination
2. conduct elections to positions on the Committee of Management that are free from discrimination and provide an equal opportunity for all members to stand for election
3. periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the systems established to remove and/or prevent discrimination
4. make reasonable accommodations to allow diverse groups to access benefits provided by membership of the organisation and its programs and activities
5. monitor the performance of office bearers and volunteers in regard to this policy
6. analyse all reported breaches to identify systematic trends and ensure that any adverse trends are addressed
7. ensure a culture of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity compliance is promoted across the organisation

All members, volunteers and employees will be made aware of the organisation's antidiscrimination policy by its publication on the organisation's website and/or newsletter.

A person who believes they are being treated unfairly as a result of discrimination may report the matter to the U3A Bendigo Secretary. The Secretary will inform the President immediately.

A report of discrimination will be investigated promptly, confidentially and fairly, in accordance with the current U3A Bendigo Model Rules.

Responsibilities

The U3A Bendigo Committee of Management is responsible for:

1. establishing, implementing, publishing, and reviewing this policy
2. fostering equal opportunity and setting an example by their own behaviour
3. ensuring that the organisation's practices and processes incorporate precautions against discrimination in such areas as selecting volunteers, admitting members and providing access to services and activities.
4. ensuring reasonable accommodations are made to allow diverse groups to become members and participate in the organisation's services and activities
5. ensuring that allegations of discrimination or vilification are properly investigated

It is the responsibility of all members and volunteers to:

6. treat each other with respect and without regard to non-relevant criteria or distinctions
7. familiarise themselves with this anti-discrimination policy
8. where appropriate, suggest ways in which practices, systems and procedures could be improved to reduce the likelihood of discrimination occurring

It is the responsibility of the U3A Bendigo Secretary to receive complaints about a breach of this policy and to bring them to the attention of the President.

The U3A Bendigo President is responsible for ensuring that a complaint of a breach of this policy is handled in accordance with the current U3A Bendigo Model Rules.

Authorisation:

This policy was adopted by Committee of Management of U3A Bendigo Incorporated, and minuted as such, on 7th June 2021.