



Title: Community Development

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Purpose

This policy establishes the direction for activities of the Community Development Branch and outlines the role of Community Workers and describes their respective program areas.

1. Community Development

1.1 Defining Community Development

Community development should be defined within the context of the relationship which exists between those responsible for its implementation, and those who are deemed to be the recipients of the process. In this case, Council's Community Development Policy reflects the role expected of a local government authority, and its ability to provide for its constituents in a manner which is both equitable and accessible.

Within this context, 'community development' is defined as a process involving local residents and organisations in identifying community needs and in the planning and development of services. This process mobilises and enhances the skills of residents and leads to increased self reliance, empowerment and the enrichment of the local community.

1.2 Principles of Community Development

The Community Development Policy is based on the following four principles of community development, namely;

Participation - i.e. the active involvement and participation of people in the affairs and welfare of their local community.

Empowerment - i.e. development of structures and processes to provide the community with the opportunity to have input into decision making, access to information and the allocation of resources.

Equity - i.e. the distribution of opportunities and resources according to need and the breaking down of barriers which discriminate and deny opportunities to people in the community.

Self reliance and mutual aid - i.e. the encouragement of people and communities to become independent, develop and share resources and mobilise skills at the local level.

1.3 Direction

Council's Community Development Policy will establish direction for the Community Development Branch for the next three years. To ensure the policy's implementation occurs in a staged and rational manner, the policy will be supplemented with a Strategic Plan for 1994-96.

The Community Development Policy provides a framework which links Branch activities and its various program areas, and sets realistic targets for 1994-96. Policy objectives and strategies will be elaborated further in the Strategic Plan.

The policy's primary objective is;

- To ensure the development of appropriate services in accordance with local needs through the implementation of a forward planning process and
- To encourage community participation in the planning, management and delivery of services.

1.4 Structure and Relevance

This policy represents a further consolidation of Council's role in the community, its services, and integrated planning. The policy represents a 'ground-up' approach, by bringing into Council the community's needs for inclusion in the planning process. The policy holds a parallel path with broader directions established by Council's overall mission, which is;

" to enhance our community's lifestyle by the provision of works and services that are efficient, cost-effective and accessible. "

Within the Community Development Branch, the policy embraces existing policies, and sets the basis for future policy development relating to the aged, youth, disabilities, multicultural services and community arts programs.

2. Historical Background

2.1 Council's Involvement

Since 1975, Council has employed community workers to identify local needs and develop community services to meet those needs.

The Canterbury LGA had been characterised as a mixed community with some areas of relative affluence, and other significant areas that were densely populated, with large numbers of families on low incomes, a low level of formal qualifications, relatively high unemployment, and culturally diverse population.

At the same time, State and Commonwealth funding was being made available to assist local communities develop the services they needed, providing that a local community-based committee could be established to take responsibility for the funds and manage the programs.

In Canterbury, the problem was (and still remains), that often the very people who need the services most, lack the skills and resources to organise services themselves. Nor do they have the professional skills required to attract the funding to meet their own and other resident needs.

2.2 The Need for Community Development

Like many Councils in the late 70s, Canterbury Council recognised that it had a role to play in providing for the social as well as the physical infrastructure needs of the area.

Council at that time preferred to emphasise its role in the development and support of community services, and to assist the efforts of the community to attract State and Commonwealth funds to address local needs. Community workers were employed to carry out Council's community development functions. Specifically the community workers were required to;

- Support the community to take greater responsibility for its own needs;
- Provide the necessary consultancy and training to assist them to organise their own services and programs;
- Attract funding to the area by assisting local groups in developing submissions and advocating on their behalf; and
- Plan for, and address priority resident needs in areas where no services or groups had been established.

In September 1983, Council adopted a comprehensive Community Services Policy and Plan which formed the basis for the development of Council's role in the Community Services area and emphasised a role for Council in the area of Community Development.

With the restructure of Council in 1990 and the establishment of a Community Development Branch within the Community Services Division, a Strategic Plan was formulated which updated the objectives of the Branch and linked its work to a more comprehensive Social Planning process. (See Appendix One)

This was important because it ensured that, given the limits of financial and other resources, the Community Services Division would be addressing priority concerns and needs, consistent with its primary goal, as previously stated. An important step in this process has already been achieved through the production of the Canterbury Social Profile which has been used to develop the 1993 Program Budget and prioritise Branch objectives.

2.3 The Need for Review

Given the changes that have occurred in recent years there is a need for Council to review its role in Community Development.

This policy framework provides a basis for the appropriate involvement of Council's community workers in their dealings with local groups and services. It also provides the opportunity to develop a strategic approach to the establishment of services in the area and balance competing demands for finite resources that Council allocates to this area.

Demand for future services and need for existing services have to be counterbalanced with the changing demographic profile of our community. Like all other areas of activity, Council should be in a position to evaluate its effectiveness in Community Development and determine a course of action based on present and future social and economic trends. This Policy is a statement of commitment to the community and emphasises the importance that Council places in seeking to best serve collective interests through the employment of Community Development workers.

From a management perspective, the Community Development Policy is consistent with the principle outlined in Council's 1993 Management Plan, which aims to;

"..Maintain close links with all sectors of the community and actively encourage resident participation in Council and community activities."

3. Community Development Activities

Increasingly as local services have been established on the ground and management committees set-up to oversee the delivery of those services, Council's role has been shifting towards a social planning and policy development focus. This has been a gradual transition with an emphasis in developing more sophisticated and accurate

social planning information systems and identifying gaps in services. It is also a response and recognition that services are "relatively" well developed in certain parts of the municipality and under-developed in others. Decisions to re-allocate resources or attract funding to those areas must have a rational basis and be supported with both qualitative and quantitative data.

Council's involvement in Community Development activities can be categorised into four distinct areas. They are:

3.1 Social Planning

Social planning links social goals to strategies and actions in order that the needs of the local community are met. It involves :

- identification and measurement of needs;
- identification of socio-demographic characteristics;
- identification of existing services and facilities currently catering to those needs;
- identification of gaps in service provision.

3.2 Policy Development

Policy development is part of a total management planning process that considers alternative courses of action in response to issues and social needs. It contains

- defined goals and objectives;
- coherent principles that guide actions;
- outlines Council's level of commitment to a particular area of activity;
- determines the allocation of resources.

Regular evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of the policy is a key aspect of the policy development process.

3.3 Service Development

Service development is characterised by co-operative work with the community sector and recognises Council's role as an initiator, co-ordinator and facilitator of community inspired actions. The range of roles played by Council in performing its service development functions includes:

- Co-ordination of services, dissemination of information and referral;
- Advocacy on behalf of individuals, groups and organisations within the community;
- Catalyst in the establishment and development of new community services in the area;
- Conduct community consultation on matters relating to Council policies, facilities and services -Representation on regional, state and federal government committees;
- Mediating between organisations to resolve conflict.

3.4 Service Provision

Council has opted to provide direct services in circumstances requiring limited involvement, tied to a specific period of time and in the absence of a suitable sponsor within the community sector. Examples of this include:

- Managing or providing direct services to the community as in the case of senior citizen centres and vacation activity centres;

- Administering funded projects by state and Commonwealth governments to provide local services as in the case of the Canterbury-Bankstown Road Safety Project and Community Relations Project;

4. Role of Community Workers

The type and range and range of work performed by community workers has varied significantly over the past fourteen years. Initially, the first community workers employed by Council were performing generalist duties with a significant focus on direct services. As more staff were employed in specialist areas and Council's role in community development became broader, the emphasis was placed on service and policy development. The following provides an outline of key functions undertaken by staff in developing community services in the Canterbury area.

4.1 Planning and Research

- Monitor and evaluate needs and resources based on an independent assessment of statistical, demographic and expressed community needs.
- Participate in the regular production of Social Profiles, and document other research necessary to identify and plan for community needs as required.
- Plan for the appropriate involvement of Council and/or other organisations in the development of community services in the area.

4.2 Community Participation and Consultation

- Encourage community participation in the planning, management and development of community services in the area.
- Regularly consult with the community including residents, service providers, voluntary groups, government departments and other interested parties in determining needs and developing information relevant to Council's planning and service delivery.

4.3 Service Development

- Promote the involvement of residents in identifying and meeting community needs.
- Promote the rational allocation of resources according to need, and encourage the equitable distribution of services across the local government area.
- Act as catalysts for new services and, with Council's consent, support community initiatives to attract funding and develop programs.
- Provide regular opportunities for the training and development of service providers in community services.
- Responding to the needs raised by the community.

4.4 Policy Development

- Develop, for consideration of Council, policies relevant to the social, recreational cultural and welfare needs of residents in consultation with the community and residents.
- Evaluate the implementation of policies relevant to the Branch and recommend to Council modifications as appropriate.

- Evaluate policies of State and Commonwealth bodies relevant to the social needs of residents and advise Council accordingly.
- Assist community organisations with policy development if requested.

4.5 Co-Ordination

- Encourage the co-operation and co-ordination of community services in the Canterbury local government area.
- Participate in regular meetings of local services to exchange information and promote community programs in the local area.
- Participate, as approved by Council, in local and regional community services planning and co-ordination committees.

5. Resources Available to the Community

5.1 Advocacy and Referral

Through its Community Workers, the Branch is able to provide advocacy on a range of community and welfare related matters. The Branch currently has sub-programs in the areas of multicultural, aged, youth, disabilities and community arts. From time to time, Council auspices short term projects and at present, Community Development houses the Roads and Traffic Authority's 'Street Safe' Project. The Branch will however, respond to other issues as they occur. Where Council is unable to act in respect of a particular matter, the Branch has and will, play a referral role.

In cases where organisations or individuals require assistance in developing an idea or project, Community Workers will provide advice or facilitate that process, provided that the project has a sound basis and is of benefit to the community. Similarly, groups or individuals will be referred to the appropriate agency or funding body if the matter is outside of Council's jurisdiction.

5.2 Facilities

Council offers a range of facilities and resources generally available for community use. In each of the following areas, potential users are asked to familiarise themselves with the respective guidelines and to make the appropriate arrangements by contacting Council directly. It should also be kept noted that there are competing demands in a number of areas and that permission to use resources and facilities may not be automatically granted.

5.2.1 Meeting Venues

A range of venues are available for community purposes which include the Wiley Park Amphitheatre, community centres and libraries. Inquiries regarding the use of such facilities should be directed to the Manager Property Bookings. In cases where after hours or weekend use is required, a fee may apply.

Some facilities, such as Senior Citizens Centres, are purpose built and consequently, older residents would have priority of access. Nevertheless, inquiries regarding the availability of daytime use of Senior Citizens Centres can be directed to the Community Worker Aged Services on 789 9474.

Use of venues such as Council's Function Room or sections of the Orion Centre is strictly limited and fees generally apply. Organisations wishing to use these venues for community purposes need to apply in writing to the General Manager, well in advance (approx 6 weeks) of the intended use.

5.2.2 Photocopying

Council provides a photocopier for the use of community organisations through its offices at 107 Clissold Parade, Campsie. Application for use of this facility need to be made in writing and directed to the General Manager. Applications are assessed for the resources required and users may be asked to supply their own paper in the case of larger jobs. This facility is available for self-use only, and Council staff will only advise on the operation of the photocopier.

5.2.3 Community Buses

Council provides two community buses for use by local non-profit groups. Requirements are that groups must provide their own drivers (in possession of a Class 1B License), fuel and adhere to the associated guidelines. Bookings and guidelines are available by ringing the Community Services Division on 9789 9456.

5.2.4 Library Reference

Community organisations are occasionally called upon to undertake research for various projects or to prepare submissions. Groups are encouraged to utilise the Library's Reference Section where expert staff can assist in accessing relevant information and databases. Appointments can be made by contacting the Reference Librarian on 9789 9423.

5.2.5 Community Information Service

Council provides a Community Information Service through its Library Services. Groups are able to circulate information about their activities or services by providing promotional material for display in the Libraries. This service also acts as a focal point for inquiries regarding services and events within the Canterbury LGA and organisations are encouraged to inform the Community Information Officer of upcoming events or new services to the area.

An extension of the Community Information Service is through the Mobile Information Van. The van provides an outreach service by circulating to places where people congregate throughout the LGA. The van can also be booked for use by community groups.

The Community Information Service Directory is produced and upgraded annually. The Directory is a comprehensive listing of local and regional services and organisations. Each year, organisations are asked to provide changes in details as the Directory is upgraded. Groups or services wishing to be listed or make use of the Community Information Service, are therefore encouraged to contact the Community Information Officer on 9789 9423.

5.3 Financial Assistance

Council has for a number of years provided financial assistance to locally based groups which further the development and well-being of the community. Council regards financial assistance as a catalyst to the community development process. In facilitating

the empowerment of community groups, Council provides 'seeding' grants to organisations for selected purposes. Each year, Council assesses applications for funding on the bases of Current priorities and where it can be demonstrated that funding will assist in advancing the status of the community.

Following the introduction of the Local Government Act 1993, Council has conducted an extensive overhaul of its guidelines for financial assistance. Potential applicants for financial assistance should familiarise themselves with the new guidelines which will become available in 1994.

5.4 Language Assistance

To cater for the linguistic needs of residents of non-English speaking background, Council offers assistance to people with limited proficiency in the English language. This is achieved through the use of accredited Language Aides within Council who are able to provide limited language support in relation to Council matters. Language Aides are available only in certain languages.

Where an inquiry cannot be appropriately dealt with by Language Aides, Council can organise an interpreter through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

6. Program Areas

6.1 Aged Services

Canterbury has a higher than average number of residents over 60 years, with a significant proportion from non-English speaking countries. In recognition of the needs of the aged, Council has employed a Community Worker, Aged Services since 1985 to co-ordinate, support and develop services to the aged in the LGA. This involves assessing service gaps and funding opportunities and working with local groups, such as the Canterbury Aged Services Committee, to plan for and deliver these services. The worker also plays an essential role in policy development, advising Council on developments in aged care, implementing Council policies in areas such as the use of its six senior citizen's centres, and providing information to residents about local services.

6.2 Community Arts

Council has approved the development of a Community Arts Program aimed at promoting cultural and artistic development in this locality as well as co-ordinating events and the use of Council facilities. The Community Arts Program will highlight the multicultural nature of the LGA and the richness of Culture inherent in its residents. The program and a Community Arts worker will be initially funded by Council with private and government sponsorship being sought to further its development.

6.3 Community Relations

Council has been instrumental in initiating the Canterbury Community Relations Program as a joint effort between Council and representative bodies of the local Muslim community. This pilot program is a local strategy aimed at enhancing community relations and is based on identified needs within the community.

The program aims to break down negative typecasting of Muslims and to develop a resource kit for community agencies and services in this area. Activities involving Muslim

and non-Muslim groups are being staged for the purpose of developing links and raising cultural awareness amongst different sections of the community.

6.4 Disability Services

According to the Department of Community Services, Canterbury ranks fourth amongst all Sydney local government areas in terms of the population of residents with disabilities although currently very few services exist to support people with disabilities. A priority for the Community Development Branch in 1993 is to establish a Disability Access Committee and to raise the awareness and status of disability issues in both Council services and the community.

6.5 Multicultural Services

Canterbury is fortunate to be one of the most multicultural and linguistically diverse LGA's in Australia with over 60 per cent of its population being of non-English speaking background. Council recognises the cultural and linguistic needs of the local community and is committed to promoting and maintaining equal access to services and information by all residents regardless of their race, language or religious affiliation. This is reflected in Council's Local Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement (LEAPS) which was first adopted in 1988 and has been reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Council's role is also to resource and support local groups and facilitate their active participation in the planning and development of services that are relevant to the needs of the community. Through the employment of a Community Worker, Multicultural Services, Council aims to improve social conditions of all ethnic groups and to provide assistance, resources and professional guidance in the implementation of multicultural programs and services. Council's Local Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement is attached as Appendix 8 to this Policy.

6.6 Street Safe' Road Safety Project

The "Street Safe" Road Safety Project was developed in 1992 through the combined efforts of the Canterbury Council, Bankstown City Council and The Roads and Traffic Authority. The project was established in response to a high number of injuries and deaths from road accidents in the Canterbury-Bankstown region. Its main objective is to promote road safety at the community level. It will be developed through five main areas including education, environment, information dissemination, liaison and engineering processes. The target groups for this project are school children, parents and carers around the school environment, pedestrians, the elderly and people of non-English speaking background.

6.7 Youth Services

In recognition of the special needs of 12-24 year olds in their transition to adulthood, Council formalised its commitment through the employment of a Community Worker, Youth Services in 1979. According to the 91 Census, Canterbury has a youth population of approximately 25,497 with at least 35.1% of them born overseas.

The Community Worker, Youth Services participates in the identification of needs of young people and attracting funding to the area to develop services to meet those needs. The worker assists in the co-ordination of youth services in terms of professional advice and information, represents Council at meetings and committees as required, resources the Youth Council and is involved in organising Youth Week, Youth Rock and other youth related activities. Specific projects for 1993 include the development of a

Youth Policy in consultation with Youth Council and young people in the area and assisting with the design and development of the Belmore Youth Facility.

6.8 Outside School Hours Care

Council also provides Vacation Activity Centres for 5-12 year olds during school holidays as part of its commitment to families and young people. These centres provide a range of supervised sporting, recreation, craft and drama related activities.

Funding is currently being sought to extend this service to include before and after school hours care. These programs are currently administered by the Community Worker, Youth Services.

6.9 Non-Specific Areas

As is clear from the outlined program areas, the Community Development Branch has chosen to focus on population groups which have been identified as the most vulnerable in the community. It is recognised that issues pertaining to these groups cannot be looked at in isolation and therefore, necessitate a team approach to community development. Within the resource limitations of the Branch, Community Workers become involved in areas which include;

- .housing;
- .employment and training;
- .education;
- .transport;
- .health;
- .education;
- .recreation;
- .personal;
- .family support services;
- .law and justice.

In the area of family support for example, Council provides direct services such as child care facilities, early childhood centres, and the provision of venues for respite and support for carers. Indirectly, Council assists in the development of local services which support the family through advocacy, management advice, the provision of facilities and financial assistance.

6.10 Other Council Provided Services

It should also be noted that Council, through other departments within the community services division, also provides a home nursing service who visit frail aged patients in their own home for nursing care, and a children's services department who are responsible for four long day care centres, a family day care program, an occasional child care centre and a support and resource team for the integration of children with special needs.

7. Strategic Plan

The Community Development Policy will be implemented in a staged manner over the next three years (1994-96). Its implementation will be guided by the Strategic Plan which identifies broader Branch objectives, together with specific program plans.

7.1 Future Directions

The future directions as set out in the Strategic Plan represent a critical assessment of important areas that the Community Development Branch needs to focus on over the next three years. They are considered key success factors in the long term development of community services in this LGA and outline a legitimate role for Council.

It is important to note that the objectives identified in the 'Future Directions' area of the Plan are largely ongoing processes which will be undertaken by the Community Development Branch as a whole.

7.2 Program Plans

Each Program Plan identifies specific objectives, strategies, target dates and responsibility. The Program Plans are based on identified needs within the local community and establish directions for each Community Worker to pursue.

7.3 Review

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually, with a report provided to Council on achievements. However, the Program Plans will be subject to quarterly reviews as these form key indicators for Community Workers.