FV-07 | Equal Opportunity Policy

APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE
Reviewed November 2026

Scope

All workforce members, applicants, participants and people accessing Fishcare services.

Purpose

Fishcare welcomes people of all backgrounds and takes proactive steps to prevent unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation. Decisions about recruitment, volunteering, employment and access to programs must be fair, relevant to the role or service and based on genuine requirements.

Discrimination and protected attributes

Direct discrimination is unfavourable treatment because of a protected attribute. Indirect discrimination can arise from an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that disadvantages people with an attribute; intent is not decisive.

Protected attributes under Victorian law include age, breastfeeding, disability, employment activity, expunged homosexual conviction, gender identity, industrial activity, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status or status as a carer, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy, race, religious belief or activity, sex, sex characteristics, sexual orientation and personal association with someone with a protected attribute. Other federal protections may also apply. This policy extends respectful and inclusive treatment to volunteers even where a particular statutory employment protection does not cover their engagement.

Positive action and accessibility

The EO must assess barriers in recruitment, role allocation, facilities, communication and program delivery, consult affected people, make reasonable adjustments where required and monitor outcomes. Provide accessible information, flexible participation options and culturally safe practice, including for Aboriginal people. Do not assume a diagnosis, age or appearance makes someone unsuitable; assess actual requirements and reasonable adjustments.

The Committee provides resources and oversight for the positive duty under the Equal Opportunity Act and related federal duties. Managers must prevent unlawful conduct through role design, training, risk controls and early action, rather than waiting for a complaint.

Responsibilities and complaints

Everyone must respect others, use inclusive language, challenge or report discrimination safely and cooperate with fair processes. Leaders must address

concerns promptly and protect complainants and witnesses from retaliation. Reasonable role requirements and lawful special measures must be documented; seek advice before relying on an exemption.

Report concerns promptly to the Executive Officer (EO). If the concern involves the EO, contact the President; if the President is involved, contact an unconflicted Committee member. Anyone may contact Police, DFFH Child Protection, WorkSafe or another appropriate authority directly. Internal approval is never required and internal processes must not delay a statutory report. Call 000 for immediate danger.

A person need not confront the respondent or attempt mediation. Follow the Grievance or External Complaints Policy with an impartial decision maker and support person if requested. Share information only as necessary for safety, fair process and legal obligations. A complaint that is not substantiated is not automatically false or malicious.

People may contact VEOHRC, the Australian Human Rights Commission, Fair Work bodies or legal advisers as applicable, without completing Fishcare's process. Breaches may lead to proportionate action under the relevant engagement procedure.

References and review

Reviewed November 2026.

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic): workplace rights and positive duty
https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/employment/

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth): positive duty
https://humanrights.gov.au/know-your-rights/rights-of-individuals/workplace-rights/positive-duty-sex-discrimination-act

VEOHRC: volunteers and sexual harassment
https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/volunteering/