Heartfulness Institute, Australia

Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm Heartfulness Institute, Australia's commitment to fostering a culture of respect, equity, and inclusion across all its activities, programs, and centers.

We recognize that our strength lies in the diversity of people who participate in, volunteer for, and lead our meditation and yoga programs. We are committed to ensuring that all individuals are welcomed and supported to contribute fully, regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Volunteers, trainers, coordinators, and Board members.

- Program participants and members of the public engaging with Heartfulness.

- Partners, contractors, and service providers working with the Institute.

3. Policy Statement

Heartfulness Institute, Australia is committed to:

- Valuing diversity in all its forms, including culture, language, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and socio-economic background.

- Providing equitable access to meditation and yoga programs.

- Building inclusive environments where all individuals feel safe, respected, and supported.

- Ensuring decision-making processes reflect diverse perspectives.

4. Principles of Diversity and Inclusion

1. Respect – Every individual will be treated with dignity and courtesy.

2. Equity – Opportunities to participate, volunteer, or lead will be based on merit and fairness, not discrimination.

3. Accessibility – Programs and resources will, wherever possible, be made accessible to people of all abilities and circumstances.

4. Representation – We will seek diverse voices in leadership, training, and community engagement.

5. Education – Volunteers and trainers will be encouraged to undertake awareness and inclusion training.

5. Implementation

- Recruitment & Volunteering: All volunteer and trainer recruitment processes will be transparent and inclusive.

- Programs: Sessions and events will be designed to respect cultural and personal diversity.

- Training: Ongoing training will support volunteers, trainers, and leaders in understanding and applying inclusive practices.

- Feedback: Participants and volunteers will be encouraged to share feedback on inclusivity through the Complaints Handling Policy.

6. Participation Guidelines

While Heartfulness is open to all, some practices and offerings may not be suitable for everyone, particularly individuals with serious mental health conditions. Trainers and organizers reserve the right to guide participants towards activities that are safe and appropriate for their circumstances.

Participation in certain Heartfulness activities requires a minimum age of 18 years. However, young people aged 15–17 may participate with the written permission of a parent/guardian and the approval of their supervising trainer.

7. Breaches of Policy

Any behaviour that undermines diversity and inclusion, such as discrimination, harassment, or exclusion, will be addressed under the Complaints Handling Policy, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, or Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- Board of Directors – Provide leadership and oversight of diversity and inclusion initiatives.

- Secretary – Monitor compliance with this policy and ensure reporting mechanisms are in place.

- Trainers and Volunteers – Apply inclusive practices in all programs and interactions.

- Participants – Engage respectfully and contribute to a welcoming environment.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains relevant and effective.