

On behalf of the City of Whittlesea we recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the traditional owners of this place

City of Whittlesea

Disability Action Plan 2017-2021

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City of Whittlesea Disability Action Plan 2017-2021

Executive Summary

The City of Whittlesea Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2017-2021 details how Council will work with the community to meet the vision of an inclusive municipality where people of all abilities are encouraged and enabled to lead satisfying, fulfilling and contributory lives.

The Disability Act Victoria 2006 requires each Local Government to develop a DAP. Section 38 of the Act states that a public sector body must ensure that a DAP is prepared for the purpose of-

- Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- Reducing barriers to obtaining employment
- Promoting inclusion and participation in the community
- Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

The City of Whittlesea Disability Action Plan has been developed to align with the State Disability Plan and community consultation outcomes, recognising that Local Government plays an important role in contributing to and supporting some of the key directions outlined in the State Disability Plan.

The DAP is the statement of the City of Whittlesea's commitment to:

1. Inclusive communities,
2. Good health, housing and wellbeing for people with disabilities,
3. Respect, equity and safety for all, and
4. Contributory community living as a right for all regardless of ability.

These four commitments are the foundation and underpin the DAP as Council's action plan for achieving genuine inclusion and equity for all. In delivering outcomes targeted by the DAP Council will also adhere to the intent of international, national and state charters and legislation that safeguard and promote the human rights and equity of people with disability.

A two year action Plan has been developed to guide Council actions over 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Due to the impact of the NDIS and other significant reforms the intent is to review these key directions in 2018/19 and develop a further two year plan to guide council actions up to 2020/21.

1 Introduction

The City of Whittlesea Disability Action Plan 2017-2021 (DAP) details how Council will work with the community and other key stakeholders to meet the vision of an inclusive municipality where people of all abilities are encouraged and enabled to lead satisfying, fulfilling and contributory lives.

The Disability Act Victoria 2006 requires each Local Government to develop a DAP. Section 38 of the Act states that a public sector body must ensure that a DAP is prepared for the purpose of-

- Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- Reducing barriers to obtaining employment
- Promoting inclusion and participation in the community
- Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

This Plan supports the seven Future Directions and themes that are outlined in Shaping our Future Whittlesea 2030 Strategic Community Plan.

- Inclusive and engaged community
- Accessibility in, out and around our city
- Growing our economy
- Places and spaces to connect people
- Health and wellbeing
- Living sustainably
- Good Governance

1.1 Human Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 extends the international human rights framework, first established in 1948 by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Australian Government ratified the convention in 2008.

Because Councils engage with a diverse range of people each day, Councils play an important role in advocating, protecting and promoting the human rights of all of their citizens.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (the Charter) sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all Victorians.

The charter protects 20 fundamental human rights, including the right to recognition and equality before the law. These basic rights form the foundation of a democratic and inclusive society that values human dignity, equality and freedom.

As public authorities, the charter requires Local Councils to consider human rights when they make, interpret and apply laws, develop policies and provide day-to-day services.

Councils must ensure that:

- All council decisions give proper consideration to human rights
- All actions, policies and services are compatible with human rights
- Local laws are interpreted and applied consistently with human rights
- People who work on behalf of councils do so in a way that respects human rights.

By understanding and promoting human rights, Councils can help build a culture of human rights in the community.

1.2 Why do we need this plan?

The City of Whittlesea was one of the first Councils in Victoria to register a Disability Action Plan with the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

In developing Whittlesea's fourth DAP we are able to build on the progress made through the positive outcomes achieved from actions embodied in previous plans.

The success of previous plans in providing more accessible communities throughout the municipality has also meant that some actions that featured strongly in previous plans have not needed to be carried forward into the new Plan. Issues addressed by actions in previous plans have become core business for the Departments involved.

The impact and outcomes of previous DAPs have helped to move the City of Whittlesea toward a more inclusive community. "Inclusion for all" remains an ongoing vision for this DAP and will be a core principle of Council's actions with the Community.

The National Disability Strategy (2010-2020) outlined that Australians with a disability have significantly worse life outcomes compared to others or compared to people with a disability in similar countries. People with a disability are more likely to experience relatively poor health, lower levels of participation in education, training and employment, social exclusion, and lack of access to goods, services and facilities and ongoing discrimination.¹

¹ National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, Australian Government, 2011

2 Legislative and Policy framework

2.1 National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

The National Disability Strategy is a National Plan to improve the life for every Australian with a disability, their families and carers.

The Strategy is a vision for an inclusive Australian society that enables people with a disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

Its aim is to;

- Establish a high level policy framework to give coherence to, and guide government activity across mainstream and disability-specific areas of public policy
- Drive improved performance of mainstream services in delivering outcomes for people with a disability
- Give visibility to disability issues and ensure they are included in the development and implementation of all public policy that impacts on people with a disability
- Provide national leadership toward greater inclusion of people with a disability.

The National Disability Strategy six broad outcomes areas are;

- Inclusive and accessible communities
- Rights protection, justice and legislation
- Economic Security
- Personal and community support
- Learning and skills
- Health and wellbeing

The Australian Local Government Association assisted in the development of the strategy which recognises that Local Government has a strong role in the implementation of the strategy.

2.2 Absolutely Everyone- Victorian State Disability Plan 2017-20

The State Disability Plan outlines the ways in which the State Government is taking a lead on promoting the inclusion of Victorians with a disability.

It tackles the barriers and exclusion that people with a disability deal with daily as they go about living their life.

The vision of the Plan is an inclusive Victoria, which supports people with a disability to live satisfying lives.

The Plan is also working to ensure the rights of Victorians with a disability to live and participate in Victorian society on the same basis as everyone else – to be supported in their aspirations for an everyday life where they are judged by their ability and agility to live as equal citizens in our society.

The four pillars of the plan are;

- Inclusive communities
- Health, housing and wellbeing
- Fairness and safety
- Contributing lives

The City of Whittlesea Disability Action Plan has been developed to align with the State Disability Plan recognising that Local Government plays an important role in contributing to and supporting some of the key directions outlined in the State Disability Plan.

2.3 Local government

The Disability Act Victoria 2006 requires each Local Government to develop a DAP. Section 38 of the Act states that a public sector body must ensure that a DAP is prepared for the purpose of;

- Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;
- Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining employment;
- Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability;
- Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

The City of Whittlesea DAP relates to the following objectives of the Local Government Act Victoria 1989 - Section 3C being;

- Improving the overall quality of life of people in the local community;
- Ensuring that services and facilities provided by the Council are accessible and equitable.

2.4 NDIS

A Productivity Commission report released in 2011 found that disability services across Australia were underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient. People receiving disability services had limited flexibility in terms of the support and service provider options.²

² Victorian Government, Absolutely everyone, State disability plan 2017-2020, page 16

In response to these findings the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was created and is now being rolled out across Australia. When it is fully rolled out it will replace most disability services currently funded and delivered by the Victorian Government. The NDIS focuses on the needs of the individual via a package of support.

The City of Whittlesea's role as a service provider long term has changed. In early 2016, Council made a decision not to be a service provider in the NDIS Scheme. Council's changing role is to support a transition to the NDIS and support the service provider market to meet the needs of local residents.

The NDIS supports the lives of people with disabilities. It is estimated that around 3,400 Whittlesea residents will be eligible for services under the NDIS³.

2.5 Shaping Our Future Whittlesea 2030 Strategic Community Plan

'Shaping Our Future' Community Plan 2030 details the community's vision for the City of Whittlesea to the year 2030. The Community Plan establishes clear outcomes for the community that will guide priority actions that will need to be undertaken over the next four years.

The Community Plan outlines future directions and themes that relate to the DAP, these are:

- Inclusive and engaged community
- Accessibility in, out and around our City
- Growing our economy
- Places and spaces to connect people
- Health and wellbeing
- Good governance

The DAP also aligns to the key strategic Directions of the Council Plan 2017-21. The DAP commitments link with the following future directions outlined in the Council Plan:

- Roads, Access and Public Transport
- Jobs and Investment
- Planning and Infrastructure
- Health and Wellbeing

³ NDIS, Market Position Statement Victoria- North East Melbourne Area, April 2016 page 33

3 Current Situational Analysis

3.1 People with disabilities

Whittlesea is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. It is one of Melbourne's key growth corridors with a current resident population of approx. 209,000 and is expected to grow to 330,000 over the next 20 years.

As one of Melbourne's ten outer metropolitan interface councils, Whittlesea faces the unique challenges of balancing urban and rural areas, rapid growth, social disadvantage and high demand for services.

Whittlesea has an area of approximately 489 square kilometres, with about 70 per cent classified rural, with the remaining 'urban' space comprising of 'established', 'developing' or future growth areas.

In the City of Whittlesea there is a larger proportion of residents who report needing assistance with day-to-day activities due to disability compared with greater Melbourne (5.7% and 4.9%, respectively)⁴. The 2016 City of Whittlesea Annual Household Survey reported that 26.1% of the residents surveyed had a permanent or long term disability or medical condition.

3.2 Carers

Carers are the fundamental support for people with disabilities in Australia. Carers Victoria reports that more than 14% of Victorians are carers⁵, and 217,800 Victorians identify themselves as primary carers that play a key role in caring and assisting with communication, mobility and self-care⁶. More than 292,100 Victorians with severe or profound disabilities are assisted by a family member or friend.⁷

It has been estimated by Carers Australia, that informal carers provided an estimated 1.9 million hours of care in 2015.⁸ If all hours of informal care provided in 2015 are replaced with services purchased from formal care providers, the replacement value of informal care would be \$60.3 billion (equivalent to 3.8% of gross domestic product and 60% of the health and social work industry).

⁴ <http://profile.id.com.au/whittlesea/assistance>

⁵ Carers Australia, Carers in Victoria- The Fact
<http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/Assets/Files/carers%20in%20victoria%20-%20the%20facts-2016-web.pdf>

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Deloitte Access Economics. The economic value of informal care in Australia in 2015.
<http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/storage/Access%20Economics%20Report.pdf>

Carers Australia reports that 55% of all carers are female. Over 33% are female aged between 35 and 65 years of age compared to 22% of males of the same age. This issue is highlighted further when comparing primary carers, with 69% of primary carers being female. For carers aged between 35 and 65 years of age, 44% are female compared to 16% male.⁹

3.3 Public built environment

Inequitable access to the built environment is a significant barrier to the full inclusion of people with a disability. In particular, it prevents people from accessing work environments and from participating in social and recreational activities due to their inability to access places such as cafes, cinemas, libraries, sporting and swimming facilities. This inaccessibility not only works against people with disability living independently in the community but it also reinforces the invisibility of people with a disability in broader society, often reducing their quality of life.¹⁰

3.4 Access to business

Access for people with disabilities to premises and services makes good business sense. This helps staff work in a place free from barriers, while customer's needs are also met.

Adopting a universal approach for the built environment benefits the whole community, as people with a disability live, work and shop in the community and contribute in a host of ways to all aspects of community life.

3.5 Awareness

Attitudes towards people with disability can affect social inclusion in all areas of their life, including their social connections, their access to places and their involvement in employment, education, social participation and interaction.

People with a disability in the community often face discrimination that prevents them from being socially included. Discrimination can take multiple forms including denying a person access to a job, promotion or inclusion into an activity based on stereotypes about disability (such as a perception that the person may spend too much time attending medical appointments). Discrimination can also be less obvious, such as imposing conditions that by default exclude people with a disability because they are unable to meet those conditions (e.g. requiring employees to use a standard computer without

⁹Carers Australia, Carers in Victoria- The Fact
<http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/Assets/Files/carers%20in%20victoria%20-%20the%20facts-2016-web.pdf>

¹⁰ ibid

reasonable modifications may be discriminatory towards an employee with vision impairment).¹¹

The Willing to Work: National Inquiry into Employment Discrimination Against Older Australians and Australians with Disability confirmed that too many people are denied employment because of discrimination based on their age or disability. This discrimination – often in the form of attitudinal barriers, underlying assumptions, stereotypes and myths – has consequences for individuals, workplaces, the economy, and the wider society.

In the Willing to Work Inquiry, The Hon Susan Ryan AO, Age and Disability Discrimination Commissioner, states that workplace discrimination “undermines basic human rights with consequences that are devastating and tragic.” “From a broader economic perspective, employment discrimination is also a huge waste of human capital.”

3.6 Transport

Accessible public transport is critical for people with a disability. People with a disability need accessible public transport so they can easily travel to school, work and social events. Universal access to public transport services and facilities provides opportunities for people with a disability to make their contribution and lead a satisfying life. This means making public transport easy to use across all parts of the system including buses, trains, trams, taxis, and other commercial passenger vehicles¹².

The Public Transport Ombudsman Victoria reported as a part of their Closing the Accessibility Gap report in 2013, that inaccessible services have profound effects on people’s lives. It can frustrate, debilitate and isolate. It can strip people of their confidence and dignity and their ability to live independent lives.

Accessible transport benefits everyone involved – it is easy and quicker to use, can reduce travel times of vehicles and can assist with managing traffic congestion in shared road environments - and takes account of the interaction between land use and transport planning.

In the City of Whittlesea residents with disabilities face two broad issues in relation to public transport:

- The lack of public transport in the municipality
- Varied provision of accessibility to the limited public transport in the municipality.

¹¹ Victorian Government, Inquiry into Social inclusion and Victorians with disability, Sept 2014, 8-10

¹² Victorian Government, Absolutely everyone, State disability plan 2017-2020, page 11

Council and the community have had great success in last couple of years advocating on the issue of lack of public transport as a part of the “Access Denied” campaign with one of the outcomes being the extension of the heavy rail from South Morang to Mernda.

3.7 Housing

There is a housing crisis looming for people with disability. Many people with a disability are finding that affordable, accessible housing is virtually impossible. The Australian Institute of Health and Well Being recently estimated that 78,000 carers (parents) have their adult children with a disability still living at home. By 2020 it is further estimated that 122,000 NDIS participants will still be without affordable housing.¹³

In 2013, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in their concluding observations on Australia’s report on our implementation of the Disability Convention recommended that “Australia take action to ensure that people with disability have free choice of where they live and who they live with.”

The City of Whittlesea supports and facilitates the provision of high quality, appropriate and accessible housing. Council plays a pivotal role in facilitating and encouraging diversity of housing developments through its Planning Scheme in order to promote a wide range of quality dwelling types, forms and styles targeted to the needs of households at different life stages and income levels.

Housing is a key element in the liveability of our neighbourhoods. Unmet housing need is a significant driver of disadvantage: without stable, affordable housing people lack a foundation to improve their life circumstances.

Barriers continue to limit the access of people with a disability to accessible, affordable, safe and sustainable housing. Many residential properties, including conventional houses and newer apartments, have limited access via steps and present other barriers such as narrow doors. This means that people with a mobility disability can only live in a restricted number of homes, and not visit other people in their homes. Inadequate housing also directly impacts upon the economic participation of people with a disability, as well as restricting social inclusion.

With emerging changes in the way residents with an NDIS plan can access individual housing support packages, Council will look to advocate and support disability housing initiatives that underpin individualised living models and move away from traditional pre-determined housing arrangements.

¹³ Models of housing and support , Araluen 2016

3.8 Universal design and adaptable housing

'Universal design is an approach to the design of products, services and environments to be useable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal design is an inclusive design philosophy which spans age, gender and ability'. (Centre for Universal Design, 1997) Definitions (Landcom Universal Housing Design Guidelines).

The City of Whittlesea is currently advocating to the Australian Government to regulate minimum access features in the National Construction Code for all new and extensively modified housing. The three minimum access features are:

1. An accessible path of travel from the street or parking area to and within the entry level of a dwelling.
2. Doors, corridors and living spaces that allow ease of access for most people on the entry level.
3. A bathroom, shower and toilet that can be used by most people, with reinforced wall areas for grab-rails at a later date.

3.9 Autism

Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition which affects the brain's growth and development. It is a lifelong condition, with symptom that appear in early childhood, but it is not un-common to be diagnosed into adulthood. The number of people who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been rising in Australia in the last 10 years. The NDIS reports in March 2017, that for 24% of approved plans of active participants in Victoria, their primary disability is ASD¹⁴. It is highlighted further in the 0-6 (34%) and 7-14 (50%) years age groups.

The Helping Children with Autism (HACWA) package is an Australian Government initiative providing support for Children 0-6 years with ASD, their families and carers. AMAZE (which manages initiatives in Victoria) advised that 893 children have received this funding in the City of Whittlesea.

3.10 Family violence

Victorian Women's Health atlas states the experience of women with a disability must be understood in the context of the intersections between gender and disability, power and marginalisation. Australian women and girls

¹⁴ NDIS, Victoria Dashboard as at 31 March 2017, <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/information-publications-and-reports/quarterly-reports>

with disabilities are twice as likely as women and girls without disabilities to experience violence throughout their lives but are less likely to receive an adequate service response. 90% of women with an intellectual disability have been subject to sexual abuse with more than two thirds having been sexually abused before they turn 18.¹⁵

The findings of the Voices against Violence research project which was released in 2014 are;

- Women with disabilities experience high levels of family and sexual violence.
- Women with disabilities experience the same kinds of violence experienced by other women but also 'disability-based violence'.
- Gender-based and disability-based discrimination intersect and increase the risk of violence for women with disabilities.
- Women with disabilities experience violence from many (usually male) perpetrators.
- Women experience a wide range of violence throughout their lives, in a variety of settings.

3.11 Need for assistance with core activity

The Core Activity Need for Assistance variable has been developed to measure the number of people with a profound or severe disability. The ABS defines the profound or severe disability population as: 'those people needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a long-term health condition (lasting six months or more), a disability (lasting six months or more), or old age'. For Whittlesea LGA 2016 data outlines women are more likely to need to assistance with core activity, compared to men (Females 6%, Male 5.3%).

3.12 NDIS implementation

As of April 2017 there were 2,650 Whittlesea residents with disabilities that are receiving support from the Victorian Government and by full rollout in 2019 there will be an estimated 3,400 Whittlesea residents in the NDIS scheme¹⁶

Currently, the overwhelming majority of disability service providers have their outlets along main transport routes in the larger and more established hubs in the south and centre of the North East Melbourne Region in close proximity to existing transport and administrative centres. The distribution of these key

¹⁵ Victorian Women's Health Atlas

<http://victorianwomenshealthatlas.net.au/reports%2Ffactsheets%2FGender%20Equality%2FWhittlesea%2FVWHAAtlas%20Fact%20Sheet%20Gender%20Equality%20Whittlesea.pdf>

¹⁶ NDIS, Market Position Statement Victoria- North East Melbourne Area, April 2016 page 33

service providers will pose particular challenges for local participants to access some supports, particularly in the northern areas of the region where there is strong urban growth such as Epping North, South Morang, Doreen and Mernda.¹⁷

3.13 Employment

The principles of equity and diversity in employment were further supported recently by Alistair McEwin, Disability Discrimination Commissioner who stated “Stigmatisation of disability is common; the key to successfully employing someone with a disability is a willingness to be flexible”.

With the introduction of the NDIS and its approach to put choice and control with the individuals living with a disability, the economic and social benefits this will create will benefit the employment prospects of the community to engage in purposeful and meaningful employment.

Many attitudinal barriers prevent people with disability from accessing employment opportunities, including employer attitudes, low expectations social and economic participation, community and business receptiveness, misunderstanding the cost of and unwillingness to make workplace adjustments and inaccessible application processes.¹⁸

Like others in the community, people with disability have skills, experience and knowledge to contribute to the workforce, and like others want an equal opportunity to work in environments where they can add value and be respected for their contribution.¹⁹

Employment outcomes for Australians with a disability were in the bottom third for OECD countries in 2012. Paid work is one part of economic participation that builds a sense of self-worth and independence.²⁰

Council will continue its community leadership role to work with others and empower our local community living with a disability to take on a leadership role in advocating for equity within local employment connections and networks.

3.14 Community Participation

Less than a third of people with a disability are actively involved in community groups,²¹ compared to 43.6% of individuals in the City of Whittlesea who participated in one or more community groups.²²

¹⁷ NDIS, Market Position Statement Victoria- North East Melbourne Area, April 2016 page 37

¹⁸ Victorian Government, Inquiry into Social inclusion and Victorians with disability, Sept 2014, 6-40

¹⁹ Victorian Government, Inquiry into Social inclusion and Victorians with disability, Sept 2014, 6-40

²⁰ Victorian Government, Absolutely everyone, State disability plan 2017-2020, page 11

Fewer than one in ten Victorians with a disability report having their social contact and community participation needs met.²³ Only two thirds of people with a disability participate in sport and physical recreation compared with nearly 80 per cent of the general population.²⁴

Additionally people with a disability need to be included and involved in decision making processes across all areas of society. People with a disability are looking for mainstream opportunities to participate in decision making and take up leadership opportunities across all areas of public life.²⁵

4 Consultation and Key Findings

In 2016, a comprehensive audit of the achievements the DAP 2013-16 was undertaken. There were a total of 81 actions, of which 58 were completed (72%). Two of the main challenges arising from this audit have been in progress on employment and in progressing the case for a regional All Abilities Playspace.

In early 2017, an internal department survey was conducted to analyse each action that was in the DAP 2013-16.

In March 2017, six consultation sessions were held across the municipality;

- Two (2) internal Staff forums
- One (1) Service Providers focus forum
- One (1) forum with Whittlesea Disability Network
- One(1) forum focused on Autism
- One (1) broader community forum.

Each session focused on three key elements;

- What participants felt were priorities when addressing disabilities,
- Capturing current initiatives in Whittlesea
- Identifying gaps/opportunities for action.

4.1 Findings

Priorities remained similar to the previous DAP 2013-2016 however there was further emphasis on:

²¹ Victorian Parliament, Inquiry into Social inclusion and Victorians with Disability (2014)

²² City of Whittlesea, Community Wellbeing indicators report 2017, Page 16

²³ Victorian Government, Absolutely everyone, State disability plan 2017-2020

²⁴ Victorian Government, A Companion document to a discussion paper of Victorian state disability plan 2017-2020, May 2016

²⁵ Victorian Government, Absolutely everyone, State disability plan 2017-2020

- Increasing advocacy across a number of areas
- Expanding support services to address changing needs across lifespans, for CALD communities, carers and parents of children with Autism
- Housing being identified as a specific aspect of the built environment needing addressing
- How the DAP would work within the new NDIS environment.
- Employment pathways

Other underpinning themes that emerged were to offer and support specific initiatives/support services but also encourage 'general services' to be more inclusive and accessible so that separate initiatives were not always required.

Current strengths such as existing networks, community hubs and services such as library programs were highlighted and encouraged to continue and expand.

There was also a focus on creating supportive environments for increasing accessibility and inclusiveness with a number of initiatives recommended that addressed the built environment, transport and housing. Of particular note were:

- Public toilets and playgrounds
- Leisure centres
- Train stations and bus stops
- Footpaths and signage
- Accessible and affordable housing.

Constant feedback from the community is also received via the Whittlesea Disability Network, which meets monthly and has over 500 persons on the mailing list, and *Our News*, which is published monthly and has over 700 individuals on the mailing list, both provide a rich source of feedback on current issues experienced by people with a disability, their carers and service providers.

Feedback from consultation sessions held with various stakeholders identified a range of issues and initiatives that could be addressed in the DAP 2017-2021. Priority areas remain similar to previous years with the opportunity to specifically address housing as a separate issue from the built environment.

4.2 Actions that have become core Council business

The success of previous DAPs has resulted in many actions being part of mainstream core business for Council. These will not be repeated in the 2017-21 action plan but importantly need to be acknowledged as follows;

Action	Outcomes
Ensure accessibility of Council's communication across all media	Document accessibility protocols developed
	Council online services comply with WCAG 2.0
	Council's website is responsive to design accessibility on a wide range of devices
	"Our News" newsletter is produced and distributed on a regular basis
	"Our News" is reviewed annually with subscribers to assess effectiveness
Council's new buildings and facilities, renovations, refurbishments and extensions meet minimum standards and achieve best practice for accessibility.	<p>Best practice accessibility is incorporated into Council's Design Expectations Guide.</p> <p>Best practice accessibility training provided to all Planning, Major Projects and Facilities Management staff at induction, with annual refreshers.</p>
Encourage compliance with the DDA at the earliest stages of the planning permit process for all new public buildings which require a planning permit, with particular focus on town/shopping centre developments.	The building permit process will continue to enforce compliance with the DDA.
Implement the Design Guidelines developed by the Whittlesea Accessible Futures project to ensure accessibility.	Accessibility Guidelines incorporated into <i>Design Guidelines for Urban Developments</i> .
Provide continuous accessible paths of travel for pedestrians.	Footpath & kerb ramp upgrade scheduled annually and works prioritised to enhance accessibility and safety e.g. trip hazards on footpaths & accessibility of high use crossing areas.

Action	Outcomes
Enhance operation of the Disabled Persons' Parking Scheme in the municipality.	Priority enforcement for public sites based on frequency of patrols and review of compliance outcomes.
	Input from Accessible Parking and Transport Working Group and Customer Requests to inform prioritised submissions for new designated bays and upgrades of existing bays.
Implement Council's Footpath Trading Policy.	Problem locations identified for non-compliance by community complaints and requests for increased surveillance.
All Council events, programs and celebration activities will be as inclusive and accessible as practically achievable.	Feasibility assessment undertaken of sites across the municipality for their potential to deliver accessible events and festivals, preferred sites identified.
	Accessible facilities are provided at events e.g. facility for people to recharge wheelchairs/scooters, and quiet spaces are provided.
	Accessible guidelines developed and facilities are provided and promoted in media communications for all events and at all events.
Support and network with local service providers on the implementation of the NDIS.	Whittlesea Community Futures Disability Cluster convened and meets regularly.

5 The Disability Action Plan 2017 – 2021 (The DAP)

Vision:

The City of Whittlesea is an inclusive municipality where people of all abilities are encouraged and enabled to lead satisfying, fulfilling and contributory lives.

5.1 Principles

The Disability Action Plan is underpinned by the following principles:

- A. The actions will be shaped and driven by the people for whom it has relevance,
- B. Access to contributory living through the development of inclusive communities is the right of everyone who lives, works, studies, attends events or visits the City of Whittlesea,
- C. Universal access is fundamental to all community facilities and premises,²⁶ in The City of Whittlesea,
- D. Access to wellbeing, education and meaningful employment are universal rights,
- E. Council will advocate for and collaborate with all levels of government as well as with community agencies for the best possible outcomes for people with disabilities, their families and friends, and
- F. Progress on actions and outcomes will be monitored and regularly reported to Council and the community.

5.2 Commitment

The Disability Action Plan is Council's commitment to:

- 1. Inclusive communities,
- 2. Good health, housing and wellbeing for people with disabilities,
- 3. Respect, equity and safety for all, and
- 4. Contributory community living as a right for all regardless of ability.

These four commitments are the foundation that underpins the DAP as Council's action plan for achieving genuine inclusion and equity for all. These commitments also connect with the four pillars of the State Disability Plan.

In delivering outcomes targeted by the DAP Council will also adhere to the intent of international, national and state charters and legislation that safeguard and promote the human rights and equity of people with disability.

²⁶ Objects - Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

A two year Action Plan has been developed to guide Council actions over 17/18 and 18/19.

Due to the impact of the NDIS and other significant reforms it is intended to review these key directions in year 2 and develop a further two year plan to guide Council actions up to 2021.

5.3 Reporting on the DAP.

At the conclusion of each year of the Plan, a progress report will be developed that will include the following structure-

- Achievement from the actions outlined in DAP from the last 12 months
- Areas that will need further work
- New and emerging issues or trends that relate to the work of the DAP and inclusion of people with disabilities in the Municipality.

This report will be to Council, the community, Whittlesea Disability Network and a summary will be provided in Council publication “Our News”

6 Our commitment

6.1 Commitment 1: Inclusive Communities.

Inclusive communities will not merely remove physical, social and procedural barriers to equity of access but will also create and promote the concept that non inclusive communities are incomplete.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
1.1 The public built environment is barrier free and accessible to all.	1.1.1 Develop a priorities process for the DDA compliant upgrade of existing Council public buildings	Prioritisation process for Council public buildings DDA compliance is developed by June 2018	City Presentation	Major Projects Community Wellbeing	17/18 18/19
		Develop a Budget submission to increase budget allocation for DDA compliant upgrade of existing Council public buildings for the 18/19 budget process	City Presentation	Major Projects Community Wellbeing	17/18 18/19
	1.1.2 Develop staff training for Tactile Ground Surface indicators (TGSi) in reference to new footpaths and refurbishment of footpaths	100% of target staff are trained in TGSi indicators by June 2018 (Target staff is determined by Lead and Supporting project group)	City Design and Transport	Community Wellbeing City Presentation Major Projects Parks and Open Space	17/18
	1.1.3 Establish a standardised whole of council approach and process for use of Tactile	TGSi standards are developed by June 2018	City Design and Transport	Parks & Open Space Major Projects Corporate	17/18

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
	Ground Surface Indicators (TGSi)			Accountability & Performance City Presentation Community Wellbeing	
	1.1.4 Develop a Public Toilets provision guide that will inform the work on public toilets across the municipality including inclusion of 'changing places' toilets at all new Council major facilities.	Develop the Public Toilets Provision Guide by June 2019	Major Projects	Parks and Open Space	18/19
	1.1.5 Develop a policy statement on the level of enhanced accessibility to be incorporated into the design of and constructions of new and redeveloped Council facilities	Enhanced Accessibly Design Principles policy statement is developed by June 2018	Major Projects	Leisure & Community Facilities Community Wellbeing	17/18
1.2 People with disability are able to access and join their communities as freely as do people without disabilities.	1.2.1 Develop a Business Support Program that works with local business owners to encourage the inclusion of customers with disabilities	Business support program is developed by June 2018	Community Wellbeing	Advocacy, Communications & Economic Development	17/18
		Business Support program implementation commences by	Community	Advocacy, Communications &	18/19

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
		June 2019	Wellbeing	Economic Development	
	1.2.2 Advocate to large local shopping centre developments to include quiet rooms to support families with sensory issues	Quiet Room Information Kit developed by June 2018	Community Wellbeing		17/18 18/19
	1.2.3 Investigate and upgrade portable assistive listening device to support people that are hearing impaired to access Council meetings and community events	Council portable assistive listening device is upgraded by June 2018	Governance	Community Wellbeing	17/18
	1.2.4 Assess and register current accessible change rooms across the municipality to be included in the <i>Changing Places</i> ²⁷ Statewide Register.	Audit of accessible change rooms across the municipality complete by December 2017 Changing Places Statewide Register is updated with accessible change rooms audit results by June 2018	Community Wellbeing		17/18

²⁷ Changing Places is a public toilet that provides extra support needed beyond what a standard accessible toilet provides. Each Changing places toilet provides a height adjustable adult-sized changing bench, a tracking hoist system, enough space and a safe and clean environment.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
	1.2.5 Encourage developers of new major commercial facilities (i.e. Major Shopping centres) to include a <i>Changing Places</i> Toilet in the designs of the development	Changing Places Factsheet is developed by December 2017 Changing Places Factsheet is distributed to 100% of all developers by June 2018	Community Wellbeing	Development Assessment	17/18 18/19
	1.2.6 Develop internal and external funding proposal (Including investigation of other funding sources) for the development of a regional accessible playground in the municipality	Funding proposal developed and submitted to relevant external agency	Parks and Open Space	Leisure and Community Facilities Community Wellbeing	17/18 18/19 (if required)
1.3 People with disability will experience no procedural, performance, cultural or economic barriers to contributing equitably as valued members of their communities	1.3.1 Provide mandatory staff induction disability awareness training sessions for all new staff with positions that require a level of disability awareness	Four training sessions held per annum for council staff for positions that require disability awareness each year of plan	Community Wellbeing		17/18 18/19

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
	1.3.2 Develop a disability awareness training program for all emergency management relief centre staff.	Deliver Disability Awareness Training for Emergency Management relief staff by June 2018	Community Wellbeing		17/18 18/19
	1.3.3 Review customer service staff training to ensure awareness of accessibility and responsiveness to people with disabilities.	Review is conducted by December 2017 New training is implemented by June 2018	Governance	Community Wellbeing	17/18 18/19
1.4 People with a disability will have access to a range of transport options	1.4.1 Work with the State government on the reform of the Disabled Persons' Parking Scheme	Contribute to the VicRoads consultation process into the reform of the Australian Disability parking scheme	Governance	Community Wellbeing	17/18
	1.4.2 Continue community awareness campaign around misuse of Disabled person parking spots with local school students	Campaign is to be implemented by June 18 Impact with students to be conducted as a part of campaign	Community Wellbeing		17/18
	1.4.3 Advocate to governments and transport providers to enhance accessibility of public transport services and facilities in the municipality	When appropriate advocate in partnership with WDN (in consultation with Accessible Parking and Transport working group and Public Transport Advisory Committee (PTAC)	Community Wellbeing	City Design and Transport	17/18 18/19

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
	1.4.4 Develop a Community Transport Policy, ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are included in the policy development.	Key Disability stakeholders are included in the consultation in the development of the Community Transport Policy	Community Building and Planning	Aged and Disability Advocacy and Communications Community Wellbeing	17/18
	1.4.5 Continue to upgrade and monitor the changes that will impact public transport stops to meet DDA requirements in line with the changes in Bus fleet	Annual bus stop upgrades are undertaken	City Design and Transport		17/18 18/19
	1.4.6 Proactively monitor and respond to incidents of misuse of disabled persons parking spots, including facilitation of the removal of abandoned cars.	Continue the implementation of the Disabled persons parking scheme and the monitoring of misuse of parking spots	Governance		17/18 18/19

6.2 Commitment 2: Good health, housing and wellbeing for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities, and their carers are among the most socially and economically disadvantaged groups in Australia. The social and economic disadvantage in which they live is a major contributor to their poor health.²⁸

Outcomes	Actions	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Timelines
2.1 People with a disability have a range of affordable, barrier free housing choices in their chosen community.	2.1.1 Advocate for increased accessible housing in the municipality	Develop an 'Accessible and adaptive housing' advocacy factsheet by June 2018 Seek opportunities to encourage the private sector and other organisations to deliver quality accessible and adaptive housing. and Distribution of the "Accessible and adaptive housing" Advocacy factsheet to key stakeholders by June 2019	Community Wellbeing	Community Building and Planning Strategic Planning and Design Development Assessment Advocacy & Communication and Economic Development	17/18 18/19

²⁸ <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/disability-and-health-inequalities-in-australia>

Outcomes	Actions	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Timelines
	2.1.2 Build the evidence for the need for accessible and adaptive housing in the municipality	Develop evidence base that supports the need in the local community for accessible housing as well as relevant support services by June 2018	Community Wellbeing	Strategic Planning & Design Community Building and Planning	17/18
	2.1.3 Investigate opportunities to use the evidence collected in Action 2.1.2 to strengthen support for accessible and adaptable housing in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.	Analysis of data and locally specific evidence for planning opportunities, to make recommendations for next steps by June 2019	Strategic Planning and Design	Community Wellbeing Community Building and Planning	18/19
2.2 People with a disability experience the optimum level of health and wellbeing.	2.2.1 Disability services providers are promoted to local NDIS participants and non-participants in the municipality	Local Services Providers Expo held by December each year	Community wellbeing		17/18 18/19

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
	2.2.2. Support the service delivery market development in the local area under the NDIS	Develop Market Gap statement and distribute to local services providers via Whittlesea Community Futures by June each year.	Community Wellbeing	Family, Children and Young People Aged and Disability	17/18 18/19
2.3 Support for children and young people with a disability (e.g. Autism) and their families/ carers	2.3.1 Monitor the impacts of the NDIS rollout , and identify emerging gaps, service access and/or support needs of families/carers, children and young people (with disabilities, e.g. Autism) that are not eligible for on-going NDIS funding.	Develop budget submission and/or business case for any required resource to respond to the emerging gaps, service access and/or support needs, identified by June 2018	Family, Children, and Young People	Community Wellbeing	17/18
	2.3.2 Work with local schools to increase the support for students with disabilities in the local area.	Develop partnerships with local schools to increase support for students with disabilities in local area by June 2018	Family, Children and Young People	Community Wellbeing	17/18 18/19
	2.3.3 Work with the Local Area Coordination (LAC) provider of the NDIS to support the implementation of community capacity building components of the NDIS.	Partners are engaged in joint projects together to support the community capacity building component of the NDIS each year	Community Wellbeing		17/18 18/19

6.3 Commitment 3: Respect, equity and safety.

The universal rights of all people are to be treated with respect, equality and dignity. The rights incorporated in the convention underpin policy and strategy development and the provision of services.

Outcomes	Actions	Measure	Lead Department	Support Departments	Time lines
3.1 People with a disability are respected within their community and the wider municipality.	3.1.1 Advocate for all departments producing major Council strategies to include WDN as a stakeholder for community participation and engagement.	WDN consulted as a stakeholder for key Council Strategies.	Community Building & Planning	Community Wellbeing	17/18 18/19
	3.1.2 Develop a Community Disability survey to get baseline data on community attitudes around inclusion in our community.	Community Disability Survey is developed and conducted by June 2018	Community Wellbeing	Community Building & Planning	17/18
	3.1.3 Review the current Terms of Reference of the Whittlesea Disability Network and continue to support the network	WDN Terms of Reference is reviewed and results are tabled at WDN by Dec 2017.	Community Wellbeing		17/18

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
3.2 People with a disability and carers are safe and free from family violence	3.2.1 Advocate for accessible crisis/emergency accommodation and/or family violence refuges to be provided in the City of Whittlesea	Update Council's Advocacy Brief on family violence refuges to state that all refuges to be inclusive for people with disabilities by June 2018	Advocacy & Communications and Economic Development	Community Building and Planning Community Wellbeing	17/18
	3.2.2 Research and evidence on experiences of family violence of people with a disability and carers to be used to inform Council's Family Violence Strategy review	Key disability and family violence sector stakeholders are included in the consultation for the Family Violence Strategy review by June 2018	Community Wellbeing	Aged and Disability Family, Children and Young People	17/18

6.4 Commitment 4: • Contributory lives.

There is equity of access to education and training to enable appropriate and valued employment opportunities, and access to inclusive communities through cultural, sporting, and leisure activities.

Outcomes	Actions	Measure	Lead Department	Support Department	Time lines
4.1 Engagement of the business community in developing existing models and pathways through skill acquisition for equity of employment for people with a disability.	4.1.1 Connect and network with a variety of Disability Employment providers to research and identify gaps and barriers to create local employment opportunities	Local Disability Employment Network is established by end December 2017	Community Wellbeing		17/18
		Local Disability Employment Network will meet 4 times a year			18/19
	4.1.2 Using various platforms, raise the awareness of local businesses that are a leader in employing people with disabilities, i.e. Jobs in the North, eNews	Minimum 2 articles in various formats are included in publications	Advocacy, Communications and Economic Development		18/19
	4.1.3 Highlight support available to local businesses and	Information provided on Disability employment at a	Advocacy, Communications		17/18

Outcomes	Actions	Measure	Lead Department	Support Department	Time lines
	encourage disability employment within the Business Events Program	minimum of two Business Events program events a year	and Economic Development		18/19
4.2 Council demonstrates leadership as a major employer of people with a disability.	4.2.1 Conduct research to gain baseline data of number of employees with a disability across the organisation to explore the setting of targets for the organisation	Research and desk-top analysis on the percentage of employees with disabilities in the organisation is conducted by June 2018	Human Resources		17/18
		Set Targets to increase the percentage of employees with disabilities in the organisation by June 2019	Human Resources		18/19
	4.2.2 Work with Australian Network on Disabilities (AND) to investigate actions that Council can take to increase opportunities for employment of people with a disability	Council becomes a member of AND by December 2017	Community Wellbeing	Human Resources	17/18
		Develop Employment workplace adjustment policy by June 2019	Community Wellbeing	Human Resources	18/19
	4.2.3 Establish Disability Work Experience/ Employment Pilot Program with Council	External funding proposal is developed for Disability Work Experience/ Employment Pilot	Community Wellbeing	Human Resources	17/18 18/19

Outcomes	Actions	Measure	Lead Department	Support Department	Time lines
	Departments for people with disabilities (Including people with disabilities from aboriginal, CALD backgrounds and women with disabilities)	in June 2018.			
4.3 Community events, activities, sporting, recreational and cultural opportunities are inclusive of people with disabilities as participants, leader/organisers and/or volunteers.	4.3.1 Ensure applicants are aware of accessibility requirements as part of the Community grants process.	Accessibility Information is provided as part of the grants application and funding approval for the 17/18 funding round	Community Building and Planning	Community Cultural Development	17/18
	4.3.2 Investigate the development of Playground communication signage at parks and gardens across the municipality for use by people with autism.	Investigation completed, designs drafted and proposal referred to the 18/19 budget process	Parks and Open space	Community Wellbeing	17/18

Outcome	Action	Measure	Lead Department	Supporting department	Time lines
	4.3.3 Increase leisure opportunities for people with disabilities in the community by investigating how inclusion and equity principles could be integrated into sport/recreation clubs/venues	Investigate opportunities to influence aquatic centre contracts, ground allocations processes, venue hire allocations in inclusive practices by June 2019	Leisure and Community Facilities	Major Facilities	18/19
	4.3.4 Work with other North East Melbourne Councils to develop a pilot program and funding submission to transition the current Building Inclusive Communities Program into Information Linkage and Capacity Building Grants Program	Funding submission for pilot is developed and submitted as a part of the 2018 funding round	Community Wellbeing		17/18
4.4 People with disability are actively involved in communities as leaders and/or volunteers.	4.4.1 Work with Volunteer Networks to promote social inclusion into purposeful volunteering opportunities which may lead to part time employment	People with disabilities are consulted and recognised in the development of the Council Volunteer strategy by June 2018	Community Building and Planning	Community Wellbeing	17/18
	4.4.2 Provide disability awareness training for Councillors.	Disability Awareness Training is provided for Councillors by June 2018	Community Wellbeing	Governance	17/18