

Whittlesea Disability Action Plan (DAP)

Under the Disability Act (Victoria) 2006, local governments are required to establish Disability Actions Plans (DAPs) to remove barriers and discrimination faced by people with permanent and significant disability, including:

- a. reducing barriers to accessing goods, services and facilities
- b. reducing barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment
- c. promoting inclusion and participation in the community
- d. achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disability.

Our Approach

The City of Whittlesea recognises the United Nations Charter on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adopts a Social Model of Disability approach to planning. This approach recognises that many attitudinal and environmental barriers are faced by people with disability and reinforces their legal rights to participate fully and equally in society.¹

Our Objectives

The DAP contains 41 initiatives supporting the objectives of Inclusion & Connection, Accessible Place and Space and Equity and Opportunity.

Inclusion & connection

The DAP includes 17 Key Initiatives designed to increase the social participation of people with disability through: the creation of safer and more inclusive spaces, services and facilities; the strengthening of links and networking opportunities between people with disability and key stakeholders in Council and the community; advocacy for increased disability services and supports across the community.

Connected Community Initiatives

1. Improve safety and perceptions of community safety in public spaces including for people with disabilities and their carers, women, girls and gender diverse people
2. Prevent and respond to family and gender-based violence by working with local service providers and the community.
3. Support our community to be safer, better prepared and more resilient to emergency events and disasters through increased access to information and education.
4. Continue to work with partners to lead recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic including vaccinations and COVID-19 safe health messaging as well as early years, school, cultural and linguistically diverse communities, refugee, asylum seekers and workplace immunisation programs.
5. Deliver a Connected Communities Strategy that will enhance social inclusion, civic participation, health, wellbeing and safety and reflect and celebrate the diversity of

¹ Australian Federation of Disability Organisations 2021, **Social model of disability** <<https://www.afdo.org.au/social-model-of-disability/>>, Melbourne, viewed 17 September 2021.

religions, cultures, heritages, abilities, ages, gender and sexual orientation which make City of Whittlesea a place for all.

6. Strengthen community connections through a vibrant arts and events scene celebrating our diverse culture and heritage, activated open spaces and facilities and local markets.
7. Establish a Gathering Place to increase connections to culture, heritage, land and healing for Aboriginal people.
8. Implement a new community grants program to support our community and businesses, encourage festivals and events as well as helping our community and vulnerable residents recover from the pandemic.
9. Deliver an inclusive leadership program to support community members to develop their leadership skills and potential.
10. Advocate for more mental health services and prevention programs for our community including young people.
11. Work with our community and partner organisations to support older residents to access quality local services.
12. Commence construction of a leisure and wellbeing facility in Mernda.
13. Build additional outdoor netball courts in a number of neighbourhoods including Epping, Doreen, Mill Park, Whittlesea, South Morang, Mernda.
14. Improve access to physical activity and social connection by providing accessible, multiuse sports infrastructure which meets the diverse needs of our community.
15. Enhance our network of vibrant and welcoming community centres at the heart of our neighbourhoods - including building new centres at Mernda, Wollert, and Donnybrook.
16. Strengthen engagement with community through supporting or developing advisory groups and networks across our diverse community including young people, business, sustainability, people with a disability and Aboriginal people.
17. Transition the Youth Advisory Committee to a Whittlesea Youth Council.

Accessible places & spaces

The DAP includes 12 Key Initiatives designed to create a more accessible built environment for people with disability through: neighbourhoods designed to provide a high level of connectivity; a more accessible public transport system; increased availability of accessible amenities; advocacy for more accessible, affordable and sustainable housing and community infrastructure.

Liveable Neighbourhoods Initiatives

1. Increase the quality, access, safety and amount of public open space in the municipality, including additional dog parks and a local park improvement program.
2. Develop and implement a plan to improve public toilets making them accessible, useable and safe.
3. Implement the Quarry Hills Regional Park master plan to increase accessibility, useability and activation.

4. Increase safety and accessibility of transport with a focus on major corridor improvements, public transport usage and safe connected cycling and walking networks.
5. Improve disability access to public transport including installation of bus shelters across the municipality.
6. Advocate for better public transport, including better rail, tram and bus infrastructure and services and lead the public transport strategy under the Northern Council's Alliance.
7. Design and upgrade local streetscapes and shopping precincts to make it easier to move about, celebrate local culture, heritage and character, and connect people to the natural environment .
8. Deliver more affordable and accessible homes in the municipality.
9. Implement the Safe Routes to Schools program to improve the safety of school children.

Sustainable Environment

1. Deliver on our Greening Whittlesea Strategy including increasing tree canopy along main road residential streets and in conservation reserves, park and major facilities
2. To protect and enhance Whittlesea's environmental and sustainable future, we will undertake advocacy on behalf of our community, on climate change, water security and quality, vulnerable flora and fauna and waste reduction and reuse.
3. Undertake analysis of extreme heat on the health and wellbeing of our community to inform future planning to protect residents and precincts most vulnerable to heatwaves.

Equity & opportunity

The DAP includes 14 Key Initiatives designed to increase the civic and economic participation of people with disability, through: dedicated networking opportunities; increased representation in Council and community forums; Employer of Choice initiatives; community partnerships to strengthen local education and employment opportunities.

Strong Local Economy Initiatives

1. As part of COVID recovery, deliver a 'support local' campaign and incentive program to support the community and local businesses.
2. Work with partners to increase opportunities for local work, training, apprenticeships and programs with a focus on young people and groups who experience significant barriers to employment.
3. Implement the Investment Attraction Plan to attract investment, strengthen the local economy and increase the number and diversity of local jobs.
4. Implement the Victorian Government-funded 3-yearold kindergarten service together with the early childhood sector and deliver infrastructure projects at key sites across the city.
5. Work with the Yarra Plenty Regional Library corporation to continue improving our library services around accessibility, innovation and community learning.

High Performing Organisation Initiatives

1. Improve customer service through investing in technology, systems and Council staff and make it easier for our community to interact with Council.
2. Continue to implement our Advocacy Plan for infrastructure and services to support the diverse needs of our community.
3. Continue to be an employer of choice through developing and implementing a new Workforce Plan to attract and retain high quality and skilled staff to support our community.
4. Establish a place-based approach to Council planning, service and infrastructure delivery that is responsive to the distinct needs and aspirations of local communities
5. Continue to implement the Local Government Act 2020 and publicly report on an action plan to embed good governance at the Council.
6. Develop a long term community infrastructure plan responding to community service and infrastructure needs for sport, leisure, recreation, arts, heritage and culture, youth, older adults, families and children and libraries.
7. Continue to strengthen local community engagement in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy to inform Council programs and decision-making.
8. Maintain strong communications with our community to promote access to services including multilingual, accessible for all and mobile friendly communications and website.
9. Implement, communicate and promote our Financial Hardship Policy 2021 to support our financially vulnerable residents.
10. Introduce regular reporting on Council's performance including the Community Action Plan and customer service performance.

For more information about the Whittlesea Disability Action Plan, please email the City of Whittlesea's Disability Planner, Rosie Beaumont: rosie.beaumont@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or visit the [Whittlesea Disability Network Online Information Hub](#) to post a comment.

[View the Whittlesea Community Plan 2021 – 25 to see how the DAP connects with our other work in the community.](#)