

Presenter: Alison Duncan, Director Community Services

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement to consult with community on the draft Disability Access Plan 2020-2024, Embracing Equity in Participation (refer Attachment 2).

Key issues

2. People with a disability reflect the rich diversity of our community and comprise eighteen percent of the population contributing socially and economically as residents, workers, students, and visitors to the city.
3. The contemporary societal context of disability is impacted by the continual growth in our population, infrastructure developments and technological advancements within our city. In addition, the revolutionary roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme presents opportunities and challenges that allow us to embrace these changes to realise our vision to make Melbourne the world's most accessible and inclusive city.
4. Research projects and community engagement undertaken in developing the draft Plan indicate that although many access improvements have been made there remain persistent barriers in our built, social and informational environments. People of all ages with disability have told us that these barriers impact on their equity of access and limit opportunities to reach their desired potential.
5. Since 1999 when Council endorsed its first Disability Action Plan, City of Melbourne has demonstrated ongoing commitment to reducing and eliminating barriers through access initiatives undertaken across many branches. These 'embedded' initiatives are allocated resources and included in branch business plans annually. Key examples include upgrades of footpaths and building facilities, inclusive community services and programs, provision of information in alternative formats, and accessible wayfinding that specifically address the needs of people with sensory disability such as Braille street signs and mobility support services. Disability organisations within the city are also supported through capacity building grants and sponsorship programs to facilitate community projects.
6. Building on business as usual access initiatives, the draft Plan outlines commitment to utilise universal access best practice based on co-design with people with a disability. This engagement ensures a person centred approach and results in environments that can be accessed, understood and used by all people regardless of their age and ability.
7. The draft Plan outlines three key outcomes that will guide actions over the next four years:
 - 7.1. Outcome 1: Our buildings, infrastructure, facilities, parks and public spaces demonstrate best practice in universal access.
 - 7.2. Outcome 2: Our information, services, programs, events, festivals and civic engagements are accessible to people with disabilities.
 - 7.3. Outcome 3: Diversity is valued and supported through education, advocacy and promotional activities.
8. Given the fiscal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the draft Plan details actions that are new initiatives that can be achieved over the next four years. Embedded access initiatives will be implemented through the annual branch business plans.
9. Council's Disability Advisory Committee has provided ongoing input to research, and participated in the development of the plan framework. The Committee supports the three key outcomes outlined in the draft Plan.

Recommendation from management

10. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 10.1. Endorses management undertaking community engagement on the draft Disability Access Plan 2020-2024, Embracing Equity in Participation.
 - 10.2. Notes that the Disability Access Plan will be returned to the August 2020 Future Melbourne Committee meeting for final endorsement.

Attachments:

1. Supporting attachment (Page 3 of 17)
2. Disability Access Plan 2020-2024, Embracing Equity in Participation (Page 4 of 17)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. Section 38(5) of the *Disability Act 2006* provides that, if a Council determines to prepare a Disability Access Plan, the Council must report on the implementation of the Disability Action Plan in its annual report.
2. Development of a Disability Access Plan will also assist Council to meet its obligations in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth).

Finance

3. The budget of \$104,300 is included within Community Services Branch 2020–21.

Conflict of interest

4. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.'

Health and Safety

5. The draft Disability Access Plan, Embracing Equity in Participation outlines how the City of Melbourne will continue to reduce and eliminate barriers in the built, social and informational environments. This will improve access, inclusion and participation for people with disability who live, work, study in or visit our city. In addition, it will foster a heightened sense of belonging and help celebrate the diversity and contribution of people with disability make to life of the city.

Stakeholder consultation

6. External consultation to seek the view of stakeholders on the draft Plan will be undertaken in July and early August 2020 through a range of methods including online, a community forum, on line via Participate Melbourne, virtual meetings with community groups based within the city.
7. Copies of the draft Plan are available in alternative formats and one of one telephone conversations will also be offered for community members and groups.

Relation to Council policy

8. This recommendation is consistent with Council Plan 2017-21, Goal 2, A City for People.

Environmental sustainability

9. This draft Plan supports environmental sustainability through promotion of best practice in universal access design that support environments that can be accessed, understood and used by all people regardless of their age and ability over the life span.

DISABILITY ACCESS PLAN 2020-24

EMBRACING EQUITY
IN PARTICIPATION



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City of Melbourne’s Disability Access Plan 2020–2024 Embracing Equity in Participation **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

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How we're working to make Melbourne the world's most accessible and inclusive city

City of Melbourne's commitment and vision

The City of Melbourne is committed to being a 'city for people' — one that is welcoming, inclusive and accessible for all. As one of the world's most liveable cities, we strive to demonstrate and lead best practice in universal access.

We define best practice universal access as a co-design process of engagement with people with disability that results in environments that can be accessed, understood and used by all people regardless of their age and ability. This results in equity of participation for all.

With continuous growth in our population and infrastructure, technological advancements and the revolutionary roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, there are new opportunities and challenges. Embracing these will allow us to realise our vision **to make Melbourne the world's most accessible and inclusive city where all people can participate with dignity and independence.**

Our commitment to civic participation provides ongoing opportunities for people with a disability to tell us about the barriers they face. Based on their experiences and feedback, we plan, collaborate and seek innovative solutions to reduce and eliminate barriers in our communities.

Why we're addressing barriers to access

Equity of access is a human right. The City of Melbourne acknowledges the right of people with disabilities to equitable and full participation in all aspects of city life.

International, national and state disability and anti-discrimination legislation¹ clearly outlines obligations of organisations to address barriers to equity of access. More importantly, community expectations dictate that all people, irrespective of their abilities, have an equal right to participate and attain their desired goals in personal, community and civic life.

This societal expectation is reinforced by the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)². This reform has resulted in more people with disabilities, their families, partners, carers and friends expecting greater access to all aspects of the built, social and informational environments including buildings, schools, employment, businesses, sport, leisure, entertainment and cultural venues and events.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cmw), Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

² The National Disability Insurance Scheme delivers a national system of disability support that allocates funding to individuals with permanent disabilities to choose services, supports and/or aids to help them reach their life goals

This document outlines how we will continue to work to reduce and eliminate barriers, both within the City of Melbourne and with external partners, to enable the full participation of people with a disability who live, work, visit and study in our city. While continuing to address barriers in our own facilities, services and programs, we will lead by example and work in partnership with community, business, academia and government stakeholders to realise our vision of a fully accessible and inclusive city.

The cultural shift: disability vs diversity

This is the City of Melbourne's fifth Disability Access Plan. In 1999, City of Melbourne endorsed its first Disability Action Plan that acknowledged that it is the barriers within society (social model of disability) that exclude and limit opportunities and choices for people with disability to fully and actively participate in all aspects of life. In 2020, this plan will further foster recognition that having a disability is just another aspect of diversity within our society and we will continue to promote and celebrate the integral part people with disability play in our city.

National and international 'high achievers' (with disability) have demonstrated what is possible when there is equity of opportunity. Individuals like Nick Vujick, Stephen Hawking, Andrea Bocelli, and Greta Thunberg show us that having a disability is not a limiting factor. It is environments that exclude and opportunities denied that limit capacity to attain individuals' desired potential in life.

Barrier-free environments respond to diversity of access needs and enable all people, irrespective of their individual abilities, to attain their life goals. City of Melbourne will continue to reduce and eliminate barriers to enable full participation for all people in the life of the city. A city in which all aspects of diversity are acknowledged, valued and celebrated – an inclusive city that enables the participation of all.

Types of disabilities

Disability is diverse. A disability may be acquired at birth or result from an accident, injury or disease. It may come and go. Many disabilities are visible, such as people using a mobility aid to get around whereas other disabilities are invisible, such as a person with a hearing impairment or psycho-social disability.

The different types of disabilities include:

1. Sensory and speech
2. Physical restriction
3. Intellectual
4. Head injury, stroke or acquired brain injury
5. Psychological
6. Other including diseases and auto-immune conditions.

The degree of a disability is different for every person and some people may have two or more types of disabilities. We understand the particular needs of each disability group and work to reduce and eliminate barriers to support inclusivity for all.

Did you know....³

People with a disability

- 18% of Australians and Victorian populations live with a disability
- 25% of Australians live with a mental illness
- 96% of disabilities are invisible
- 95% of people with disability live at home or in the community
- The likelihood of living with a disability increases with age which means the city will experience increased numbers of people with disabilities in the future.

Diversity of disability

- Only 4.4% of people with a disability in Australia use a wheelchair
- 1 in 6 Australians are affected by hearing loss
- Vision Australia estimates there are currently 357,000 people in Australia who are blind or have low vision
- 45% of Australians aged 16–85 years, experience a mental health condition during their lifetime
- 3 million Australians live with depression or anxiety
- Over three-quarters (76.8%) of people with disability reported a physical disorder as their main condition. The most common physical disorder was musculoskeletal disorder (29.6%) including arthritis and related disorders (12.7%) and back problems (12.6%).

Diversity of disability reported by City of Melbourne residents

- 24% physical
- 13% psychosocial
- 10% speech and sensory
- 8% intellectual
- 27% other.

Assistance and carers

- Approximately 60% of people with disability need assistance with at least one activity in daily life
- 5.5% of City of Melbourne residents assisted family members due to disability, long terms illness or old age (2016)
 - A significant increase of 38% (2011) that could be an indicator of a gap in service availability
- 460,000 Australians are supported by the National Disability Insurance Scheme

³ AURIN University of Melbourne Demographic and Service Mapping Across City of Melbourne Suburbs July 2017, Disability Demographics Infographics and International Best Practice, Nerd Digital, 2019

- 280,000 under the age of 65 receive services under the National Disability Agreement.

Employment of people with disability

- 53% of people with disability participate in the workforce compared with 83% of people with no reported disability
- The weekly median income of people with disability was \$465, less than half of people with no reported disability
- Graduates with disability take 61.5% longer to gain full-time employment compared to other graduates.
- Almost one in five (18.9%) people with disability aged 15–24 years experienced discrimination. In almost half of those instances, the source of discrimination is an employer
- 34% of people with disability are managers and professionals.

Disability inclusivity

- 36% of people with disabilities are often treated less favourably than customers without a disability
- 28% of people with disability have experienced discrimination by one or more of the organisations they've recently interacted with
- 1 in 3 people with disability report that their customer needs are often unmet
- 35% of people with disabilities have avoided situations because of their disabilities
- 68% of complaints regarding assistance animal access were from non-guide assistance animals. 72% of these named a private business.

Economic benefit of universally accessible businesses and employing people with disability

- City of Melbourne attracts over 800,000 visitors into the city every day
- The City of Melbourne is a major destination for domestic and international visitors
- The social and economic life of the city is enhanced when everyone can actively participate in the life of the city
- Employment returns: \$26 for every \$1 is the return for keeping people living with disability in employment
- Return on investment: \$13 for every \$1 potential return on investment universally accessible environments
- Increased tourism: up to four times use of facilities by City of Melbourne tourists with a disability when you improve access
- More travellers means higher returns: every \$1 spent by people with disability returns \$7 for tourism and retail related revenue
- Retail environments: 20–25% increase in the turnover for universally accessible retail environments compared to non-accessible environments
- 89% of organisations who employ people with disability identify positive benefits:
 - 61% improvement in workplace morale
 - 49% increase in the ability to fill skills gaps

- 42% increase in productivity
- 90% of employees with disability record productivity rates equal or greater than other workers and 86% have average or superior attendance records.

When working to reduce and eliminate access barriers we need to address the distinct needs of diverse disability groups. For example, implementing innovative technologies such as beacons that help people with vision impairment independently navigate through the city, and advocating recognition of assistive companion animals that support the participation of people with psycho-social disabilities in community life.

What the community has told us

City of Melbourne engages and listens to community members with disabilities, advocacy groups, access experts, academics and innovators to help us better understand and address barriers in ways that have not been tried before.

In preparing to write this plan, we have undertaken research and engaged with diverse groups of people with various disabilities, young people, children, and sought the insights of parents, carers, partners and siblings.

Our engagement and research has reinforced that although some access improvements have been made significant barriers remain in the built, informational and social environments that limit equity of access and participation for many people with a disability.

We share in the disability community motto of 'nothing for us without us' and we will continue to be guided by the voices of people with disability through our Disability Advisory Committee, engagement and other co-design processes.

Research undertaken to inform this plan

Rigorous research has been undertaken to expand understanding and knowledge on how we can better address persistent access barriers. City of Melbourne's Disability Advisory Committee, advocacy groups, academics and people with disabilities have helped co-design research methodologies and identify what needs to be investigated.

Research studies that have informed this plan include:

1. 2012 Economic Benefits of Universal Access, Monash University *
2. 2015 Understanding Accessibility for Sensory Disability – Qualitative Research Inquiry, Studio Thick *
3. 2017 Demographics and Disability Service Mapping Across City of Melbourne Suburbs, AURIN Melbourne University
4. 2019 Everyone's Moomba, Melbourne University in conjunction with Committee for Melbourne*
5. 2019 Making Melbourne more inclusive for people with disability, Melbourne University (Disability Institute) *

6. 2019 Disability Demographics Infographics and International Best Practice, Nerd Digital
7. 2019 Showcasing Access and Inclusion – Cutting through a complex legislative and policy landscape with co-design, Visionary Design Development*
8. 2020 Making Melbourne more inclusive for children and young people with disability, Melbourne University*.

*co-design research methodologies

All these reports are available at www.accessingmelbourne.vic.gov.au and requests for reports in alternative formats can be made at 9658 9658 or www.melbourne.vic.gov.au.

Equity Access Plan 2020–2024

Equity of access, inclusion and participation is a legislative requirement

This plan has been developed with reference to international, national and state legislation, with an emphasis on meeting obligations in the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*. This Act requires all public sector bodies to prepare a Disability Action Plan and Section 38 stipulates that a plan should be developed for the purpose of:

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

City of Melbourne's long and ongoing commitment to access for all

City of Melbourne has a long history of action and commitment to equity of access. Having established Victoria's first Disability Advisory Committee in 1999, we have heard the voices and acted on recommendations that have reduced barriers and enhanced access, inclusion and participation in our city and across the nation.

Key achievements include:

- **Advocacy** on legislation and policy reforms such as the Premises Standards and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- **Inclusive services and programs** that respond to the needs of people of disability of all ages through our child care centres, family services, recreation centres, libraries, festival and events
- **Education** of internal and external stakeholders on the importance of equity of access through ongoing disability awareness training
- **Provision of access information** through access checklists, information in alternative formats and development of the Accessing Melbourne website that provides key access information and resources for community
- **Adherence to access standards** stipulated in planning, building and on street by laws/codes such as the Street Café Code and accessible parking schemes such as the City Access Pass
- **Exploration and implementation of innovative technologies** such as Braille street signs and beacon technology to help people with vision impairments navigate around the city
- **Capacity building** through grants and sponsorships that support community, disability, and social enterprise groups to pursue community projects

- **Collaborative stakeholder relationships** with disability service providers, cultural venues, business stakeholders, travel providers, government departments and academia that have resulted in world class traveller services that facilitate mobility aids and companion services to help people get around the city. In addition, the availability of Changing Places toilet facilities and joint research assignments with academics resulting in greater rigour in understanding the needs of people with disability in our fast paced technological world.

In this plan, we reinforce the fact that having a disability is an integral element of the ‘melting pot’ that is our diverse community and that we will build on further embedding equity of access in all aspects of operations across the City of Melbourne.

Best practice in universal access

To build on our status as one of the world’s most liveable cities we will strive to demonstrate best practice in universal access through a co-design process of engagement with people with disability that results in environments that can be accessed, understood and used by all people regardless of their age and ability – resulting in equity of participation for all.

How this plan will be implemented, monitored and reported

The outcomes and actions in this access plan have been developed following the undertaking of research, associated community engagement and the input and feedback of the City of Melbourne Disability Advisory Committee.

Although affected by the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, access initiatives deemed to be embedded access initiatives will continue to be progressively implemented across City of Melbourne branches. For ease of reference and reporting, this plan outlines new initiatives to be implemented over the next four years.

This plan will be lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission as the City of Melbourne endorsed Disability Access Plan 2020–2024. Progress on embedded and new access initiatives will be reported annually.

Outcome 1: Our buildings, infrastructure, facilities, parks and public spaces demonstrate best practice in universal access

Action	Measure	Year of Implementation
1.1 Establish and promote Changing Places facilities within City of Melbourne	No. of City of Melbourne facilities that provide Changing Places No. of Changing Places facilities in City of Melbourne No. of mediums and occasions Changing Places facilities available within City of Melbourne are promoted	1, 2
1.2 Deliver best practice universal access design in 'city shaping' and other new and redevelopment initiatives	No. of people with disability engaged in co-design opportunities No. of branches conducting co-design with people with disability	1, 2, 3, 4
1.3 Explore the establishment of a demonstration best practice universal access 'Inclusive Access Zone' demonstration model	Scope and timeframe of demonstration model endorsed for implementation	1, 2, 3, 4
1.4 Work with Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) to improve standards for design, construction and safety equipment that apply to domestic commercial vessels to improve accessibility	Determine accessibility requirements for domestic vehicles from AMSA Seek data on % of people with disability who use river craft on annual basis Convene disability awareness training for river craft operators	1, 2

Outcome 2: Our information, services, programs, events, festivals and civic engagements are accessible to people with disabilities

Action	Measure	Year of Implementation
2.1 Translate and provide communication and information in alternative formats	% of Council meetings captioned or Auslan interpreted No. of publications and information in easy English available for community No. of interface desks with communication boards	1, 2, 3, 4
2.2 Maintain, review and update access information on the City of Melbourne Accessing Melbourne website	No. of people with disability engaged in review process No. of analytics reports developed	1, 2, 3, 4
2.3 Establish a child and youth with disability civic forum	Forum established No. of young people involved No. of issues brought to forum	1, 2, 3, 4
2.4 Develop service/program/facility/event co-designed disability action plans to enhance equity of access and participation of people with disability (co-design)	No. of people with disability engaged to identify access and inclusion barriers and scope solutions to reduce and eliminate these No. of branches that developed service/program specific No. of staff who completed disability awareness training % of program budget allocated to address identified barriers	1, 2, 3, 4
2.5 Enhance employment opportunities for people with disability	No. of instances vacancies promoted with disability recruitment agencies No. of interns, trainees and students in	1, 2, 3, 4

	<p>placement every year</p> <p>Review employment diversity strategy to highlight the importance of increasing the number of employees with disability across the organisation</p>	
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Outcome 3: Diversity is valued and supported through education, advocacy and promotional activities

Action	Measure	Year of Implementation
3.1 Facilitate collaborative forums between people with disability and transport providers to enhance vehicle, station and route access provisions	<p>No. of stakeholder relationships established</p> <p>No. of forums</p> <p>No. of access changes implemented</p>	1, 2
3.2 Advocate the establishment of an Assistive Dog Scheme in Victoria	<p>Involvement on a working group or steering committee to guide scheme establishment</p> <p>Promotion of and encouragement of business stakeholders and transport providers (including aviation) to be engaged in scheme development</p>	1, 2, 3
3.3 Update procurement agreements to stipulate requirement to employ people with disability	Stipulation to employ people with disability in procurement contracts	1, 2, 3, 4
3.4 Promote and explore affiliation with the Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyard (discreetly indicates need for additional support, help or a little more time)	<p>No. of occasions lanyards promoted</p> <p>Affiliation to Sunflower Lanyard scheme</p>	1, 2

How to contact us

Online:

melbourne.vic.gov.au

In person:

Melbourne Town Hall - Administration Building
120 Swanston Street, Melbourne
Business hours, Monday to Friday
(Public holidays excluded)

Telephone:

03 9658 9658

Business hours, Monday to Friday
(Public holidays excluded)

Fax:

03 9654 4854

In writing:

City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australia

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