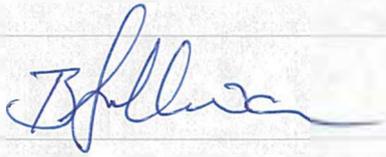


# Disability Action Plan 2023/24



**Table 1 Endorsement Details**

<b>Date of Adoption</b>	September 27 2023		
<b>Adoption Method</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> Executive	
<b>CEO Signature</b>			<b>Date</b> 17/10/23
<b>Manager</b>	Naomi Scrivener, Manager Community Wellbeing		
<b>Department</b>	Community Wellbeing		
<b>Term</b>	July 2023 to June 2024		
<b>Last Endorsement Date</b>	27 October 2021 (Easy English format)		
<b>Nominated Review Period</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Biennially	
<b>Next Endorsement Date</b>	June 2024		

Council's Disability Action Plan 2020-2025 (Easy English version) was endorsed, with actions incorporated into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2020-2025, at the Scheduled Meeting held 27 October 2021.

This plan for 2023-24 builds on previous plans but is a separate document linked to the Council Plan and other Council plans and strategies.

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

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## Purpose and aims of this Disability Action Plan

This Disability Action Plan (DAP) recognises the right of all people with disability to live an included and respected life in our community and acknowledges the important roles played by carers, families, volunteers and service-providers.

We developed this DAP with input from people with disability, disabled people's organisations, families, carers and supporters of people with disability.

The DAP will guide Council decision-making and aims to promote

- A whole-of-council approach to disability inclusion
- Accessible and inclusive Council services, programs and events
- Partnership approaches
- Positive community attitudes and disability-inclusive community activities



## Legislative and policy context

Our DAP aligns with our responsibilities under the following legislation

### International

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### National/Australian

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
- Disability (Standards for Accessible Public Transport) 2002
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031

### State/Victorian

- Disability Act 2006
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Local Government Act 2020
- Carers Recognition Act 2012
- State Disability Plan – Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022-2026)
- Legislation relating to the built environment including
  - Building Act 1993 (State)
  - Building Regulations 2018 (State)
  - National Construction Code (National)
  - Australian Standard 1428.1-2021 (National)

**The DAP addresses the four key areas of action legislated in the Victorian Disability Act 2006. These are:**

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



## Local policy context and relevant Council Plan priorities

The DAP aligns with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council (MRSC) key strategic planning documents:

- Council Community Vision 2021-2031
- Council Plan 2021-2031 and the four (4) Strategic Objectives in this Plan
- Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 and Council's health and wellbeing goals:
  - Our community is inclusive and celebrates diversity
  - Our community is safe and healthy
  - Our community is adaptable and resilient



**Figure 1 Strategic Objectives, Community Vision Themes**

## Summary

The Disability Act 2006 (Vic) requires that Councils in Victoria either prepare an annual DAP or include disability planning in their Council Plan. Reporting on implementation must be included in Council's annual report.

Council's Disability Action Plan (2021-2025) is written in an Easy English format, with 2022-2023 actions being part of the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP). For 2023-2024 the DAP is a standalone plan, which is aligned to other Council plans and strategies. It will also be supplemented with an Easy English version.

The Council Plan 2021-2031 (draft 23/24 actions) commits to "Continue to deliver the actions for the Disability Action Plan 2021–2025". Therefore to meet this all areas of Council have been invited to nominate relevant new actions for 2023-2024 or to carry forward actions that were not able to be met in in 2022-2023.

Council has an ongoing involvement in a wide range of activities, events, initiatives and projects that impact and support people with disabilities in our community. In line with Council's Community Vision Statement of "a collaborative commitment to inclusivity for all", the draft DAP 2023-2024 incorporates an inclusive approach across Council responsibilities, where all areas take direct responsibility for ensuring they conduct their roles in ways that promote access and inclusion across the community.

Feedback from relevant stakeholders across Council was sought and actions collated to form the draft plan. Public consultation on the draft was held in July/August 2023 and the feedback reflected in the plan where this was possible, appropriate and timely.



## Disability in the Macedon Ranges Shire

In 2021, 2,614 people (or 5.1% of the population) in Macedon Ranges Shire reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This was a percentage increase from 2016 and compares to 6.9% for Regional Victoria.

In Macedon Ranges Shire in 2021, 5,878 carers were providing unpaid assistance to a person with disability, long term illness or old age, an increase of 1.9% since 2016. This represents 14.3% of the population aged 15+ compared to 14.1% for Regional Victoria.

From [profile.id.com.au/Macedon-ranges/assistance](https://profile.id.com.au/Macedon-ranges/assistance)

The 2021 Census also indicated that 29.6% of people with disability in the Macedon Ranges Shire have mental health conditions – this is significantly higher than for any of the other identified groups.

Recent years have seen increasing numbers of Australians identifying as neurodiverse. For example, 1-2% of the population are affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder and around 5% by Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. People in this group, particularly children and young people, need varying levels of support in areas of social interaction, education and employment in order to manage their lives effectively.



## Council's role

Council has a number of roles that are important in improving access and inclusion for people with disability, their carers and families. Key examples are:

- Planning, managing and maintaining community resources and infrastructure including footpaths and roads, community buildings, parks, playgrounds and sporting and leisure facilities.
- Planning and delivering health and community services including Maternal Child Health Services, immunisations, playgroups, youth services, libraries, cultural events and entertainment.
- Providing connection and reliable information to the community through our customer service centres, websites, social media accounts and print publications and through supporting local groups, events and initiatives.
- Working in partnerships with other Government, the not for profit sector and businesses to benefit the community and residents
- As an employer.

## Developing the DAP

Thank you to everyone who has contributed their ideas and views on the direction they would like us to take in disability and inclusion. We know that a strong plan should reflect the community's needs, concerns, priorities and aspirations.

To develop our Disability Action Plan, we considered:

- the views of external stakeholders
- population data from many sources
- Commonwealth and Victorian Government priorities
- evidence about what works
- our current actions, resources and other relevant council plans, strategies and priorities

## Monitoring and reporting

We are committed to reviewing and reporting on progress of the DAP aims and actions. Performance indicators will be developed for DAP actions and these will form the framework for monitoring and reporting progress with implementation.

The Community Wellbeing Department will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and reporting of this Plan, however the actions will be the responsibility of the relevant department across Council.

We will include people with disability in review and evaluation processes and will incorporate their input in reports.

Twice-yearly reports will be published on the MRSC website, distributed to people who provided comment and available to the community.



## Actions for 2023-24

**Table A**      **Actions linked to Council Plan Strategic Objective - Connecting communities**

Council Plan Strategic Priorities	Disability element/action
<p>Improve connectivity and movement, and provide transport choices to the community, including walking trails and bike paths</p>	<p>Continue to deliver improvements in car parking accessibility, based on community input, information about current situation, and future needs.</p>
<p>Provide well-designed, fit-for-purpose, multi-use open spaces and infrastructure for the community to connect, engage and participate in a financially sustainable way</p>	<p>Continue to improve continuous accessible paths of travel to key destinations, such as recreation and community facilities, through the funding of the Footpath Construction Program.</p>
<p>Provide well-designed, fit-for-purpose, multi-use open spaces and infrastructure for the community to connect, engage and participate in a financially sustainable way</p>	<p>Pending available funding implement a program of DDA compliance assessment across all Council owned/operated facilities – to raise awareness and guide a future workplan of building upgrade</p>
<p>Target community needs through development programs and grants</p>	<p>Direct some Council community grant funding to initiatives that emphasise inclusiveness.</p> <p>Seek funding to provide customised accessibility guides (Access Key) for large Council-managed venues.</p> <p>Initiate development of accessibility maps for MRSC towns and key locations.</p>

Council Plan Strategic Priorities	Disability element/action
Promote a more inclusive community by supporting community groups and vulnerable groups	<p>Continue to recognise International Day of Persons with Disability (IDPwD).</p> <p>Research the most effective ways for council, working within our agreed role and resourced capacity, to support carers in our community.</p> <p>Continue to review programs and work with young people to identify and implement options for increasing social connections among children and families who are at risk of experiencing social isolation, and who may not engage in traditional community programs.</p>
Explore opportunities for affordable and social housing in the shire	<p>Work with the Victorian Government to increase supply of affordable housing, including social housing, in the shire.</p> <p>Advocate for specialist disability housing in the region.</p>

**Table B**      **Actions linked to Council Plan Strategic Objective - Healthy environment, healthy people**

Council Plan Strategic Priorities	Disability element/action
Provide opportunities to experience open space and bushland reserves	<p>Ensure that inclusion and needs of people with disability are reflected in the development of a new Open Space Strategy.</p> <p>Maintain open spaces and parks that can be used by all members of the community.</p>
Maintain systems and capacity to manage and respond to emergency events	<p>Work with stakeholders to provide community education sessions for people with disability about how to keep safe during emergencies.</p> <p>Advocate for funding for specific recovery activities for people with disability who may experience emergencies differently.</p> <p>Promote person-centred emergency preparation.</p> <p>Ensure inclusion of people with disability in Municipal Emergency Management Plan actions including household emergency preparation, building capacity for community led recovery and extreme weather support actions.</p>
Encourage active and healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities	<p>Work with partner agencies to encourage people with disability to increase physical activity levels.</p> <p>Help sporting groups and clubs to be accessible and inclusive for people with disability.</p>

**Council Plan Strategic Priorities**

**Disability element/action**

Engage families to promote the importance of early childhood education and health

Access School Readiness Funding to assist children with communication, wellbeing, access and inclusion outcomes prior to attending school.

Embed use of communication support tools in kindergartens, including Auslan or Key Word Sign.

Support our community to ensure better access and connection for facilities and services

Prepare for and take advantage of funding opportunities for provision and renewal of accessible public toilets, including Changing Places.

Review disability access and inclusion learning needs within our organisation.

Develop and implement a disability awareness training strategy that is integrated in Council’s Learning and Development Strategy.

**Table C      Actions linked to Council Plan Strategic Objective – Business and Tourism**

Council Plan Strategic Priorities	Disability element/action
Encourage economic vitality (including tourism, agribusiness and local employment options)	<p>Promote diverse and flexible opportunities for volunteering with Council.</p> <p>Plan ways for MRSC to offer employment opportunities to people with disability.</p> <p>Investigate potential to work with disability employment groups.</p> <p>Complete the review of our workplace Equal Opportunity Policy.</p>
Support small business and the local economy	<p>Support external organisations to increase diverse volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Profile the diverse experience and contribution of people with disability in the workforce in Council's Economic Development e-news and other communication channels.</p> <p>Promote Australian Government grant opportunities to assist businesses to modify physical work environments.</p>



**Table D Actions linked to Council Plan Strategic Objective – Deliver strong and reliable government**

Council Plan Strategic Priorities	Disability element/action
<p>Enhance strategy, policy and plan development, and identify alignment to allow for prioritisation of services that are efficient, well planned, accessible and meet community needs</p>	<p>Establish internal disability inclusion champions group from across council, to strengthen focus on an inclusive approach by council</p>
<p>Lead advocacy engagement and enhance relationships with all tiers of government and key stakeholders</p>	<p>Build effective networks of people with disability, carers, service-providers and government agencies – to enable two-way information exchange.</p> <p>Establish ongoing inclusive consultation mechanisms - to hear the views and ideas of people with disability of all ages in MRS, to inform council policy, planning and service-provision.</p> <p>Liaise with NDIS Local area coordinators regarding NDIS reform, in particular the community capacity-building plans being developed.</p>
<p>Enhance customer experience through the transformation of our services, to ensure they are easy to access, and provide seamless transactional and interactional experiences</p>	<p>Investigate strategies to confirm that the commitments in the Customer Service Charter are met for people with disability.</p> <p>Develop policy and guides to achieve optimum readability and accessibility of all council plans and strategies.</p>