

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2024-28

A MORE ACCESSIBLE AND
INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY
FOR EVERYONE

AUGUST 2024



We Acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We Acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our Greater Geelong community today.



Photo: Barwon River, Moonah Park Barwon Heads



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The Greater Geelong community's 30-year vision includes the aspiration to create an inclusive, diverse, healthy, and socially connected community.

This is a strong validation of Council's commitment to working towards creating a community that is fully accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

More than 20 per cent of people in the Geelong region live with a disability, and this plan outlines the steps we will take to reduce and remove the barriers that are experienced.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28 is our sixth disability action plan, the first of which was launched in 2002.

Since then, we have made significant progress in creating more inclusive services and improving the accessibility of buildings, footpaths and parking.

However, there is always more to do, and this plan will keep that momentum going and drive forward change.

We are proud to report the Geelong region has the second highest number of Changing Places (adult change facilities) in Australia, only slightly behind Melbourne.

We have also worked hard to bring the voices of people with lived experience to the forefront. Our Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee is a strong and vocal group that provides invaluable advice on many projects and strategies.

Our consultation processes for projects across the board include accessible participation methods to ensure everyone can have a say.

Additionally, we continue with annual awareness-raising campaigns such as the Geelong Awards for People with Disability to help build more inclusive community attitudes.

The City of Greater Geelong is committed to creating a city that is equitable, inclusive and accessible to all and we will continue our important partnerships with organisations across the region.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trent Sullivan', positioned above the printed name.

CR TRENT SULLIVAN

Mayor,

City of Greater Geelong

MESSAGE FROM THE ACCESS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The committee is proud to have played an important role in the development of this plan. We are hopeful and excited for a more accessible and inclusive future for Geelong.

The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee was established as an advisory committee to Council in 2018. It includes community representatives living with disability and/or with expertise in disability access and inclusion.

Our role in the development of this plan included advising on the community engagement, promoting the engagement opportunities to the community, advising on the content of the plan and advocating for a strong and sustainable commitment to access and inclusion.

We see this plan as a positive demonstration of collaboration with the community and local businesses. This will be an essential part of the plan moving forward.

The City of Greater Geelong has shown leadership on a number of accessibility projects on which the Committee has been able to advise.

These include community art and education projects like the Two of Us and My Story, the Geelong Awards for People with Disability, gaining commitment to the Rippleside Inclusive Playspace, and numerous new facilities and building upgrades.

We look forward to seeing the advances that the City of Greater Geelong can make over the next four years so that all people with disability feel welcome and able to participate in community life.

2023-2024 ACCESS AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:



Cr Anthony Aitken
Committee Chair



Rebecca Price



Rob Kuebler



Oliver Lynch



Simon Morris



Elica Petroska



Pearse Fay



Raegan Cavagnino



Alex Holland



Aleta Moriarty

INTRODUCTION



Photo: Installation of I Am sculpture in Geelong West.

The City of Greater Geelong is committed to the fair participation and inclusion of all.

We recognise and support the diversity of our communities and the rich contributions this diversity provides our region. People with disability are an integral part of this diversity, contributing as they live, work and participate in family and community life.

The *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28* sets out the steps we will take to reduce and remove barriers experienced by people with a disability.

Contribution from our community has been critical to the development of this plan, with more than 200 community members providing input. This input has formed the basis of the outlined actions.

Over the next four years, we will continue to engage with community as the plan is delivered. Our Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee will also provide us with advice and accountability throughout the lifespan of the plan. A measurement framework will accompany the plan to track progress and measure the impacts of the actions.

Delivering on our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan contributes to the delivery of the community vision detailed in *Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future* and our combined council plan and municipal public health and wellbeing plan, *Our Community Plan 2021-25*.

Disability access and inclusion is critical to creating a safe, fair and inclusive workforce for employees with disability and carers of people with disability. This action plan aligns to our organisational Inclusion and Diversity Roadmap, our guide for creating an inclusive workplace for our employees.

Achievements will be joint, as we work with the whole community; residents, businesses, community organisations and employees. The achievements we make together will improve physical accessibility, foster genuine inclusion and support meaningful participation for people with disability.

THANK YOU

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges the significant effort and enthusiasm of people with disability, parents, guardians and carers who contributed to the development of this Action Plan. We appreciate the ideas and practical solutions that members of the Greater Geelong community contributed.

We appreciate the support of our Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee who helped shape the community engagement for this plan and encouraged participation of others within their networks.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DISABILITY?

DEFINING DISABILITY

There are many definitions of disability used in Australia. The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* defines disability in terms of loss of body or cognitive or mental functions.

The Victorian Government's 'Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft' proposes a model for promoting and advancing disability inclusion, and outlines the following definition:

Disability means any impairment (including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment) or functional limitation (whether or not the impairment or limitation is permanent, temporary, episodic in nature or evident) that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.¹

The City of Greater Geelong adopts this definition which provides for both a person's impairment and societal barriers.

SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

The City of Greater Geelong embraces the Social Model of Disability. This model recognises that 'disability' is the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It is these barriers that prevent the equal participation of people with disability and therefore it is our environment that needs to change.

LANGUAGE

People with disability have different views and preferences for the way they describe themselves. Some people prefer to use 'person-first' language, for example 'I'm a person with disability'. Others prefer to use 'disability-first' language, for example 'I'm a disabled person' or 'I'm autistic'.

The City of Greater Geelong respects the different ways people with disability choose to describe themselves and others with disability. We have chosen to use person-first language in this plan, in line with the 'People with Disability Australia Language Guide' and the 'Australian Government Style Manual'.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

When something is accessible, everyone can use it.

For example, footpaths, car parks, buildings, sporting grounds, websites and services.

When something is inclusive, everyone can take part.

For example, all people are welcomed and supported to participate and be involved.

WHAT GUIDES US

RECOGNISING THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

The City recognises and embraces the rights of people with disability to experience, benefit and enjoy all aspects of society. These rights lie at the heart of this plan.

International, Commonwealth and Victorian laws set out the expectations of societies to uphold rights to equality, autonomy, dignity and full and meaningful participation for people with disability.

All levels of government in Australia continue to work to support the needs and improve the lives of people with disability (Figure 1). We work to the Commonwealth's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*. Our work is strongly aligned to *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031* and *Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan 2022-2026*.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* requires that public entities develop a disability action plan and register it with the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Under the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, a disability action plan should outline how we will:

- reduce barriers to people with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;
- reduce barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;

- promote inclusion and participation in the community of people with a disability; and
- achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.

OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

The City of Greater Geelong's *Our Community Plan 2021-25* identified four strategic directions to move towards the community's 30-year vision. The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan sits under Strategic Direction 1: 'Healthy, caring and inclusive community', and also contributes to Strategic Direction 4: 'High performing Council and organisation'. The plan is underpinned by the principle of sustainability, planning for the best outcomes for people, the environment and economy, now and in the future.

Following elections in November 2024, the new Council will develop *Our Community Plan 2025-2029* (the Council Plan) which will include updated strategic direction/s. This will be informed by a community deliberative engagement process.

In line with good practice and the City's standard governance approach, all strategies and plans are reviewed within the 12 months of the adoption of a new Council Plan to ensure alignment to the new strategic direction/s of Council. Therefore, the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan may be subject to updating following this review process. As part of this review, the City's new *Organisation Strategy 2024-29* will also be considered.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Ratified by Australian government 2008		
Commonwealth	Victoria	City of Greater Geelong
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	Disability Act 2006	Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future
National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013	Disability Inclusion Bill 2022	Our Community Plan
Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31	Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan 2022-26	Social Equity Framework
Our Vision for an Inclusive Australia Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Report 2023		Inclusion and Diversity Roadmap
		Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28

Figure 1. Legislative and policy environment for disability access and inclusion in Australia

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE GEELONG FEASIBILITY STUDY

Deakin University's study, published in 2019, provided valuable insights for the development of this plan.² All five principles were incorporated in the plan design and implementation, for example, co-design methods, embedding universal design across actions, improvements to the built environment, attitudinal change, and adopting inclusion as a core principle. Aspects of the six priority recommendations were included where possible within the scope of local government and available resourcing.

SOCIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

The City of Greater Geelong's Social Equity Framework 2022-25 underpins our work with a commitment to putting equity at the centre of everything we do. It identifies the way the City will consider its many diverse communities and their unique needs to support participation, inclusion and equal opportunity.

We recognise that individuals and groups can be impacted by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, and that an 'intersectional' approach is needed to identify and address this.

The Social Equity Framework identifies 10 priority populations, of which one is people with disability.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ROADMAP

The City of Greater Geelong's Inclusion and Diversity Roadmap is our internal framework demonstrating our journey to creating a safe and inclusive workplace. We are committed to creating an inclusive organisation that supports and encourages our employees to do their best work, have equal opportunities and a safe work environment.

The Inclusion and Diversity Roadmap demonstrates our journey to inclusion through our horizon approach, building the foundations of inclusion and diversity over subsequent years. Ultimately, we are working towards Horizon 3: Adaptive inclusion for our future. Our inclusive ways of working and diverse perspectives and embedded within our organisation.

INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

People with disability come from diverse backgrounds and identities, including diversity of age, culture, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status and geographic location. There is also great diversity in the experience of disability, from mobility restrictions to sensory disabilities.

While the primary focus of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is to address disability discrimination, we recognise that other types of inequality intersect with disability discrimination, compounding the barriers or discrimination experienced by people.

For example, while around 12% of the Australian population aged under 65 have a disability, this rate is 35% for First Nations people under 65.³ First Nations people with disability are more likely than other people with disability to participate in community and cultural life, however they experience acute inequalities across all other socio-economic outcomes.⁴

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan presents many opportunities to apply an intersectional approach by addressing multiple forms of discrimination. It aims to improve public space, services and community attitudes in ways that will benefit many people across the community.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A gender impact assessment was conducted to inform the development of this plan. While the community engagement data did not show any meaningful differences in priorities for people of different genders, the plan development considered gendered issues, including:

- People with disability experience considerably higher rates of violence than people without disability. Rates of violence are particularly high for women with psychological or intellectual disability, First Nations women with disability, young women with disability.³
- Men with disability are more likely to be in paid employment than women with disability.⁵
- Women make up a higher proportion of people providing unpaid assistance to people with disability, long term health condition or due to old age.⁶
- The negative impact of gender stereotypes is exacerbated when combined with disability stereotypes.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014 General Social Survey indicates that 30 per cent of people aged 18 and over who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual identity had disability, higher than the general population.³

We will continue to consider how the plan may impact people of different genders and look for opportunities to improve gender equality throughout the plan's lifespan.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PREVIOUS PLAN

The City committed to 34 goals in the *Access and Inclusion Action Plan 2018-23*. Significant progress was made against all goals, with 44 of the 50 'measures of success' achieved.

The final report can be found on the Geelong Australia website.



Photo: Accessible entrance at Wurrki Nyal



Photo: Ripplside Inclusive Playspace concept



Photo: Geelong Awards for People with Disability winners

HIGHLIGHTS:

ACCESS

- Inclusive features in facility design:
 - › Wurrki Nyal Civic Precinct
 - › Northern Aquatic and Community Hub
 - › Northern Bellarine Aquatic Centre
- New [Social Infrastructure Plan and Policy](#)
- [Central Geelong Accessibility Improvement Project](#)
- Ripplside Inclusive Playspace commitment and planning
- 5 new Changing Places facilities
- [Destination Accessible Roadmap](#)
- [Pay by Phone Parking App](#)
- Marveloo and Mobi Chair activation

INCLUSION

- [Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee](#)
- Accessible communication improvements
- Reasonable adjustment guidelines for community engagement activities
- [Events Planning Guide](#) – inclusive events
- [Sport4All Program](#)
- New [Social Equity Framework](#), includes people with disability as priority population

EMPLOYMENT

- Accessible tourism project employed 70 people with disability in local tourism industry
- Rollout of e-learning to all staff
- New Inclusion and Diversity Roadmap
- New Access and Inclusion Employee Network

INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES

- [International Day of People with Disability](#) events
- [Geelong Awards for People with Disability](#)
- Through My Eyes art exhibition
- MY STORY project
- [The Two of Us](#) photography exhibition
- STREETFACE marketing campaign
- The ["I AM" sculpture](#)

OUR COMMUNITY



Photo: Guests at Home Alone performance at the Potato Shed.

Profile of disability and carers in the Greater Geelong community.

POPULATION

- 54,985 people with disability in Greater Geelong or 22.1% of our population.
- Disability prevalence is similar for women (22.2%) and men (22%).
- The number of people with disability increases with age. 54.5% of people aged 65+ have a disability.

EMPLOYMENT

- Almost 3 in 4 people with disability do not work (73.9%).
- For those who work, 13.1% work part time and 10.9% work full time, far lower than for people without disability.

DAY TO DAY LIVING

- 17,726 people reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability.
- More than 1 in 4 people with disability had difficulty with access to buildings and facilities.

CARERS

- 30,115 people (aged 15+) are providing unpaid care to people with disability, long term illness or aged care.
- 61.5% of carers are female. Almost half (49.6%) of all carers also have a disability.

OUR ORGANISATION

- In a 2024 employee survey, 78 employees identified as living with disability (4.7% of survey respondents) and 38 (2.3%) said 'prefer not to say'.⁸

All community statistics relate to the Greater Geelong community, sourced from the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2018⁵, except for the carers statistics which are sourced from the Census 2021⁷.

WHAT WE HEARD



Photo: Wheelchair ramp at George Harvey Reserve, Manifold Heights

ENGAGING WITH THE GREATER GEELONG COMMUNITY

An extensive consultation process was undertaken to identify the issues faced by people with disability in Greater Geelong. Our Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee was an important stakeholder in developing, promoting and participating in the consultation process.

WHAT WE ASKED

We asked questions about current accessibility and the current state compared to five years ago.

We asked about the most important things we can do to make Greater Geelong more accessible and inclusive.

We asked how we can:

- increase the accessibility of our services and facilities,
- increase employment opportunities for people with disability,
- increase people with disability's participation in community life,
- support people with disability to be treated fairly and equally.

WHO RESPONDED

226 responses received:

- 128 completed the Have Your Say Survey
- 72 people engaged in Hosted Conversations
- 20 people attended Community Workshops
- 6 service/advocacy providers were interviewed

HAVE YOUR SAY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- 128 responses
- 48% of respondents had a disability
- 39% of respondents were carers or family members of people with a disability
- 13% of respondents had a disability and were also a carer or family member of a person with a disability
- 25% worked in the disability sector
- 70% were women, 22% men and 3% non-binary
- 3% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 13% were from the LGBTQIA+ community (of those, 53% had a disability)
- 5% were migrants
- 9% were employees of City of Greater Geelong

FINDINGS

There were mixed feelings about the progress the City of Greater Geelong has made in improving accessibility, with 36% of respondents feeling Greater Geelong was more accessible than 5 years ago and 38% feeling it was less accessible. Greater Geelong scored an average of 2.7 out of 5 for accessibility.

The physical environment, facilities, and ability to travel throughout Greater Geelong were raised repeatedly. These factors were considered essential to people with disability being able to work, attend events, be independent and generally participate in society. With regard to physical access, people wanted:

- More accessible public places and spaces.
- Greater provision of well maintained, accessible public toilets and changing rooms (including for adults).
- More disability parking (increased number of parking bays and increased length of stay).
- Improved accessible public transport (more accessible buses, improved routes and increased frequency).
- Physical access for the whole experience or journey (e.g., a beach may provide access to the sand, but not access to the water).

SIX COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The consultation identified six main themes to be addressed.

PHYSICAL ACCESS

Continue work to remove physical barriers and consider the different types of disability to improve accessibility of buildings, public spaces, facilities, and signage in both the city and outer areas of Greater Geelong.

‘Ensure buildings are thoroughly audited, not just entrance accessibility.’

INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

Improve participation by people with disability in the City’s events, activities, sport, services and employment by improving physical access and creating environments where they feel welcomed, supported and that they belong.

‘Treat people with disability as part of society and not a subset of society.’

EMPLOYMENT

The City to become a leader in employing people with disability in the region. Then advocate to, and educate local businesses, by promoting the strengths

of people with disability as employees. Provide support to people with disability to find and do their job.

‘Employment is the strongest action any community can take to create real and lasting change for people with disability.’

LIVED EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT (‘NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US’)

People with a diverse range of disabilities should be engaged in the planning and design of infrastructure, facilities, services, and programs to ensure they are functional, appropriate and avoid segregation from the broader community.

‘When planning or building for accessibility, ask us if it will be functional.’

COMMUNICATION

Establish accessible* communication between the City and people with disability for information about services and timely notification of activities or events (including how they are accessible). Establish a central point of contact to report accessibility issues.

*Easy English, Easy Read, Auslan, live and closed captioning, braille, audio description

‘There needs to be a list of local businesses that support equity and diversity within their companies.’

RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

Educate the broader community to accept diversity, understand and recognise different types of disability. Grow community understanding of how they can support people with disability to participate in the community. Promote the rights of people with disability and their contribution as valued members of the community through their stories and achievements.

‘The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower has been awesome in helping my family and others I know with disabilities’

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS FOR 2028

People held a vision for Greater Geelong as a place where people with disability feel:

- welcomed,
- a genuine sense of belonging, and
- safe to enjoy the wide range of experiences offered because they were accessible and inclusive.

Photo:
Community member enjoying
Bellarine Aquatic and Sport Centre



ACTION PLAN 2024-28

The development of this plan was overseen by a Cross Departmental Working Group. More than 70 employees representing 25 different departments at the City of Greater Geelong participated in workshops and individual consultations to develop actions, based on the findings from the community engagement.

STRUCTURE OF THE ACTION PLAN

To create an enabling environment in Greater Geelong for people with disability, the six community priorities are addressed in the following action plan under four pillars. Each pillar has associated outcomes, strategies and actions.



COMMUNITY AND WORKFORCE OUTCOMES

Disability action plans are intended to address access and inclusion barriers for people with disability, as community members, service users and employees.

As such, this plan includes actions to improve access and inclusion for both our community members and our employees. Through the plan, actions that focus on workforce outcomes are noted with the # symbol.

ACTION PLAN TIMEFRAME

Year 1: 2024-25

Year 2: 2025-26

Year 3: 2026-27

Year 4: 2027-28

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This plan will be delivered by the City, working together with our diverse service providers, businesses, community organisations and networks. While the City will lead on these actions, we will identify opportunities to work in partnership, leveraging valuable networks and relationships to support delivery of the plan.

The City will continue to build on existing relationships with important key organisations such as the Rights, Information and Advocacy Centre, and VALiD.

The City will also seek opportunities to collaborate with some of Geelong's large organisations with a shared interest in disability inclusion, such as NDIS, WorkSafe and TAC.

PILLAR 1: ACCESS

Physical access to public spaces and facilities builds greater participation in society, and is essential for education, health care and work for people with disability. Accessible buildings, roads and footpaths, and effective communication through different formats (e.g. Braille, Auslan, plain/easy English, picture displays) support people with disability to achieve independence and greater social connectivity.⁹ 'Universal design' aims to create environments that are useable and accessible to as many people as possible, inclusive of age, ability, gender identity, culture and language.¹⁰

Long term outcomes:

- The infrastructure of City of Greater Geelong (buildings, public spaces, facilities) is accessible for people with disability in both city and regional areas.
- People with disability feel informed and can communicate effectively with the City of Greater Geelong.



Photo: Visiting the Geelong Library & Heritage Centre

Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
1.1 Apply a universal design approach to improving the accessibility of public spaces, streets, community buildings and facilities.	1.1.1	Incorporate accessible design in new capital projects through consistent processes, resourcing and consultation at concept design stage (including social infrastructure, open space and community recreation projects).	Year 1-4	Major capital projects (buildings over \$5M) engage an accessibility consultant. The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee consulted on the design of all regionally significant capital projects.	Major Projects; Asset Planner
	1.1.2	Construct the new Rippleside Inclusive Playspace	Year 1-2	Construction completed and playground opened	Major Projects
	1.1.3	Increase organisational expertise in accessible design, through employee capability building and/or a new position with technical expertise in accessible design.	Year 2	Suitable capability building scoped and delivered. Feasibility assessment of new position conducted.	Community Programs and Venues; Asset Planners
	1.1.4	Conduct asset assessments including accessibility audits of the City's major existing buildings (approx. 400) and develop a prioritisation process to plan and budget upgrades.	Year 1-4	Accessibility audit commenced for the City's 'major' building assets. Prioritisation system for accessibility upgrades developed and used in annual renewal programs.	Asset Management
	1.1.5	Embed universal and accessible design in the City's guidelines and manuals for public space design, as they are prepared (including open space landscaping, public realm, streetscapes, social infrastructure and signage).*	Year 1-4	Universal and accessible design included in guidelines and manuals for public space design. People with disability are consulted on the guidelines.	City Design; Social Infrastructure Planning; Marketing
	1.1.6	Continue to increase the provision of safe and accessible footpaths across the municipality.	Year 1-4	New: Subdivision footpaths are constructed to relevant standards. Renewed: 8km footpaths renewed per year. Repairs: New work orders for footpath tripping hazards are made safe within approved response times of the Road Management Plan.	Civil Infrastructure (new) Major Projects (renewed) City Works (repairs)

Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
	1.1.7	Improve beach accessibility for people with disability (to sand and water) at high-use beaches managed by the City.	Year 1-4	<p>Accessibility assessment of 4 beaches conducted.</p> <p>Recommended upgrades included within asset renewal process.</p> <p>Provision and use of Mobi Chairs is improved.</p>	Community Inclusion; Environment and Natural Resources
	1.1.8	Continue to increase the provision of Changing Places facilities across the municipality.	Year 1-4	<p>4 new Changing Places built, in line with priority areas identified in the 2023 review.</p> <p>Marveloo (portable Changing Place) provided for hire at 2 community events per year.</p>	Community Inclusion; Major Projects
	1.1.9	Review and improve current supply of accessible parking in Geelong CBD and other major precincts.	Year 1-4	<p>Audit of accessible parking included as part of the Central Geelong Parking Strategy – Precinct Parking Review, and other precinct reviews as they occur. Include consultation with Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee.</p> <p>At least 2 accessible parking bays upgraded per year.</p>	Transport



Photo: The City will explore ways to improve beach access as part of this plan.

Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
1.2 Improve communication with people with disability and provide information in a timely manner.	1.2.1	Improve the availability of information about disability access and inclusion and increase provision of information in accessible formats (including Easy English pictorial format).	Year 1-4	The website page on Accessibility is updated regularly to provide current information. Number of publications provided in Easy English is increased.	Community Inclusion; Marketing
	1.2.2	Develop an interactive City of Greater Geelong Access Map providing key accessibility features to support people with disability visiting Geelong CBD.	Year 2-4	Interactive access map developed in consultation with people with disability.	Community Inclusion; Smart City
	1.2.3	Build the new Geelong Australia Website page to meet current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and include an accessibility widget to provide additional access features (e.g. dyslexia friendly, screen reader).	Year 1	User testing of the website includes people with disability. Accessibility widget provided on new website.	IT Project Management Office
	1.2.4	Make it easier for people to report mobility/disability access issues via the 'Report an Issue' feature and improve collection and tracking of data.	Year 1	New option added to the 'Report an Issue' form (on website and app) to report mobility/disability access issues. Data on mobility/disability access reports is collated and analysed annually.	IT Project Management Office; Community Inclusion; Customer Service
1.3 Advocate to state government, private and community sector to improve accessibility of public transport and public spaces for people with disability.	1.3.1	Advocate to other levels of government and government departments on public transport issues impacting people with disability.	Year 1-4	The City's advocacy regarding public transport includes disability access and the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee has input on accessibility priorities.	Government Relations and Advocacy; Transport
	1.3.2	Continue to address footpath obstructions by monitoring and enforcing local laws and educating retailers and residents.	Year 1-4	Clear expectations of shared mobility (e.g. e-scooter) hire companies communicated. Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee has input to the review of the Footpaths and Designated Roads Trading and Activity Policy. Complaints about obstructions on footpaths responded to in designated timeframes.	Transport; Community Safety and Regulation
	1.3.3	Educate and advocate to developers to provide accessible parking bays in private shopping car parks in new developments.	Year 1-4	Accessible parking requirements captured in permit approval process.	Strategic Transport Planning

PILLAR 2: INCLUSION

Even when a public or community place is physically accessible, people with disability want to feel welcomed and experience a sense of belonging within the broader community. People with disability want to be consulted and included in decisions that affect them, often referred to as 'nothing about us without us'. We acknowledge that engaging with people with lived experience will result in improved facilities and services that meet the needs of people with disability.

Long term outcomes:

- People with disability enjoy equal participation in events, activities, sport programs and services in Greater Geelong.
- The City of Greater Geelong actively seeks advice and input from people with lived experience of disability to improve access and inclusion.
- The City of Greater Geelong actively promotes inclusive events and activities to people with disability.

Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
2.1 Increase inclusion of people with disability at City of Greater Geelong events and other public events in the municipality.	2.1.1	Provide guidance for public events that prioritise accessibility for people with a disability (considering all stages of event delivery including promotion, access at the event and evaluation). *	Year 1-2	Guidelines for City-run events that prioritise accessibility for people with a disability developed and implemented. Event Planning Guide reviewed and updated	Marketing; Event Services; Community Inclusion
	2.1.2	Advocate to local event organisers and tourism businesses to accept Companion Cards at tourism businesses and ticketed events across the municipality.	Year 1	Information on Companion Card included in Event Planning Guide and in communications with tourism businesses.	Events Services
2.2 Increase inclusion of people with disability across sport and recreation programs (metro and regional).	2.2.1	Implement Sensory Quiet Time ongoing at Leisurelink and extend to other aquatic centres.	Year 1-4	Sensory Quiet Time implemented at Leisurelink aquatic areas and trialed at least 1 other aquatic centre.	Leisure Facilities
	2.2.2	Continue implementation of the Sport4All Program which creates inclusive pathways for people with disability to participate in grassroots sports, and include a gender lens.	Year 1	Sport4All program implemented. 100 sporting clubs and schools engaged in the program per year	Community Recreation
	2.2.3	Continue to embed disability access and inclusion across the Learn to Swim program, considering the needs of children with all types of disability including sensory disability.	Year 1-4	Increase in percentage of Learn to Swim instructors that have completed additional accessibility and inclusion training.	Leisure Facilities
	2.2.4	Facilitate increased access to City of Greater Geelong leisure and recreation programs for First Nations community members with disability or health issues.	Year 1-4	First Nations community members are assisted to access leisure and recreation services each year.	First Nations Community Experience

* Action implementation will also apply a gender lens and consider other priority groups including First Nations, as outlined in the Social Equity Framework.

Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
2.3 Increase inclusion of people with disability across City of Greater Geelong's services.	2.3.1	Investigate options for increasing understanding of hidden disabilities across frontline services, such as the Hidden Disability Sunflower initiative. #	Year 2-3	Report on Hidden Disability Sunflower initiative prepared. Hidden Disability Sunflower initiative (or similar) implemented.	Training and Compliance; Community Inclusion; Customer Service
	2.3.2	Continue to strengthen inclusion of children with all forms of disability across Family Services policies and procedures and seek input from children with disabilities and their families.	Year 1-4	Needs assessment of children and families with disability is conducted. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated.	Family Services Development
2.4 Deliver accessible community engagement activities that actively encourage participation by people with disability.	2.4.1	Convene the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee and provide opportunities for identifying and providing advice on priority projects.	Year 1-4	Six meetings convened per year. Annual report published on the Council's website.	Community Inclusion
	2.4.2	Continue to enhance our community engagement platforms and activities to enable people with disability to have their voices heard and reflected in decisions.	Year 1-4	Online or face-to-face accessibility supports added to community engagement options each year. Engagement Plan template includes accessibility section.	Community Engagement
	2.4.3	Conduct engagement opportunities with people with disability across the life of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.	Year 1-4	At least 3 engagement initiatives conducted each year providing opportunity for input into the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.	Community Inclusion
2.5 Demonstrate the City of Greater Geelong's leadership and commitment to inclusion within the municipality.	2.5.1	In line with Social Equity Framework and in consultation with Council Advisory Committees develop a public statement of commitment to diversity and inclusion (including people with disability). *	Year 1	Draft statement developed in consultation with Council Advisory Committees.	Social Equity and Safety; Community Inclusion
	2.5.2	Proactively monitor and respond to any proposed legislative change related to disability access and inclusion. #	Year 1-4	Timely action taken to respond to any proposed or new legislation that impacts on the City.	Community Inclusion; Social Equity and Safety; Inclusion and Diversity
	2.5.3	Review the Community Investment Support Fund Policy to consider inclusion of the Social Equity Framework principles across community grants. *	Year 2	Community Investment Support Fund Policy reviewed and updated to incorporate the Social Equity Framework.	Community Grants; Social Equity and Safety

* Action implementation will also apply a gender lens and consider other priority groups including First Nations, as outlined in the Social Equity Framework.

Workforce focussed action

PILLAR 3: EMPLOYMENT

Paid employment improves people’s independence, empowers them to participate and contribute to society, and increases their ability to make their own choices. Employment rates of people with disability are much lower than employment of people without a disability. Meaningful employment for people with disability can be achieved through recognition of the person’s strengths and understanding their access and support needs in getting and keeping a job.

Long term outcomes:

- The City of Greater Geelong is an inclusive and diverse organisation with strong partnerships.
- The City of Greater Geelong has partnerships with businesses and services to advance employment opportunities for people with disability in the municipality.

Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
3.1 Create a fully accessible and inclusive workplace at the City of Greater Geelong to attract and retain employees with disability.	3.1.1	Review and develop policies, procedures and checklist to establish accessible recruitment processes. Review to include use of external recruitment agencies and recruitment advertising. #	Year 1-4	Recruitment policies and procedures include access and inclusion for people with disability.	Talent Acquisition
	3.1.2	Develop a Workplace Adjustment Policy and implementation plan. #	Year 1-4	Workplace Adjustment Policy developed, implemented and evaluated, in consultation with people with disability.	Policy and Workplace Relations
	3.1.3	Convene an Access and Inclusion Employee Network for employees with disability as peer support and advisory body. #	Year 1	Employee network convened. One employee network event hosted annually.	Inclusion and Diversity
	3.1.4	Develop advancement opportunities across different levels for employees and students with disability. #	Year 3-4	Internal program to provide advancement opportunities for employees with disability developed and implemented. Internship program for students with disability implemented.	Inclusion and Diversity



Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
3.2 Improve understanding and capability of City of Greater Geelong employees in creating accessible and inclusive environments and services for people with disability.	3.2.1	Implement disability inclusion training program(s) for leaders and relevant teams within the organisation delivered with/by people with disability. #	Year 1-4	Training program developed in consultation with Access and Inclusion Employee Network. Training program(s) and/or e-learning provided to people leaders and relevant teams.	Inclusion and Diversity; Training and Compliance
3.3 Partner with the Greater Geelong business community and disability employment specialists to promote inclusive employment.	3.3.1	Engage disability experts to run education sessions as part of the Geelong Small Business Festival on accessible employment and how to support employees with disability in the workplace.	Year 2-3	Education sessions on how to support employees with disability in the workplace delivered at Geelong Small Business Festival.	Business and Industry Experience; Community Inclusion

* Action implementation will also apply a gender lens and consider other priority groups including First Nations, as outlined in the Social Equity Framework.

Workforce focussed action

PILLAR 4: COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

Positive change across society begins with inclusive community attitudes that value and respect individuals across all diversities. Negative attitudes within the community toward people with disability impact all areas of their lives and result in lower participation and higher levels of isolation. Changing negative community and employer attitudes toward people with disabilities, and challenging stigma will create positive contribution toward greater inclusion.

Long term outcomes:

- People with disability feel respected, understood and valued in the Greater Geelong municipality.



Photo: Madeline and Rachael, 2022 International Day of People with Disability award winners

Strategy	Ref #	Action	Year	KPIs	Lead Unit
4.1 Actively build community understanding of disability (all types) and the value of diversity and inclusive environments.	4.1.1	Deliver social marketing campaigns to improve community understanding and attitudes towards people with disability, promoting the diversity and strengths of people with disability, and challenging disability and gender stereotypes.	Year 2-4	Two social marketing campaigns are developed and implemented collaboratively with people with disability.	Community Inclusion; Communications and Marketing
	4.1.2	Investigate new artistic opportunities that engage people with disability in the creation of public arts projects.	Year 2-3	Potential opportunities scoped and included in Public Art Delivery program plan 2025-26. Engagement occurs with artists with lived experience on future opportunities.	Culture and Public Art Experience
	4.1.3	Conduct the annual Geelong Awards for People with Disability and engage people with disability in the design of the awards program and categories.	Year 1-4	The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee is engaged in co-design of the awards program including award categories. At least 15 nominations for the awards received each year.	Community Inclusion
	4.1.4	Hold an annual community event for the International Day of People with Disability (open to the public) and engage people with disability in designing the event.	Year 1-4	Annual public event held, with at least 100 attendees. People with disability are engaged in design and delivery of the event.	Community Inclusion
4.2 Foster new opportunities for businesses, organisations and community groups to increase understanding and inclusion of people with disability.	4.2.1	Scope and seek funding to implement a "Proud to be a Welcoming and Inclusive Business" program for Greater Geelong that builds capacity among tourism, hospitality and retail businesses to be more inclusive and accessible for people with disability and people of all diversities. *	Year 2-4	Program is scoped and assessed for feasibility and funding. Program is designed and delivered in collaboration with people with disability.	Community Inclusion; Business and Industry Experience; Tourism
	4.2.2	As part of a review of Council's Community Grants consider trialling a small community grants stream (<\$10,000) to fund local organisations for initiatives in celebration of International Day for People with Disability to promote inclusive attitudes across community.	Year 2-4	New small grant is trialled. At least 5 community events for International Day of People with Disability are supported per year.	Community Inclusion; Community Grants

MEASURING AND REPORTING



Photo: Performers at Back To Back Theatre Company.

We recognise the importance of monitoring our progress over the life of the plan and reporting back to our community. The plan will be accompanied by a measurement framework which supports us to regularly track our progress and report on our activities and outcomes.

We will measure and report on progress through the following approaches:

- Progress reporting on actions to the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- Annual reporting within the City's Annual Report.
- Surveys of employees and the Greater Geelong community.
- Case studies of implemented actions.
- Analysis of data from surveys such as the Geelong Preventative Health Survey.

We will also establish an internal implementation group to guide and provide input monitoring progress, outcomes and reporting back to community.

SHARING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We heard from the community and the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee that it is important that the City share stories of success, inclusive practice and accessible design. This helps to create a positive culture of inclusion and provide examples that we can build on into the future.

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4. Commonwealth of Australia, 2022: [Commonwealth Closing the Gap Annual Report 2022](#), page 123.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018: [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of findings.](#)
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021: [Unpaid work and care: Census.](#)
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8. City of Greater Geelong, 2024: *Employee Experience Survey 2024.*
9. World Health Organisation, 2011: [World Report on Disability Report.](#)
10. State of Victoria, 2022: [Inclusive Victoria: State disability plan \(2022-26\).](#)

Photo: Leisurelink is designed to give people with a disability or mobility-related issues greater access to aquatic, fitness and recreation facilities.







This document contains important information about the City of Greater Geelong. Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to request a hard copy of the report.

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