



ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2018 - 2022



LODDON
SHIRE

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Municipal Early Years Plan 2014-2017
Economic Development Strategy 2015-2019
Municipal Emergency Management Plan
Recreation Strategy 2015-2020
Tourism Strategy 2011-2016
Loddon Shire Diversity Action Plan 2015-2016

RELATED LEGISLATION: United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 - ratified in Australia July 2008.
Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
Building Code of Australia 2013
Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Commissioning Framework 2016
Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 - 1 January 2008
The Victorian Disability Amendment Act 2012 (revises the Disability Act 2006)
The Equal Opportunity Act 1995
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This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Loddon Shire Council is working to achieve its vision to have a *prosperous, vibrant and engaged community* and its mission *to enhance the sustainability and liveability of Loddon Shire*. Loddon Shire Council acknowledges that to achieve a community that is liveable for everyone it must continue to increase the accessibility and inclusion of people with a disability in the Loddon Shire.

In 2015, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identified that approximately 18.3% (4.3 million) of the national population reported living with a disability, which is almost one in five Australians. This means approximately 1383 residents of Loddon Shire could have some form of disability. Disability results from the interaction between a person's conditions or impairments and the social and physical environment around them. It is also important to consider that the impacts of disability can extend beyond the person with a disability, affecting families, carers and the community as a whole.

Council has used the Social Model of Disability to guide the development of the Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 – 2021. The Social Model of Disability directs Council to focus on addressing barriers created by attitudes, practices and structures which limit opportunities for all people to fully participate in life and creating a community that offers dignity, independence and choice.

The Plan reflects Council's commitment to continue to reduce barriers experienced by people with a disability. The Plan follows a review of Council's Community Action and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2015.

The Plan has six focus areas that were identified through extensive community and staff consultation. The following outlines each focus area, the particular outcome that area addresses for the community, and the underlying strategies that state how Council will work to achieve each outcome.

Accessible services, programs and events

People with a disability have the same opportunities to participate in services, programs and events in the Loddon Shire as everyone else.

- We will ensure our services are accessible and flexible to meet the changing needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.
- We will support events in the Loddon Shire to be accessible and welcoming to people with a disability.

Accessible Council buildings and infrastructure

The Loddon Shire's built and natural environments are accessible and people with a disability are able to move around and get to the places they want to go.

- We will work with our community to understand what physical barriers are experienced by people with a disability in our built and natural environments.
- We will ensure new developments and infrastructure are built to the principles of universal design, planning beyond the Access Standards to meet community needs.
- We will work to increase the accessibility of our built and natural environments to reduce the physical barriers experienced by people with a disability.
- We will support our residents to maintain their independence to get about town.
- We will support private businesses and people working in the building sector to understand the importance of and improve their accessibility.

Equal employment opportunities

People with a disability are engaged in flexible and sustainable employment within the Loddon Shire and have opportunities to develop and succeed.

- We will lead and work with others to increase local employment opportunities for people with a disability.
- We will offer work experience opportunities for people with a disability to increase their skills and confidence in the workplace.

Accessible communication and engagement

People with a disability can access the information they need to make informed decisions and choices and contribute to leading, shaping and influencing the Loddon Shire.

- We will continue to improve our communication and information approaches to ensure that people with a disability can access information and know what is happening in their community.
- We will ensure our community engagement approaches are accessible and inclusive of people with a disability and ensure all Loddon Shire residents have the opportunity to have their say.

Inclusive community participation

People with a disability, their families and carers are able to connect and participate in activities that are aligned to their interests and identities, and experience a high level of wellbeing in all aspects of their life.

- We will continue to improve access to and from activities, services and events for people with a disability in the Loddon Shire community and reduce isolation.
- We will lead and work with others to increase opportunities for people with a disability, their families and carers to connect and feel supported in the Loddon Shire community.

Respectful and safe communities

People with a disability feel welcome and safe, and are as recognised and respected as any other resident in the Loddon Shire.

- We will promote the importance of inclusion for all and provide information and education about good models of inclusive practices and approaches.
- We will ensure our residents with a disability do not experience discrimination in the Loddon Shire.

Council will play many and varied roles in implementing the Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 – 2021. Some activities will require resource allocation through Council's annual budget process. Annual internal Action Plans will be developed to guide Council staff on what needs to be done to achieve each strategy. Annual reviews will be conducted to assess the Plan's progress, make appropriate changes and develop new actions to form the next year's Action Plan. Annual progress reports will be provided to Council.

1 PURPOSE

The Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 – 2021 (the Plan) has been developed to help identify how Loddon Shire Council can contribute to better access and inclusion for residents in the Loddon Shire. Though the Plan refers primarily to people living with a disability, the plan also considers improved access for all community members including the elderly, parents with prams, young children and people who use English as a second language.

The Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2015, after a twelve-month extension, is at the end of its term and in accordance with legislative requirements under the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* (the Act) Council has developed a new Disability Action Plan which will be known as the Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 – 2021.

In addition to the Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 – 2021 being developed to satisfy the legislative requirements of Section 38 of the Act, the Plan also demonstrates Council's commitment to improving the lives of people with a disability in the Loddon Shire in order to achieve Council's vision to have a *prosperous, vibrant and engaged community* and contribute towards the mission *to enhance the sustainability and liveability of Loddon Shire*.

2 DISABILITY IN LODDON SHIRE

2.1 Defining disability

The term 'disability' is an umbrella term which covers many different conditions and impairments. Some people's conditions or impairments are present from birth, others are acquired later in life. Conditions or impairments can be permanent or temporary. Some people's support needs can increase over time and some can fluctuate or be episodic (particularly for some people with mental illness).

The World Health Organisation describes disability as:

"[A] term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations".

This definition acknowledges that disability is complex and recognises the interaction between a person and the community in which they live. For people with a disability to participate in all walks of life, interventions are required to remove both environmental and social barriers.

This Plan has been developed using the Social Model of Disability. The Social Model of Disability identifies systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society as the contributing factors to a person's disability, rather than by the person's own impairment. Its emphasis is on dignity, independence and choice. Using the Social Model of Disability directs Council to focus on addressing barriers created by attitudes, practices and structures which limit opportunities for all people to fully participate in life.

2.2 Loddon Shire community profile

Loddon Shire is located within central Victoria. It has an area of almost 6700 square kilometres. The municipality is a 'community of communities', comprising a number of small towns spread throughout the Shire.

According to the 2016 census, the estimated population of Loddon Shire was 7555 people. 2675 people or 35.4% of the Loddon Shire population are aged 60 years and over, compared to

only 27.3% for regional Victoria. Loddon Shire's population is ageing, with the number of people over the age of 60 years increasing by 179 people between 2011 and 2016.

In 2015, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identified that approximately 18.3% (4.3 million) of the national population reported living with a disability, which is almost one in five Australians. This means approximately 1383 residents of Loddon Shire could have some form of disability.

The 2016 census recorded that 553 people or 7.4% of the population need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This is 1.4% higher than the Victorian average and is an increase from 7.3% in 2011. Loddon Shire also has 854 people providing unpaid care to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age.

3 THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

3.1 History

Council is now heading into its fourth Disability Action Plan.

2003: Council adopted its first Community Access Plan in 2003.

2007: The 2007 Plan introduced a holistic approach to access and inclusion across the whole organisation with a strong focus on educating and informing the principles of universal access and social inclusion to bring systemic changes in attitudes and work practices.

2013: The 2013 Plan continued with the focus on awareness, attitudinal change, education and training, while addressing and responding to Loddon Shire's legislative requirements. Federal Government changes to the Building Code of Australia (BCA) to align with the Disability Discrimination Act and Australian Standard 1428.1-2009 Design for Access and Mobility provided regulatory control to ensure that universal access design principles are considered in the design and construction of buildings and other related structures.

The implementation of the previous plans reflects the gradual shift in community and government perception of accessibility and inclusion. Attitudinal changes are evident and processes are embedded to ensure accessibility across the organisation.

The previous plans have seen the Loddon Shire Council make significant steps towards embracing accessibility and social inclusion in its organisational values, as reflected in the vision and mission of the Council Plan 2017 - 2021. This Plan sets out a four-year plan that builds on the success of previous plans.

3.2 Review of the Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2015

Council is committed to operating with a lens of continuous improvement to ensure it is doing its best for the people of Loddon Shire.

3.2.1 Achievements of the Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2015

The Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2015 identified action areas for Council to facilitate a truly inclusive community in relation to consultation, civic participation and community engagement, employment, the built environment, transport, and leisure and tourism activities.

Some significant achievements of the Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2015 include, but are not limited to:

- Essential Safety Audits planned to assess the accessibility of all Council buildings and development of priority recommendations for upgrades.
- Inglewood Swimming Pool Universal Upgrade project designed to meet disability access needs and requirements, to include complete upgrades of all buildings; new change rooms, including an above standard accessible change room facility; a new kiosk with disability access to servery areas; and new public ambulant and accessible toilets.
- Council style guide reviewed by Vision Australia and recommended changes incorporated to increase the accessibility of Council documents and publications.
- New Council website developed with integrated accessibility features such as ReadSpeaker software.
- Accessible accommodation guide developed that allows visitors to identify which accommodation providers could potentially meet their access needs and helps accommodation providers to identify simple changes to their business to increase their accessibility.
- Completion of several major projects to townships such as: Pyramid Hill corner of Barber and Victoria St, increased access from the parking bays to footpath and egress into the hotel; Pyramid Hill Kelly St footpath upgrade with contrast paving for people with low vision; and Serpentine public toilets upgraded to be universally accessible.
- Easy English training provided to staff.
- Council's standard font type and size changed to make all Council publications more accessible.
- Events Management Plan developed to include accessibility information.

3.2.2 Key learnings from the previous plan

Annual reviews of the Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2015 were conducted and a comprehensive review was completed at the end of the Plan in consultation with managers who were responsible action owners. Key learnings that came out of the reviews are:

- **Keep it clear and achievable.** The previous Plan was found to be unclear on what was the expected outcome. This meant that some actions could not be achieved as staff were not aware of why or how to implement their actions requiring a lot of support and advice from the Loddon Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Officer.
- **The importance of consultation with staff and community.** The previous Plan highlighted the importance of setting actions that meet community needs but also align to business unit plans. Some actions could not be achieved with existing resources or budget due to not aligning to the planned work of the business unit and became difficult for staff to find the capacity to complete.
- **The importance of continual review and modification.** The previous Plan's actions were developed to cover three years of implementation, meaning it became rigid and did not allow for changes or opportunities for continuous improvement.

This Plan has been developed after extensive consultation with staff and community to identify and set outcomes that address the needs of people with a disability in the Loddon Shire community, and strategies that fit within Council's area of influence to help achieve these outcomes. The Plan sets out broad outcomes and strategies for the four years, with Action Plans to be reviewed and developed each year to ensure the plan continues to adapt to the needs of the community and aligns with business unit plans and staff capacity.

3.3 Researching best practice

Extensive research was conducted to ensure the Plan is aligned with current policy and trends, including:

- reviewing demographic and health statistics
- reviewing local, state and federal strategic, policy and service context
- benchmarking against other local government Disability Action Plans.

3.4 Consultation with the community and staff

Council values the voices of the people living in Loddon Shire and conducted an extensive range of consultations with community members and staff members to ensure the Plan is based on the needs and aspirations of people in Loddon Shire.

Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Steering Group had a key role in identifying the mechanisms for engaging and consulting with the community.

3.4.1 Community engagement methods

Council ran a series of targeted community engagement sessions to find out community views on how accessible and inclusive the Loddon Shire community is, and identify ways it can improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community and ensure that services and facilities provided by the Loddon Shire are accessible and equitable. The community was offered many different ways it could get involved and have its say. A total of 111 community members and staff members participated in the consultation.

Direct contact

People were encouraged to contact the Disability Inclusion Officer by phone, email or in person. This was promoted through emails, flyers on community notice boards, website banner, social media posts, and local newspaper and community newsletter articles.

Survey

A survey was available online and in hardcopy encouraging people to answer questions related to the following areas:

- Council's buildings and facilities, such as sports grounds, swimming pools, public halls, footpaths, parks, playgrounds and any other Council owned places
- the services that Council offers, such as child care centres, garbage collection, customer service that the community receives either over the counter or on the phone, animal registration, and the many other services that Council provides to the community
- information and communications that Council produces, such as flyers, books, advertising, website and other documents
- employment as a person with a disability
- participation in the community as a person with a disability, such as participating in events, recreation activities, public activities
- attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability
- best practice for accessible and inclusive communities of people with a disability.

The survey was promoted and distributed through Council's Home and Community Care clients, networks and community groups, flyers on community notice boards, website banner, social media posts, and local newspaper and community newsletter articles.

15 surveys were completed: 12 online using Survey Monkey, 2 hardcopy and one over the phone with support from the Disability Inclusion Officer.

Pop-up listening posts

Eight separate community engagement opportunities were held around the Loddon Shire through pop-up listening posts at neighbourhood houses and outside supermarkets. The opportunities encouraged community to think about what actions they would suggest Council take over the next five years so that they can answer 'yes' to the following questions:

- Do you feel comfortable and welcome in Loddon Shire?
- Can you easily find your way around?
- Can you find information about services and community activities easily?
- Are you able to participate in community life to the full extent you want to?
- Can you access buildings and facilities easily?

Six community members attended the community listening posts held at neighbourhood houses and 21 community members participated in the community engagement opportunities held outside the four local supermarkets.

Suggestion boxes

Suggestion boxes were left at each neighbourhood house and local supermarket for a week following each town's listening posts providing the opportunity for people to write a comment and post it in a box. Suggestion forms encouraged the community to consider the same questions as those asked at the pop-up listening posts.

14 suggestion forms were completed by community members.

Focus groups

Community groups and organisations were encouraged to invite the Disability Inclusion Officer to meetings if they were interested in discussing access and inclusion issues to feed into the development of the Plan.

The Disability Inclusion Officer attended three group meetings/gatherings to talk about the Plan.

Staff workshops

Four separate workshops were held for staff seeking feedback from staff on what works well and what needs improving. At these workshops staff reviewed Council's current practices focusing on services and public programs delivered and facilities provided, and identifying barriers that prevent people with a disability accessing them.

53 staff attended the four staff workshops held in Wedderburn and Serpentine. Two staff were not able to attend the staff workshops however arranged a separate meeting with the Disability Inclusion Officer to discuss the plan.

Staff survey

A staff survey was available for Council staff members to answer questions related to:

- their level of awareness of disability, the previous Plan and how it relates to their work
- their level of confidence to adapt work practices to meet the needs of people with a disability
- identifying opportunities to improve their work practice to be more accessible and inclusive of people with a disability
- rating the Loddon Shire Council's level of accessibility and inclusiveness.

52 staff members completed the survey.

3.4.2 What people told us

Feedback from the consultations generally indicated that the community was satisfied with the services provided by Council and thought that Council was making some good improvements to

the accessibility of the Loddon Shire. The common issues identified during the community and staff consultation were:

Accessibility of services, programs and events

Feedback identified that event organisers need awareness and support to understand how to set-up their events to be accessible, such as placing vans and toilets where there are clear and easy paths of travel, having an accessible toilet, signage at events to help people get around, and including information about the event accessibility in promotion material.

Many community members raised the need for information and face-to-face contact with Council to be more easily available. A common complaint was that people who didn't live in Wedderburn or Serpentine and have direct access to one of the Council offices found it difficult to get in contact with Council staff because they did not have access to transport and found it difficult to communicate over the phone. Suggestions included a council road show or regular attendance at neighbourhood houses.

A number of community members talked about how difficult they found it to find out about what services and activities were available in the Loddon Shire. A suggestion was made regarding the need for welcome packs from the shire to support access to information and about opportunities to participate in the community.

Accessibility of buildings and infrastructure

Footpath and gutter maintenance was raised often by community members as being a high priority within the towns of Loddon Shire. Of specific mention was the need for footpaths and gutters to be of a standard that supports the use of mobility aids such as scooters and wheel-walkers to support people to maintain their independence when getting around their towns.

The need to increase the accessibility of many existing public toilets and community buildings was raised in most community consultation sessions. Residents would like to see more ambulant toilets with rails in addition to the accessible toilets.

A number of community members also identified the need for Council to be thinking about access to and from buildings at recreation and natural reserves where there are often not designated footpaths and using universal design principles to plan beyond the standards to meet community needs.

Community members also understood that Council does not have control over all buildings and infrastructure in the Loddon Shire, however many people noted difficulty getting into shops and private businesses.

Employment opportunities

Community members said that programs that support creation of employment opportunities for people with a disability in the Loddon Shire was very important. People with a disability in the Loddon Shire community want to work but said that employers weren't willing to "give them a go". Suggestions included broader community support and awareness to businesses of State and Federal initiatives that encourage and support employment of people with a disability and providing opportunities for training/work placements for people with a disability to develop skills for employment.

Communication and information

Feedback indicates that community members access information in many different ways and there is no one type that suits all. Some feedback indicated that access to the internet is difficult and many community members reported that they would like Council to make better use of non-formal communication methods, such as community noticeboards, newsletters and distribution to community groups to support 'word of mouth' sharing of information. While other feedback suggested an increase in the use of social media by Council and improvements to the Council website to make it simpler, with plain English and easier to find information.

A common suggestion from community members was also for Council to update and improve the signs around the Loddon Shire to make them easier to read.

Many community members identified that they did not hear about or know when Council had new projects or plans being developed, or know how they could get involved and have their say.

Inclusion and civic participation

Transport across the Loddon Shire was identified by many community members as a major barrier to participation in the community. Suggestions included advocating for improved public transport and the development of transport programs to events, activities and also to towns outside of the Loddon Shire to support people to access the services that are not available to them within the Shire.

Many people reported that they felt they were able to participate and be included in the Loddon Shire, however it was identified that people with a disability and their carers can be isolated in the community and may not have the same opportunities to make connections and feel supported in the Loddon Shire. Some suggestions included running organised programs for people with a disability to participate and build connections, such as “know your neighbour” and “come and try days” and more support groups for carers.

Attitudes and behaviours that discriminate

Feedback generally indicated that people with a disability felt welcome and safe in the Loddon Shire community, however there may be a lack of understanding of disability and therefore people with a disability may not be treated or respected the same as any other resident. Many community members identified the need for more disability awareness activities in the community to raise understanding of diversity, human rights and what discrimination is, such as workshops with community groups, businesses, clubs, and positive promotion/stories of disability in the community.

Staff training

It was also found through the staff and community consultations that for Council staff to be able to address the above identified needs of the community and adapt their work practices to consider and meet the needs of people with a disability, staff will need training to increase their confidence and help them know how they can do that.

4 POLICY CONTEXT

Access and inclusion for people with a disability is driven by international policy, such as the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006*. The Australian government ratified the convention on behalf of the country in 2008 and followed this with the development of the *National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020*.

The Victorian Government's *Absolutely Everyone, State disability plan 2017 – 2020* outlines how the state government will implement their obligations under the national strategy and the convention.

As a local government in Victoria the Loddon Shire Council also has responsibilities under state legislation such as the *Disability Act 2006* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Council must also act in accordance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* to ensure there is no discrimination based on disability in any of its functions, services or corporate framework.

The Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 – 2021 forms part of Council's commitment to achieving its obligations under international, federal and state legislation, plans and policies. The Plan has been developed taking inspiration from the documents listed in Appendix 1.

This Plan has specifically been developed to have outcomes that align with and support the aspirations of the Victorian Government's *Absolutely Everyone, State disability plan 2017 – 2020* and the *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Framework*.

5 COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council acknowledges that people living with disability are valuable members of the community who have the same fundamental rights and responsibilities as all citizens. It commits to a proactive 'whole-of-organisation' approach informed by principles of universal access and social inclusion.

Council, in partnership with all its citizens, state and federal governments and other organisations, will work towards the following guiding outcomes to build a truly inclusive community:

- 1. People with a disability have the same opportunities to participate in services, programs and events in the Loddon Shire as everyone else.**
- 2. The Loddon Shire's built and natural environments are accessible and people with a disability are able to move around and get to the places they want to go.**
- 3. People with a disability are engaged in flexible and sustainable employment within the Loddon Shire and have opportunities to develop and succeed.**
- 4. People with a disability can access the information they need to make informed decisions and choices and contribute to leading, shaping and influencing the Loddon Shire.**
- 5. People with a disability, their families and carers are able to connect and participate in activities that are aligned to their interests and identities, and experience a high level of wellbeing in all aspects of their life.**
- 6. People with a disability feel welcome and safe, and are as recognised and respected as any other resident in the Loddon Shire.**

The Loddon Shire Council has identified 15 strategies that will direct Council on how it will achieve the six outcomes of the Plan.

5.1 Accessible services, programs and events

People with a disability have the same opportunities to participate in services, programs and events in the Loddon Shire as everyone else.

1. We will ensure our services are accessible and flexible to meet the changing needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.
2. We will support events in the Loddon Shire to be accessible and welcoming to people with a disability.

5.2 Accessible Council buildings and infrastructure

The Loddon Shire's built and natural environments are accessible and people with a disability are able to move around and get to the places they want to go.

3. We will work with our community to understand what physical barriers are experienced by people with a disability in our built and natural environments.
4. We will ensure new developments and infrastructure are built to the principles of universal design, planning beyond the Access Standards to meet community needs.
5. We will work to increase the accessibility of our built and natural environments to reduce the physical barriers experienced by people with a disability.
6. We will support our residents to maintain their independence to get about town.
7. We will support private businesses and people working in the building sector to understand the importance of and improve their accessibility.

5.3 Equal employment opportunities

People with a disability are engaged in flexible and sustainable employment within the Loddon Shire and have opportunities to develop and succeed.

8. We will lead and work with others to increase local employment opportunities for people with a disability.
9. We will offer work experience opportunities for people with a disability to increase their skills and confidence in the workplace.

5.4 Accessible communication and engagement

People with a disability can access the information they need to make informed decisions and choices and contribute to leading, shaping and influencing the Loddon Shire.

10. We will continue to improve our communication and information approaches to ensure that people with a disability can access information and know what is happening in their community.
11. We will ensure our community engagement approaches are accessible and inclusive of people with a disability and ensure all Loddon Shire residents have the opportunity to have their say.

5.5 Inclusive community participation

People with a disability, their families and carers are able to connect and participate in activities that are aligned to their interests and identities, and experience a high level of wellbeing in all aspects of their life.

12. We will continue to improve access to and from activities, services and events for people with a disability in the Loddon Shire community and reduce isolation.
13. We will lead and work with others to increase opportunities for people with a disability, their families and carers to connect and feel supported in the Loddon Shire community.

5.6 Respectful and safe communities

People with a disability feel welcome and safe, and are as recognised and respected as any other resident in the Loddon Shire.

14. We will promote the importance of inclusion for all and provide information and education about good models of inclusive practices and approaches.
15. We will ensure our residents with a disability do not experience discrimination in the Loddon Shire.

6 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Annual Action Plans will be developed to guide Council staff on what needs to be done to achieve each strategy of the Plan and ensure the plan is implemented efficiently and effectively over its four years.

Annual reviews will be conducted to assess the Plan's progress, make appropriate changes and develop new actions to form the next year's Action Plan.

7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Council has identified an additional three key strategies for the Plan, these are:

1. We will meet our legislative requirements.
2. We will be accountable to our community and implement the Plan with good governance.
3. We will operate with a lens of continuous improvement to ensure we are doing our best for people with a disability in the Loddon Shire community.

The below table sets out how the Loddon Shire Council will continually monitor and report on the Plan's progress over its four years of implementation and inform future planning to continue to address the needs of people with a disability in the Loddon Shire community.

Table 1: Implementation and evaluation plan

Strategy	Actions	Lead Department	Partners
We will meet our legislative requirements.	1. Register the Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021 with the Australian Human Rights Commission.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	
	2. Include a report on the Plan's progress in the Loddon Shire Council Annual Report.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	Corporate Services
We will be accountable to our community and implement the Plan with good governance.	3. Regularly monitor and support implementation of the Action Plan through the Disability Access and Inclusion Steering Group.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	Disability Access and Inclusion Steering Group
	4. Develop a monitoring and evaluation template for all lead departments to report on the progress of their actions every 6 months.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	All Lead Departments
	5. Publish annual updates on the Loddon Shire Council website.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	
We will operate with a lens of continuous	6. Conduct a review of the	Community Support	All Lead Departments

Strategy	Actions	Lead Department	Partners
improvement to ensure we are doing our best for people with a disability in the Loddon Shire community.	Action Plan in the last month of each year of the Plan to assess progress, make appropriate changes and develop new actions to form the next year's Action Plan.	(Disability Inclusion)	Disability Access and Inclusion Steering Group
	7. Provide annual progress reports to Council through internal reporting processes.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	
	8. Undertake a comprehensive review and evaluation of the DAIP 2018-2021 in the last quarter of the Plan, to inform the development of the new DAIP.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	
	9. Report to Council on the efficacy of this Plan, with future recommendations and priorities for action by the end of 2021.	Community Support (Disability Inclusion)	

8 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are 18 strategies outlined within this Plan. The majority will be achieved using existing resources and budget and therefore will not require additional funding. Some actions may require additional allocation of Council's budget, however feasibility will be investigated in the first year of this Plan and business cases developed to inform budget bids for year two (2018/19 financial year) expenditure. Other actions will require external grant applications or the development of partnerships with other agencies to contribute to some of the costs.

9 RISK ANALYSIS

It is a legislative requirement that Council has a Disability Action Plan and report on its implementation in its Annual Report. Failure to complete the development of a new Disability Action Plan will put Council at risk of non-compliance and potential discrimination.

It is considered that this Plan does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. It is important to note that Loddon Shire Council is liable under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1994* (DDA), if it discriminates against people with disabilities and or their carers/family members based on any of its functions, services or corporate framework. Therefore it is possible for the Council to be sued if it does not adhere to the DDA or the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act*.

It is also costly to retrofit buildings to make them accessible rather than meet accessibility requirements in the initial construction.

The following table outlines the risk analysis of not implementing a Community Access and Inclusion Plan:

Table 2: Access and Inclusion Plan risk analysis

Possible risks	Consequential criteria	Likelihood criteria	Assessed risk
New or modified facilities not being disability compliant	Potential cost could be more than \$100,000	Unlikely to occur but could happen	Medium
Person with a disability unable to obtain and maintain employment with Loddon Shire Council	Potential cost could be more than \$100,000	Unlikely to occur but could happen	Medium
Person with a disability is not included in local activities coordinated by Loddon Shire Council due to negative attitudes, assumptions and barriers not addressed	Potential cost could be between \$20,000 and \$50,000	Unlikely to occur but could happen	Low
Loddon Shire Council staff discriminate on the basis of disability for Loddon Shire Council services	Potential cost could be between \$20,000 and \$50,000	Unlikely to occur but could happen	Low

APPENDIX 1: POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The Plan has been developed taking into account the following documents:

International

- United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 - ratified in Australia July 2008.

National

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Building Code of Australia 2013
- Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Commissioning Framework 2016

State

- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 - 1 January 2008
- The Victorian Disability Amendment Act 2012 (revises the Disability Act 2006)
- The Equal Opportunity Act 1995
- The Local Government Act 1989 - Section 3C
- Absolutely Everyone, State Disability Plan 2017-2020

Local Government

- A Strategic Framework for Local Government, MAV

Loddon Shire Council

- Council Plan 2017-2021
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Community Care Strategy 2013-2017
- Municipal Early Years Plan 2014-2017
- Economic Development Strategy 2015-2019
- Municipal Emergency Management Plan
- Recreation Strategy 2015-2020
- Tourism Strategy 2011-2016
- Loddon Shire Diversity Action Plan 2015-2016

ACTION PLAN 2022

PURPOSE

The Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2018-21 has now reached the end of its term. Due to a number of factors, including disruptions and service redirections resulting from lockdowns, Council has decided to extend this Plan to the end of 2022, alongside the development of a new Plan during this period.

Annual Action Plans have been developed to guide Council staff on what needs to be done to achieve each strategy of the Access and Inclusion Plan and ensure it is implemented efficiently and effectively. Progress against previous years' Action Plans were reported and feasibility for delivery in 2022 determined in consultation with staff at departmental level. This Action Plan includes priority actions from the previous Action Plans that have not yet been completed. There are 13 items outlined within this Action Plan, which Council will endeavour to deliver in 2022.

This Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2022.

ACTION PLAN

Priority area: accessible Council buildings and infrastructure

Outcome	Strategy	Actions	Responsible staff	Partner/s
The Loddon Shire's built and natural environments are accessible and people with a disability are able to move around and get to the places they want to go.	We will ensure new developments and infrastructure are built to the principles of universal design, planning beyond the Access Standards to meet community needs.	Deliver training to increase awareness and understanding of universal design principles for all relevant staff.	Manager Organisation Development	Loddon Leaders

Outcome	Strategy	Actions	Responsible staff	Partner/s
	We will work to increase the accessibility of our built and natural environments to reduce the physical barriers experienced by people with a disability.	Undertake activities to identify high use buildings and public toilets within the Loddon Shire, with the vision to determine the compliance of identified buildings and the budget required to improve their accessibility (Disability Discrimination Act). To inform a business case and budget bid for the 22/23 financial year.	Manager Assets and Infrastructure	
	We will support our residents to maintain their independence to get about town.	Implement the Outdoor Style Guide.	Manager Community Support and Manager Community Wellbeing	Manager Assets and Infrastructure
		Identify the need and locations for new mobility scooter and wheelchair recharge points. Investigate whether the EV charging points implemented during the Charging the Regions project are able to charge mobility scooters and wheelchairs and promote as such.	Manager Community Support and Manager Community Wellbeing	

Priority area: equal employment opportunities

Outcome	Strategy	Actions	Responsible staff	Partner/s
People with a disability are engaged in flexible and sustainable employment within the Loddon Shire and have opportunities to develop and succeed.	We will offer opportunities for people with a disability to increase their skills and confidence in the workplace.	Investigate the feasibility of a targeted work experience program for people with a disability within various Council departments.	Manager Organisation Development	Manager Community Support and Manager Community Wellbeing

Priority area: accessible communication and engagement

Outcome	Strategy	Actions	Responsible staff	Partner/s
People with a disability can access the information they need to make informed decisions and choices and contribute to leading, shaping and influencing the Loddon Shire.	We will continue to improve our communication and information approaches to ensure that people with a disability can access information and know what is happening in their community.	Deliver training to staff on how to write in plain and easy English.	Manager Organisation Development	
		Promote the use of the Communications Plan template to staff, to be used in liaison with Council's Media Officer.	Manager Executive and Commercial Services	Loddon Leaders
	We will ensure our community engagement approaches are accessible and inclusive of people with a disability and ensure all Loddon Shire residents have the opportunity to have their say.	Upload the plain and easy English versions of the 2018-2021 DAIP to Council's website.	Manager Community Wellbeing	Manager Executive and Commercial Services

Priority area: inclusive community participation

Outcome	Strategy	Actions	Responsible staff	Partner/s
People with a disability, their families and carers are able to connect and participate in activities that are aligned to their interests and identities, and experience a high level of wellbeing in all aspects of their life.	We will continue to improve access to and from activities, services and events for people with a disability in the Loddon Shire community and reduce isolation.	Advocate for improved and accessible public transport systems.	Manager Community Support	Manager Community Wellbeing
		Explore potential partnerships and funding opportunities for transport programs to events, activities and towns outside of the Loddon Shire for accessing services.	Manager Community Wellbeing	Manager Community Support
	We will lead and work with others to increase opportunities for people with a disability, their families and carers to connect and feel supported in the Loddon Shire community.	Compile a list of available local support groups for carers and publish on Council's website.	Manager Community Wellbeing and Manager Community Support	Manager Executive and Commercial Services

Priority area: respectful and safe communities

Outcome	Strategy	Actions	Responsible staff	Partner/s
People with a disability feel welcome and safe, and are as recognised and respected as any other resident in the Loddon Shire.	We will promote the importance of inclusion for all and provide information and education about good models of inclusive practices and approaches.	Run an annual internal International Day of People with Disability event to promote positive stories of disability that increase awareness and inclusion in the workplace.	Manager Organisation Development	Manager Community Wellbeing
		Disability awareness will become part of the Position Description in all new positions and Personal Development.	Manager Organisation Development	Manager Community Wellbeing