Accessibility Action Plan 2026-2030

Version 4, January 2026

DRAFT

City of Port Phillip
99a Carlisle Street
St Kilda VIC 3182

Phone: **ASSIST** 03 9209 6777
Email: portphillip.vic.gov.au/contact-us
Website: portphillip.vic.gov.au

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Acknowledgement of Country

Wominjeka. Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their legacy and spiritual connection to the land and waterways across the City of Port Phillip and pay our heartfelt respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

Mayor's message

Note: The Mayor's message will be added once the final plan is endorsed by Council.

Language in this document

When we talk about people with disability, this plan puts the person first, not their disability.
This is called **person centred language**. It helps show respect.

Some people prefer something different, called **identity first language**.
This means their disability is an important part of who they are.
For example, some people with autism prefer to say **"I am an autistic person"** instead of **"I am a person with autism."**

There is no right or wrong choice.
People can describe themselves in the way that feels right for them.
In most situations, person centred language is more commonly used.

Introduction

The **Accessibility Action Plan 2026–2030** explains what Council will do to reduce unfair treatment of people with disability.

The City of Port Phillip wants to build a community in a way so that everyone can take part and feel included. Through this plan, it is hoped we will achieve this.

The plan shows how Council will remove barriers that stop people with disability from using services and facilities in our area.

The plan was created with help from people with disability, carers, community groups, and disability advocates.
The plan follows the rules in the ***Disability Discrimination Act 1992*** and **Victorian *Disability Act 2006***.

We will improve physical and digital access, support better job choices, and build a culture that values people with disability.

We can help make sure people with disability are treated fairly and can access services just like people without disability.

This plan shows how we will lead the way, remove unfair barriers, and make sure everyone who lives, works, or visits the City of Port Phillip can belong and feel included.

Vision and Outcomes

The plan looks at ways to make sure everyone can:

- take part in community life
- access services and places without barriers
- find fair job opportunities
- feel respected and included

These goals help create a more equal and inclusive community.

The plan also sets out clear steps for how we will get there and explains what success looks like.

For example:

- accessible buildings
- fair hiring processes
- inclusive events

It also lists actions we will take, such as completing reviews, delivering training, and working with the community.

We will check our progress by looking at:

- our access scores
- the number and types of complaints we get
- feedback from people with disability and their carers

All of these parts will work together to make sure the plan creates positive change across Council and the community.

Models of Disability

This plan is based on two ideas about disability:
the **social model** and the **human rights model**.

The social model of disability

The social model says that disability is not caused by a person's condition.
Instead, people are 'disabled' by barriers in society.

For example:

- buildings that are hard to enter
- negative attitudes
- systems that don't include everyone

Under the social model, the impacts of disability can be reduced by removing those barriers.

The social model was created by the disability rights movement.
It empowers people by saying the problem is not the person but the environment around them.
the social model encourages governments and communities to make places more inclusive.

The human rights model of disability

The human rights model builds on the social model.
It says people with disability have the same rights as everyone else.
They deserve freedom, dignity, and equal opportunities.

This model is based on international human rights law, including the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, which Australia joined in 2008.

It promotes:

- independence
- participation
- equality before the law

It says people with disability must have their rights upheld in all areas of life such as education, health, jobs, and community involvement.

How these models guide the plan

Both models guide modern disability policy, including this Accessibility Action Plan and they both:

- challenge discrimination
- promote inclusion
- show that people with disability should be valued and included as equal members of society.

Why we need a new Accessibility Action Plan

Council wants to build a community that is diverse, inclusive, and accessible.
This means everyone can take part in community life.

The Accessibility Action Plan is one way Council shows the community what actions it will take to make this happen.

We need a new plan because:

- our local community needs continued support, and
- the law requires us to keep improving accessibility

This plan will confirm Council's commitment to making our community fair, inclusive, and accessible for everyone.

Disability – an overview

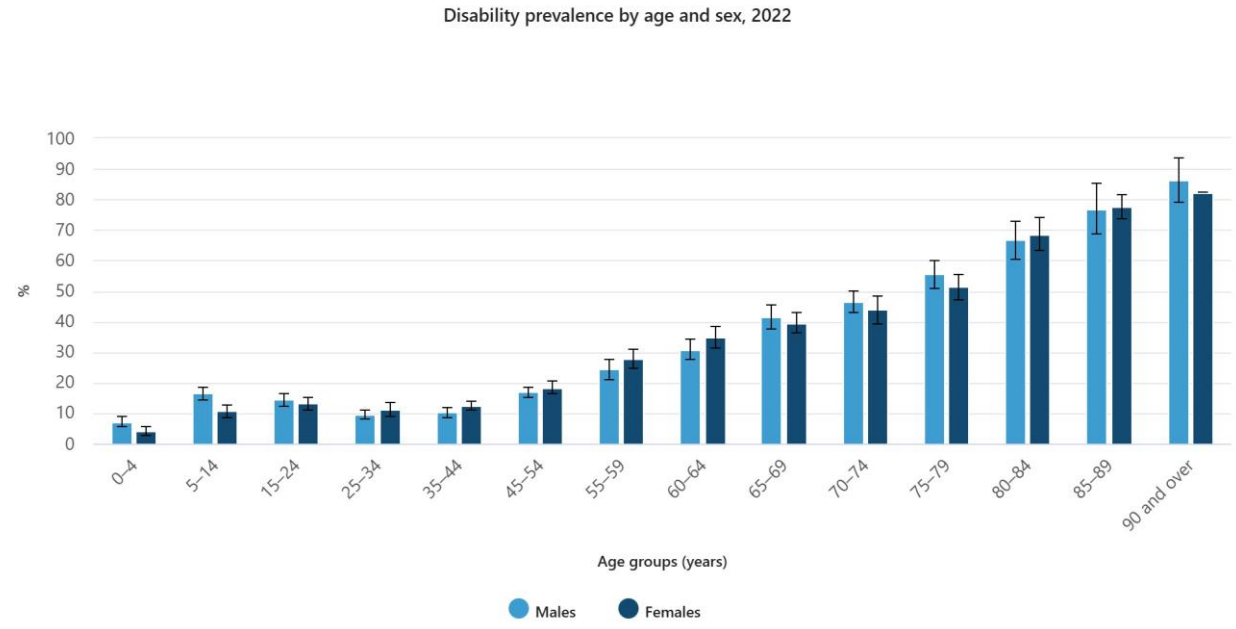
Recent information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) shows that more people in Australia are living with disability, but discrimination against people with disability has not improved.

In 2022, **21.4% of Australians had disability**.
This was an increase from 17.7% in 2018.

Disability is more common in older people.
More than half (52%) of people aged over 65 have disability.

This increase may be due to:

- Australia's ageing population
- better awareness and reporting of disability
- more long-term health conditions being recognised



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2022

The number of carers in Australia is also growing.
There are now **about three million people** in caring roles.

The gap between men and women who are carers look as though they are getting smaller, with 12.8% of all women being carers and 11.1% of all men.

However, **80% of primary carers are women**, meaning women take on most of the responsibility and time commitments in their caring roles.

People with disability are still one of the most unfairly treated groups in Australia.

According to data from 2022 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS):

- **People with disability are more than twice as likely to be unemployed** as people without disability.
- **People with disability earn much less**. Their weekly income is $575, compared with $1,055 for people without disability.
- **1 in 10 people with disability experienced unfair treatment (discrimination)**, and this increases to 1 in 5 for people with severe disability.
- Two out of three people aged 15 and over with disability said they faced barriers when trying to join social or community activities in the previous three months.
- In the City of Port Phillip, the most common long-term health condition is a mental health condition.

Local government can play a big role in finding and removing barriers that make life harder for people with disability.
Councils can take practical steps that other levels of government or local organisations cannot.

Legislative Context

Two main laws guide the Accessibility Action Plan.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

The DDA is a national law that makes sure people with disability have fair and respectful access to all areas of life.

Victorian Disability Act 2006

This Victorian law states that Councils must create an Accessibility Action Plan.
The point of the action plan is to remove barriers for people with disability and support inclusion in community life.

Under Section 38(1), the Act says Councils must work towards four goals:

1. Reduce barriers to accessing goods, services and facilities
2. Reduce barriers to getting and keeping employment
3. Promote inclusion and participation in the community
4. Create real changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with disability

These four goals form the foundation of our Accessibility Action Plan.

Relevant legislation and guidance

Other relevant legislation and guidance includes the following:

State	Federal	International
Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026)	Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006	*Fair Work Act 2009*	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2
Equal Opportunity Act 2010		
Local Government Act 2020		

Plan for Port Phillip

This Accessibility Action Plan supports the Plan for Port Phillip 2025–35, which guides the future of our City.

The Plan for Port Phillip aims to create: *a liveable and vibrant city where people feel connected and well*.

This Accessibility Action Plan supports three main goals from that plan:

- A Healthy and Connected Community
- A Vibrant and Thriving Community
- An Engaged and Empowered Community

This means the plan helps make Port Phillip a place where everyone can take part, feel included, and enjoy community life.

Accessibility Action Plan Context

This Accessibility Action Plan is part of Council's broader work to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community.
It sits alongside several other plans and strategies that also aim to make Port Phillip fair and inclusive.
These include:

- Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–2027
- LGBTIQA+ Action Plan 2024–2026
- Positive Ageing Policy 2023–2027
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2025
- Community Safety Plan (being developed)
- Affordable Housing and Homelessness Strategy (being developed)
- Multicultural Strategy (being developed)

Together, these plans help Council create a community where everyone feels included and supported.

All of Council's diversity, equity, and inclusion work is guided by these commitments:

- We value and actively seek the views of our staff and community with lived experiences

- We take responsibility for our actions and decisions
- We work in a fair way, which helps us decide how to focus our diversity, equity, and inclusion work
- We keep learning and improving. Our work toward equality is ongoing, and along the way we will reflect, be accountable, and grow

Building on our Success

The City of Port Phillip has been creating Accessibility Action Plans since 2001. After 25 years of doing this, the Council knows what has worked well and what still needs to improve.

Some things we've done well include:

- Running an accessible beaches program each summer so people with disability can enjoy the beach with their family and friends
- Providing disability awareness training so staff can better understand disability
- Making sure events like the St Kilda Festival are accessible so everyone in the community can take part

A review of the 2023–2025 plan showed that there is still more work to do. One of the main goals of the new plan is to build staff skills so they can think about the needs of people with disability in all projects, policies and programs.

This Accessibility Action Plan has been written so that it is quite open, while still making meaningful commitments. It shows where Council is now, on its accessibility journey.

The plan also looks ahead by including actions that will create long-term, lasting change for people with disability.

How this plan was made

Council made this plan by talking with many people, especially people with disability. Council also looked at important state and federal disability policies to make sure this plan matches those.

To understand community views, Council asked people living in our City to share their experiences. This included feedback from people with disability, their carers, and results from the 2025 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey.

In June 2025, Council ran a workshop with Voices of the South Side (VOSS). People with disability told us what they want to see in the new Accessibility Action Plan. Some of those ideas have been included in the plan

Council also looked at plans from eight nearby Councils. This helped us find ways that we might work with other local Councils and share resources to improve outcomes for people with disability.

Council staff were also involved. They shared what worked well in the last plan and what they found hard. This helped shape a stronger, more useful new plan.

Finally, Council completed a Gender Impact Assessment, as required by the Gender Equality Act 2020. This helped make sure the plan is fair for everyone.

The Role of Governments

Every level of government plays a role in making sure people with disability are treated fairly. The key ones are listed below:

Federal Government

- Laws: The government makes sure people follow the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), which makes it illegal to treat people unfairly because of disability in jobs, education, transport, and access to services
- National Plan: It also leads Australia's Disability Strategy (2021–2031), which sets goals to make life fair and inclusive for people with disabilities
- NDIS: It helps run and fund the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which gives some people with disabilities support
- Oversight: It supports organisations like the Australian Human Rights Commission and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to make sure rights and standards are followed
- Public Education: It runs campaigns to raise awareness and reduce stigma about disability.

State Government

- Laws: There are rules like the Disability Act 2006 and Equal Opportunity Act 2010. These rules protect the rights of people with disability.
- State Plan: The Victorian government has a plan called *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022–2026*. This plan helps people with disability feel safe and take part in the Victorian community.
- Services: The government makes sure schools, hospitals, buses, trains, and housing are easy to use for people with disability.
- NDIS: The State government works with the federal government to run the NDIS in Victoria.

Local Government (Councils)

- Accessibility Plans: Councils write plans to make places, services, and information easy for everyone to use.
- Inclusive Places: Councils make sure parks, libraries, community centres, toilets, footpaths, and events are accessible.
- Community Education: Councils work with community groups to help stop unfair treatment of people with disability
- Working together: Councils work with people with disability and local groups to help make services better.

Vision

A City for Everyone
This plan aims to make the City of Port Phillip a place where everyone can join in, do well and feel like they belong. Council is focused on fairness and making sure everyone is treated with respect. We are committed to removing barriers, stopping unfair treatment and having spaces where everyone feels included. By leading the way, working with others and always learning, we want to make sure all people can access our City in a fair and respectful way.

Outcomes

These outcomes explain what Council wants to improve so people with disability can take part in community life more easily. Council will work to:

- Make buildings, services, parks, and online information easy for everyone to use.
- Make sure people with disability have a fair chance to get a job at Council and get the support they need at work.
- Provide more chances for people with disability to join events, programs, and decisions.
- Help the community better understand disability and reduce discrimination.

Overall, the goal is to remove barriers and make our city fair and inclusive for everyone.

Actions and Performance Measures

This plan links what we want to achieve with real, visible changes. It includes actions and measures to help track progress and show what is improving.

- **Clarified Results** explain what success looks like in everyday life.
- **Actions** are the practical steps that help achieve these results.
- **Performance Measures** show the impact of the work, not just what activities were done.

Together, they ensure the plan leads to real, measurable improvements in access, inclusion and attitudes across Council and the community.

Objective One: Reduce barriers in accessing goods, services and facilities

Services, facilities and programs will be more accessible, so that people with disability can meaningfully engage with them - Facilities include public spaces and footpaths

Outcome	Clarified Result	Actions	Performance Measure
Services, facilities, and programs are accessible and inclusive for people with disability	People with disability can enter, use, and navigate Council buildings, foreshore areas, and services without assistance or complaint	1.1 Emergency Preparedness Plans updated to include people with disability and their carers 1.2 Foreshore Accessibility Evaluation program developed 1.3 Council buildings accessibility audit conducted 1.4 Local traders supported to be inclusive through training 1.5 Inclusive Library Programming 1.6 ASSIST Accessibility Review 1.7 Accessibility Improvement Plan developed for South Melbourne Market Accessibility statement included in each Project Brief, Tender and Strategy 1.8 Program of works to address inaccessibility (based on audit findings).	- % of staff and visitors with disability reporting improved access in annual surveys. - Reduction in accessibility related complaints logged in ASSIST. - % of Council buildings audited for accessibility.

Objective Two: Reduce barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment

As a workforce, Council will build on its current disability inclusive practices, identifying barriers to employment and seeking ways to address these

(Note: Workforce data is regularly analysed to understand representation and experiences of employees with disability and other diverse backgrounds, informing initiatives that foster a more inclusive workplace. Council continues to focus on building staff confidence to share demographic data, including disability status. Due to sample size and employee privacy, this data is not reported publicly.)

Outcome	Clarified Result	Actions	Performance Measure

Council is an inclusive employer that supports people with disability at all recruitment stages.	Applicants and employees with disability experience fair, supportive recruitment and workplace adjustments.	2.1 Inclusive recruitment and disability inclusion awareness 2.2 Workplace Adjustments procedure education and awareness	- Recruitment eLearn published; 80% of people leaders completed it - Inclusive Leadership Training completed by 80% of people leaders - Disability Inclusion communications issued twice yearly - Workplace Adjustments procedure published and intranet page updated Awareness of adjustments promoted twice yearly; annual drop-in sessions for leaders

Objective Three: Promote inclusion and participation in the community

Council will actively identify and promote opportunities, events and programs that increase the participation of people with disability, their carers and families

Outcome	Clarified Result	Actions	Performance Measure
People with disability are actively included in community life and decision-making processes.	People with disability attend and participate in Council events, programs, and consultations without barriers.	3.1 Accessibility of Council events and festivals audited and audit actions implemented through a program of works 3.3 Support and training provided to build capability of community organisations 3.4 Inclusive communication developed 3.5 Accessibility training module and toolkit developed and made available to all grant applicants	- % of attendees with disability reporting a positive experience at Council events. - % of community organisations reporting increased confidence in disability inclusion after training.

Objective Four: Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with disability

Increased knowledge amongst community members on the rights of people with disability and relevant legislation

Outcome	Clarified Result	Actions	Performance Measure
Increased awareness and inclusive practices across Council and the community, reducing discrimination.	Staff and community members demonstrate improved knowledge and inclusive behaviours.	4.1 Tailored disability, legislation and discrimination training 4.2 Forum with community enabling sharing of inclusive and equitable practice 4.3 International Day of People with Disability recognition	- % of participants in inclusive practice forums reporting intent to apply inclusive practices. - Year-on-year increase in engagement with International Day of People with Disability activities.

While the four objectives of the Victorian *Disability Act 2006* are the focus in the Accessibility Action Plan, Council will find other ways to reduce discrimination and promote inclusivity throughout the plan's lifetime.

Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

Implementation

To track progress, an annual implementation plan will be created, and all actions will be reported on each year.

The outcome framework below shows what will be achieved during the plan's lifetime:

Plan for Port Phillip Strategic Direction	Legislative Objective	Outcome
	All four legislative objectives	Reduced barriers to access and participation, and inclusive attitudes and practices across Council and community
A Healthy and Connected Community	Reduce barriers in accessing goods, services and facilities	Facilities, programs and services are accessible and inclusive for everyone

A Vibrant and Thriving Community	Reduce barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment	Council is an inclusive employer that supports people at all recruitment stages
An Engaged and Empowered Community	Promote inclusion and participation in the community	People with disability are actively included in community life and decision-making processes
A Healthy and Connected Community	Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with disability	Increased awareness and inclusive practices across Council and the community, reducing discrimination

Monitoring

Council will often look at how the plan is progressing. A group of staff responsible for different actions will meet to check what has been completed and what still needs attention, supported by Council's internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion reporting systems.

Each year, Council will assess all actions to ensure they are on track.

In the last six months of the plan, Council will carry out a full review to understand what worked well, what could be improved, and what should be included in the next plan.

Reporting

This action plan will be lodged with the Victorian Human Rights Commission and shown on their Disability Action Plan Register. The register lets the community see what commitments organisations have made to reduce discrimination toward people with disability.

The plan's status will be reported yearly in Council's Annual Report, showing the community how we are progressing.