



ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN

# Engagement Report

March 2026





## 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.

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# Introduction

## Project background

We're creating a new Accessibility Action Plan to make our City fairer, more inclusive, and easier for everyone to use. This Plan will guide how we remove barriers, improve access, and make sure people with disability can fully take part in community life.

In line with the Disability Act 2006, the plan will have four main goals:

1. Make services and places easier to use, like our buildings, beaches, libraries and markets
2. Help people get and keep jobs by promoting fair practices and providing workplace adjustments
3. Include people in community life by offering accessible events and programs
4. Improve attitudes and stop unfair treatment by providing training and holding community forums

### **What's happened so far**

Before engaging, we developed a draft Accessibility Action Plan using local information and community voices. This included:

- We analysed local statistics and data to understand barriers and opportunities for people with disability in our City.
- We reviewed also previous plans and feedback from earlier engagement.
- We held a workshop with Voices of the South Side (VOSS), a group of residents with lived experience of disability, to understand their ideas and



priorities, with participants sharing their views on how to make our City more accessible.

## **What we set out to achieve**

This engagement project aimed to hear what the community thinks about the draft Accessibility Action Plan and whether it needs any changes before it goes to Council for approval. We especially wanted feedback from people with disability.

## **About this report**

The purpose of this report is to show how we engaged with community members, groups and organisations, as well as tell you a summary of what we heard.

## **Before reading this report**

The following should be considered in reading this report:

- These findings come from people who chose to give feedback. This means the results do not represent the whole community – only the people who took part.
- We tried to hear from many different groups, but some people may still have found it hard to participate. This includes people with disability, people from multicultural backgrounds, older people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- ‘Participants’ means everyone who took part in any activity. ‘Respondents’ means the people who answered a specific question or task.
- This report explains what people told us. The feedback has not been checked by an independent expert, so some comments might be wrong, unrealistic, or outside the project’s scope. We did not include every single



comment; instead, we grouped ideas into themes and used quotes and numbers to show the main messages.

- Some people may have taken part in more than one activity. This means their views might have been counted more than once without us realising.
- We did not collect demographic information in the same way for all activities, so it's harder to compare feedback between different groups.
- This report only includes engagement activities run by Council. It does not include events, surveys or petitions run by the community or other organisations.
- Humans completed the main analysis for this report. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools helped process large amounts of data and identify patterns. Human analysts then checked all AI-generated results to make sure they were correct and meaningful. The final findings in this report are based on the judgement of these human experts.






# What we did



Between Monday 16 February and Sunday 15 March 2026 we delivered a range of communications activities to let the community know about this project. We also collected feedback through a mix of accessible and inclusive engagement activities.

## Communications activities

To increase awareness of the engagement process, we did the following:

Method	Detail	Reach
 <p><b>Posters &amp; postcards</b></p>	<p>Postcards and posters were distributed to the local community, explaining the engagement process and inviting people to provide feedback.</p>	<p>Approx 50 posters and 100 postcards were dropped at 19 local groups, businesses and organisations in Port Phillip.</p>
 <p><b>Targeted emails</b></p>	<p>Emails were sent to a range of stakeholders, explaining the engagement process and inviting people to provide feedback.</p>	<p>Over 70 local groups, businesses and organisations were contacted, including past grant recipients and recent applicants for the new Disability Advisory Committee.</p>
 <p><b>Local newsletters</b></p>	<p>Project information and an invitation to engage was included in Council managed newsletters during the engagement period.</p>	<p>Help Shape Our City (19 February 2026) – &gt;4000 recipients                      Community Sector News (20 February 2026) – &gt;1200</p>







Method	Detail	Reach
 <p><b>Social media</b></p>	<p>Social media posts were included on both Facebook and Instagram to promote the engagement process.</p>	<p>Diversity (27 February 2026) – &gt;14,500 recipients.</p> <p>What’s on at the libraries (2 March 2026) – &gt;7000 recipients</p> <p>South Melbourne Market Traders e-news (February 2026) – &gt;160 recipients</p>
	<p>A reel of Mayor Alex Makin speaking about the engagement process was developed to increase visibility and accessibility of the engagement process.</p>	<p>Facebook reel (19 February) – 21 engagements, 3 clicks</p> <p>Facebook (5 March) – 26 engagements, 2 clicks</p> <p>Instagram (19 February) – 16 engagements</p> <p>Instagram (5 March) – 15 engagements</p>
	 <p><b>‘Have your say’ website</b></p>	<p>Council’s dedicated engagement website, ‘Have your say’ included a page for this project, with information on the process, a timeline, contact details, and opportunities to engage.</p>

## Engagement activities

To collect feedback from the community we did the following activities:



Method	Detail	Participation
 <b>Feedback form</b>	<p>On our engagement webpage ‘Have Your Say’, we had an online feedback form where people could provide their feedback on the draft.</p> <p>We also had hard copies of the feedback form available to download, as well as at ASSIST Customer Service desks and libraries.</p>	18 (all online)
 <b>Uploads and submissions</b>	<p>Through the engagement webpage ‘Have Your Say’, people could upload their feedback in a range of formats such as document, picture, audio or video.</p>	1
 <b>Workshop with people with lived experience</b>	<p>We held a workshop on Wednesday 4 March with people with lived experience of a disability, facilitated with Voices of the Southside (VOSS).</p>	14
 <b>Staff feedback session</b>	<p>We held a targeted feedback session with City of Port Phillip staff on Thursday 19 March 2026.</p> <p>Following the session, we received emails with additional feedback.</p>	43 2



Two online feedback sessions were scheduled (Tue 10 Mar, 1–2.30 pm; Wed 11 Mar, 6.30–8 pm) with \$40 Coles/Myer vouchers for participants but were cancelled due to lack of registrations.



# Who we heard from

## Demographics

Through the online engagement activities on the Have Your Say webpage, we asked community members questions to better understand the demographics of people who responded. The results are summarised below.

### Age

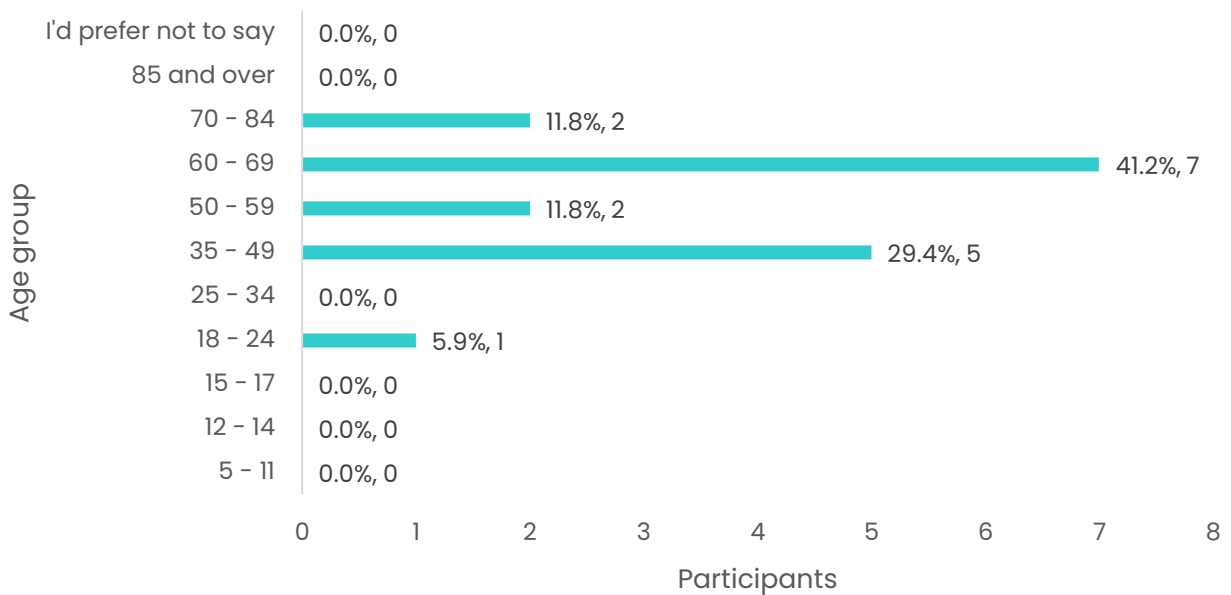
We asked people their age group.

Seventeen people responded to this question.

The largest group was aged 60–69, with 7 people (41.2%).

The next largest group was aged 35–49, with 5 people (29.4%)

No respondents were aged under 17 or over 85.



## Suburb

We asked people which suburb they live in.

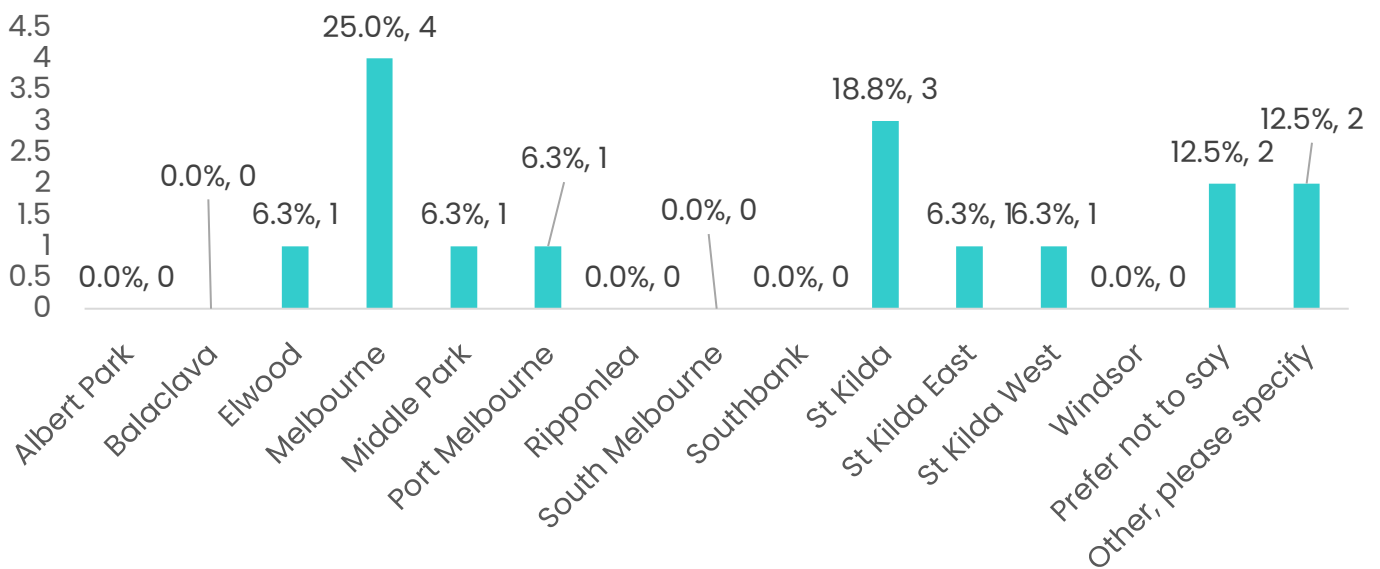
Sixteen people responded to this question.

The largest number said they live in Melbourne, with 4 people (25%).

The next largest group lived in St Kilda, with 3 people (18.8%).

Other respondents lived in Elwood, Middle Park, Port Melbourne, St Kilda East and St Kilda West.

No respondents lived in Albert Park, Balaclava, Ripponlea, South Melbourne, Southbank or Windsor.



## Gender

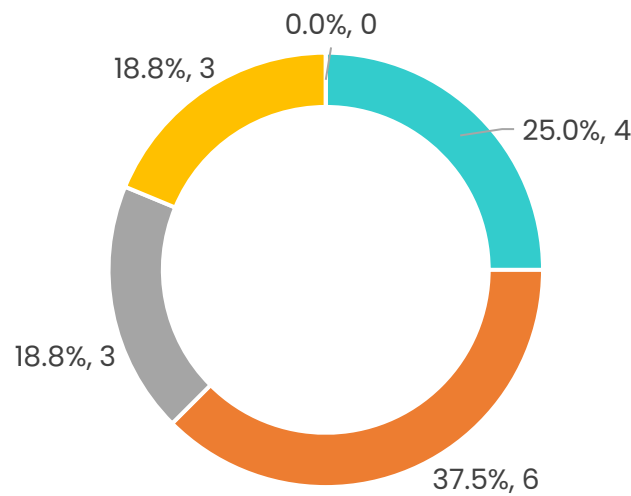
We asked people which gender they identify with.

Sixteen people responded.

The largest group identified as male (man or boy), with 6 people (37.5%).

The next largest group identified as female (woman or girl), with 4 people (25%).

This was followed by people who identified as non-binary, with 3 people (18.8%).



- Female (woman or girl)
- Male (man or boy)
- Non-binary
- I'd prefer not to say
- I use a different term (please specify)

## Diversity and inclusion

We asked people whether they identified with any of the following statements.

- Fourteen people said they are a person with disability.
- Eight people said they identify as LGBTIQ+.
- Three people said they speak a language other than English at home.
- No respondents identified as being from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

One person said they would prefer not to say, and two people said that none of the statements applied to them.

## Previous engagement

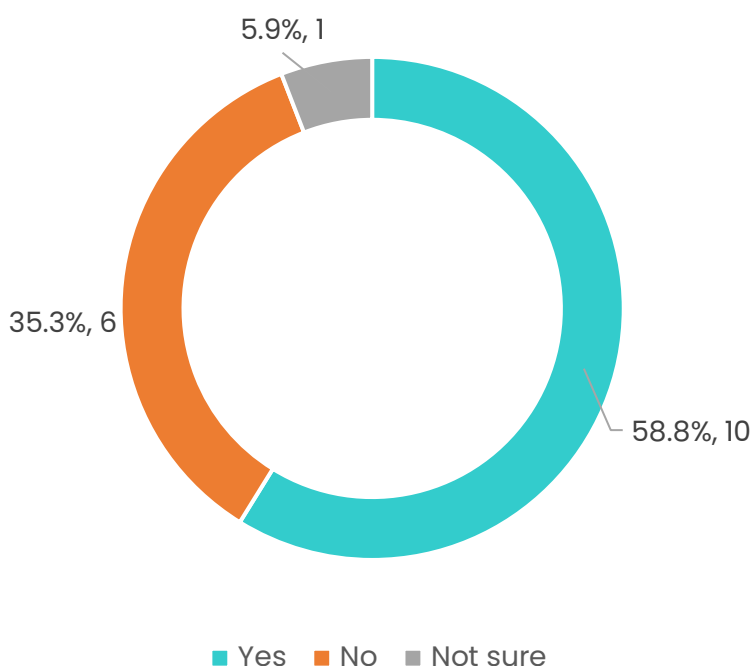
To help us understand whether we were engaging with new community members, we asked participants whether they had provided feedback on any other Council projects in the past 12 months.

Seventeen people responded to this question.

Most respondents, 10 people (58.8%), said they had provided feedback in the past 12 months.

Six people (35.3%) said they had not provided feedback in the past 12 months.

One person (5.9%) said they were not sure.



## Targeted groups

### People with disability

Due to the nature of this plan, we were especially interested in understanding feedback from people with disability. In addition to the 14 people in the survey who identified as having a disability, we undertook a workshop with Voices of the Southside, where we heard directly from 13 people with lived experience of a disability.



## Organisations and group

We invited those who were representing groups or organisations to respond to the survey. Two respondents identified as representing a group or organisation, including Rawcus Theatre Company and Victorian Astrologers Association.



# What we heard

## Community Feedback

Below is a summary of what we heard through community engagement activities listed on the 'What we did' section of this report – including feedback forms, workshops with people with lived experience, and uploads to the Have Your Say webpage. Staff feedback has been represented separately later in this report.

Do you think there are any gaps or things the draft Plan could do to better meet the four (4) goals above?

We asked people whether they felt there were any gaps in the draft Plan, or if there were ways it could better meet the four goals set out in the *Disability Act 2006*. To support this, participants were provided with an overview of the four goals and invited to share their views and suggestions.

The four goals are:

1. Make services and places easier to use, including Council buildings, beaches, libraries and markets
2. Support people to get and keep jobs by promoting fair practices and providing appropriate workplace adjustments
3. Increase inclusion in community life through accessible events and programs
4. Improve attitudes and reduce discrimination through training and community forums

The feedback received has been placed under the goal from the *Disability Act 2006* that it most closely relates to, grouped into key themes and ordered from the highest to the lowest number of comments.

## **Goal 1. Make services and places easier to use, like our buildings, beaches, libraries and markets**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
Hard infrastructure - especially footpaths	7	<p><i>"Pavements need to be maintained because it is dangerous if you have a physical disability"</i></p> <p><i>"Provide more opportunities for accessing transport, including smoother footpaths, increased road crossings, and buggy and wheelchair charging stations."</i></p>
Transport accessibility - not just PT but taxi services and parking	7	<p><i>"Public transport access should be a higher priority."</i></p> <p><i>"In my past experience here the provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles by the taxi service is severely restricted. Even prior ordering does not prevent long delays."</i></p>
Systemic change is needed	6	<p><i>"The systems that are in place are failing when you ring to access supports and services you are often placed on hold and must go around in circles. Often you do not get your needs met. Even when you want support to make a complaint it is hard to speak to a person who can help you."</i></p>
Access designed from the start	5	<p><i>"Ensure that access costs are built into service delivery and project budgets. Access is often an after thought in designing or delivering however if there is consultation at the beginning then accessibility can be fully integrated so it's part of co-design. Recognising that accessibility requires funding is an important step."</i></p>
Advocacy by Council is needed	1	<p><i>"There needs to be more about the role of advocacy in the Disability plan."</i></p>



## Goal 2. Help people get and keep jobs by promoting fair practices and providing workplace adjustments

Theme	Number of comments	Quotes
Flexible and realistic employment pathways	7	<p><i>“Even when you have training to support you to get employment there is often unrealistic expectations of channelling you into any type of employment rather than what would suit you as a person with a disability.”</i></p> <p><i>“It would be good if Council had a program that supports people with disability who have a current job and could support others wanting to get employment.”</i></p>
Leadership, representation and accountability	3	<p><i>“The plan is incredibly vague; there are no tangible outcomes or performance measures.”</i></p>
Training for staff	2	<p><i>“It would be good to introduce disability training to all staff at council.”</i></p>
Work with local businesses and traders	2	<p><i>“We are seeking an improved quality of life now and into the future. Incentivise the business community to actively support those with a disability.”</i></p>
Workplace adjustments that are timely and trusted	1	<p><i>“How exactly are prospective and current staff with disabilities being supported in the workplace? What procedures are in place to monitor how many staff are requesting workplace adjustments, and how many are actually getting approval for their adjustments?”</i></p>

### **Goal 3. Include people in community life by offering accessible events and programs**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
Integrated support and navigation	11	<p><i>“Services systems cause me anxiety. There needs to be an integrated holistic approach.”</i></p> <p><i>“There needs to be other ways to get information and support to people who have a disability and find it difficult to access computers.”</i></p>
Affordability and cost-of-living impacts	5	<p><i>“The cost-of-living crisis is impacting on people’s capacity to be engaged in the community.”</i></p>
Making events and festivals accessible to ensure participation	2	<p><i>“it would be good to mention events specifically. for me it is very hard to be dropped off or picked up from things like Stk Festival or Pride March.”</i></p>
Include the Disability Advisory Committee in the AAP.	1	<p><i>“The disability action plan should have the existence of the disability advisory committee written into the plan. So that it becomes embedded into the COPP Disability plan and is not overlooked, signalling Council’s commitment.”</i></p>

### **Goal 4. Improve attitudes and stop unfair treatment by providing training and holding community forums**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
Challenging stigma and everyday	11	<p><i>“There should be disability training for organisations and local businesses in the COPP.”</i></p>

discrimination through training and other initiatives		<p><i>“It would be good to introduce disability training to all staff at Council.”</i></p> <p><i>“Discrimination is an everyday interaction and there is an unconscious bias towards people with a disability. Often people are not even aware that they are discriminating.”</i></p>
Clear and inclusive understanding of disability, appreciating its complexity	8	<p><i>“I think that there needs to be a clear definition of 'disability' stated explicitly, not just an outline of what the models of disability are. I have read the document and still don't know whether I would be considered 'disabled' as a person with moderate to severe hearing loss.”</i></p>
Intersectionality needs to be considered	3	<p><i>“There is an intersection of chronic complex health issues and other factors such as LGBTQ, Mental health and physical health issues that impact on a person's daily life and this needs to be acknowledged in the plan.”</i></p>
Having people with a disability represented in promotions and marketing	2	<p><i>“Create more visibility in the community and promote the events that are accessible and all inclusive”</i></p>

## What do you think is most important for us to focus on?

We asked people what they think Council should focus on and choose up to three issues. The responses have been organised below into key themes, based on the number of votes each issue received (from most to least votes).

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of votes</b>
Making footpaths easier and safer for everyone to us	10
Advocating for better accessibility on public transport	10
Encouraging positive attitudes towards people with disability	9
Working with local shops, cafés and restaurants to improve accessibility	9
Creating more accessible job opportunities at Council	5
Supporting community organisations to make their programs inclusive and accessible	5
Expanding and improving the accessible beaches program	4
Providing better support for carers	3
Making Council events and festivals more accessible and inclusive	3
Making sure all Council buildings are fully accessible	2

## Do you have any other feedback about the draft Plan?

Below is a summary of other feedback we received about the draft, in order of the number of comments (from most to least)

- Provide practical accessibility guidance (8 comments)
- Improve footpath safety and maintenance (4 comments)
- Clearly define disability in the Plan (6 comments)
- Expand and clearly promote accessible beaches (4 comments)
- Embed accountability, co-design and leadership (10 comments)
- Address e-bike and scooter safety risks (2 comments)

## Differences in feedback across genders

People raised the same main issues across genders, especially around access, safety and feeling included. Overall, there were no strong gender-based differences in the feedback, and the small number of responses limits how much comparison can be made.

## **Council staff feedback**

Feedback received from staff has been outlined below, under the four objectives of the Plan.

### **Objective 1: Reduce barriers in accessing goods, services and facilities**

- Participants identified the need for clearer, more consistent information about accessibility across Council goods, services and facilities.
- Feedback highlighted the importance of considering accessibility early in design, rather than relying on individual adjustments later.
- There was a focus on improving physical, digital and customer facing access so services work better for everyone.
- Some feedback noted the need to clarify whether “facilities” include Council workplaces, as well as buildings used by the community.

### **Objective 2: Reduce barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment**

- Feedback strongly focused on inclusive recruitment, onboarding and ongoing employment support, not just recruitment alone.
- Participants highlighted the importance of clear processes for workplace adjustments and better staff awareness of how to support colleagues with disability.

- Suggestions included staff education sessions with organisations such as Vision Australia and SEDA, including practical and hands-on awareness training.
- Feedback emphasised the value of universal design, such as making all internal communications, templates and systems accessible by default.
- Ideas included updating PowerPoint and document templates, and embedding accessibility guidance into Copilot and other AI tools.
- Participants noted the need for more systemic change, including co-design with people with disability on workplace policies and practices

### Objective 3: Promote inclusion and participation in the community

- Participants emphasised building strong, ongoing relationships with people with disability and community organisations.
- Feedback supported working in partnership with external organisations to improve inclusion and participation.
- Suggestions included increasing visibility of disability inclusion at major community events, such as hosting information stalls at festivals.
- There was a strong theme of involving people with disability meaningfully in planning, delivery and decision making (“nothing about us without us”).

### Objective 4: Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with disability

- Feedback highlighted the need for lasting change through increased staff awareness and shared learning across the organisation.
- Participants supported sharing real stories of barriers and successes to challenge attitudes and build understanding.



- The follow-up emails emphasised improving internal communication and consistency to support inclusive practice.
- Detailed feedback on the draft document identified the need for clearer language, defined terms, aligned outcomes and actions, and clear timeframes.
- Participants noted the importance of aligning the plan with broader disability reforms and focusing on organisation-wide change, not just individual actions.



## Next steps

We will use the feedback to improve the draft Accessibility Action Plan where needed. The updated plan will be presented to Council at the June 2026 Council meeting. If the plan is approved, it will guide Council’s work to make Port Phillip more accessible and inclusive.

More information about this engagement project can be found at :

[haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/accessibility-action-plan](https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/accessibility-action-plan). If you ‘follow’ the page, you will receive future updates as this project progresses.

Once the final plan is ready, you will be able to find it at: [portphillip.vic.gov.au/people-and-community/accessibility-and-disability-inclusion](https://portphillip.vic.gov.au/people-and-community/accessibility-and-disability-inclusion).