



Moreland
City Council



Moreland Disability Access and Inclusion Plan



2022 – 2026



Acknowledgement of Country



Moreland City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Moreland, and pays respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Contents



Message from the Mayor	4
A quick mention about language and terminology	5
Purpose of the plan	6
Council's role	6
The foundations of the plan	7
1. Legislative, policy and current context	7
The 5 key areas	8
Disability Royal Commission	9
COVID-19	9
NDIS	10
2. The Social Model of Disability	11
3. Our community	12 – 13
The objectives of the plan – Our commitment	14 – 16
Action plan – How will we meet the objectives?	17
Monitoring and reporting	18
Appendix 1	19

Message from the Mayor



Cr Mark Riley
Mayor

The Moreland Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022 – 2026 is Council's vision for an inclusive and accessible city for everyone to enjoy.

It demonstrates our responsibility to ensure people with disabilities are included in the work we do and have the same opportunities as everyone else in the community. The plan also acknowledges the tireless contributions many carers make in our community, which too often go unrecognised and unrewarded.

I also wanted to make a special mention of the difficulty experienced by many people with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many people with disabilities were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and were often left behind. For many people with disabilities and their families, this is still a time of huge distress and isolation, and I hope we can recover quickly and build on the lessons we have learned. I also want to acknowledge the work of the Disability Royal Commission and hope that this process will lead to better protections and a safer world for people with disabilities.

Council has had a strong history in addressing disability discrimination. During the course of the previous plan, we focused on removing barriers to the built environment, including Council buildings and open spaces.

We also made significant improvements to our sporting venues, aquatic and leisure centres, libraries and community venues so that more people with disabilities can visit them and feel welcomed. We advocated for more accessible public transport, better economic security and stronger social connections for people with disabilities. We also challenged negative attitudes and perceptions of disability through the delivery of many inclusive campaigns, programs, services and events. However, despite these gains, more work needs to be done.

This plan was developed through significant consultation with people with disabilities, their carers and families, disability advocates and service providers. Their insights and experiences have helped us create a plan that sets the foundation for Council to reverse the discrimination experienced by people with disabilities.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this plan who passionately believe in the human rights of people with disabilities.

I look forward to working together over the next four years to continue removing the barriers that lead to discrimination and create a city that is truly accessible and inclusive of everyone.

A quick mention about language and terminology



The way we use language and words to define and describe disability can directly impact our attitudes, stigma and perceptions of disability, so it is important that we use language that is respectful and inclusive.

Council recognises that there are currently two different ways that we can use language to identify people with disability – **person-first** language and **identity-first** language. People with disability can have preferences for either and it is important that non-disabled people should be led by each person with disability for the preferred choice of language.

For the purpose of this plan, Council uses *person-first* language when referring to people with disability. *Person-first* language uses phrases like ‘people with disability’, ‘people with lived experience’ or ‘a person with a cerebral palsy’. It puts the word ‘person’ first. *Person-first* language acknowledges that people with disability are multi-faceted individuals with diverse characteristics and are not necessarily defined by a medical condition, illness or diagnosis. In other words, it separates a person’s sense of identity from any notion of disability. *Identity-first* language, on the other hand, has reclaimed the word ‘disabled person’. Other examples of *identity-first* language are ‘autistic person’ or ‘the Deaf community’. *Identity - first* language acknowledges that for some people their disability is an integral part of who they are and can feel empowered by identifying with a disability community with shared

experiences. *Identity-first* language also acknowledges that people have been disabled by the barriers created by ableist attitudes and systemic inequalities imposed by society. Both *person-first* and *identity-first* phrases have merit depending on the situation and the disability. The phrase ‘people with disability’ will be used throughout this plan so that it is aligned with the current terminology used in national and state legislation and policies. We also recognise that *person-first* language is not fixed and the organic nature of language may shift the consensus in time.

The term *disability* is also a word that has attracted some different and changing definitions over time. This plan will not define the term disability and will embrace broad, respectful and sensitive views of what disability means for individuals and what it is like to live with disability in Moreland.

Purpose of the plan



The Moreland Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022– 2026 sets out a 4-year plan to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, so they can enjoy a fulfilling life without barriers, have equal access and opportunity, and feel included to participate in all aspects of life in Moreland.

Council takes a whole of Council approach to access and inclusion and sees it the responsibility of all Council staff to protect and advance the human rights of people with disability.

This plan was developed mainly in consultation with people with disability, and their families and carers. We also consulted widely with disability advocates, members of the Moreland Disability Working Group, disability service providers, Moreland staff, and community members with an interest in the human rights of people with disability.

Council's role



The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it a legal requirement for local government to provide equal access to its buildings, open spaces, information, services and employment opportunities.

Council plays a key role to promote access and inclusion in local communities to ensure people with a disability have the same opportunities as non-disabled people. Council provides a range of advice, guidance, advocacy and support services that reduce discrimination and protect the wellbeing of people with a disability. In doing so, Council has a role to provide leadership around accessibility of service delivery, inclusive employment and setting minimum standards for other organisations and businesses to follow.

Communities are also looking to Council to play a role in raising community awareness around the needs of people with disability, to address discrimination and stigma, and to provide advocacy around issues of inclusion and access.

The foundations of the plan



1. Legislation, policies and standards

2. The Social Model of Disability and the Human Rights Model of Disability

3. The Community - local people who live, work, study, visit and play in Moreland and their knowledge, perspectives, values and lived experiences of disability

1. Legislative, policy and current context

In Australia, people with disability are far more likely to experience discrimination than people without disability. People with disability are entitled to the same rights and opportunities as everyone else, and this is enshrined in legislation and fundamental human rights. The *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* makes it unlawful in Australia to discriminate on the grounds of disability. It also highlights the importance of treating people with disability, family members, friends and carers, equally and with dignity, and to make sure they participate and feel included in the community.

In 2008, Australia became a signatory to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This important commitment has helped Australia move even further towards promoting and protecting the human rights of people with disability and reinforces the legislation that already exists in Australia.

Sadly, despite anti-discrimination legislation and commitments to human rights, many people with disability in Australia are still unfairly treated and do not have access to the same basic human rights and opportunities as everyone else. This is not just a problem for people with a disability and their families and carers, but for society as a whole. A truly inclusive community is one that fosters harmony, knowledge, creativity, and wealth for everyone.

A more extensive list of the legislation, policies and industry standards that are relevant to this plan can be found at the end of this plan. See Appendix 1.



Promote inclusion and participation in the community

5 Key areas



The Victorian Disability Act (2006) requires all public authorities, such as Councils, to develop a disability action plan. The Act also identifies 4 key areas that disability action plans must address in their plans.

We have included these 4 areas in our plan and included an additional fifth key area in relation to health and safety. **These 5 areas will focus our actions to ensure that we address the main barriers preventing people with disability from enjoying full participation in community life. These are:**

Ensure equal and dignified access for people with disability in ALL areas of life within Council's responsibility, including the built environment, information, and service delivery

Support the health and safety of people with disability in ALL settings and contexts

Improve the employment and education opportunities for people with a disability

Change the attitudes and practises that lead to discrimination of people with disability

Promote inclusion and participation in the community of people with disability





Disability Royal Commission

In Australia, people with disability experience the highest rates of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation compared to any other group. These rates are even higher amongst women and children with disability, Aboriginal people, LGBTIQ+ people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with disability.

During 2022 and 2023, the Disability Royal Commission will continue to investigate how to better protect people with disability from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in all settings. Moreland City Council welcomes the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Exploitation and Neglect of people with disability and will continue to encourage and support people with disability and those who support them to share their stories.



COVID-19

In some settings, the COVID-19 pandemic has indirectly improved the situation for people with disability. For the first time, people with disability were suddenly able to access flexible services that they had been asking for years. However, despite some fortuitous improvements in accessing services, largely, the pandemic disproportionately impacted the lives of people with disability and exacerbated the systemic inequalities they face in Australia. **During the pandemic, people with disability were more likely to experience deeper social isolation, reduced economic security, and difficulty finding up-to-date accessible information.** They also experienced slower vaccination roll-outs, and were at much higher risk of infection, developing serious health complications and death. During the life of this plan, we will continue to advocate for better responses and support the COVID-19 health, well-being and recovery of people with disability.



NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is one of the most important and essential social reforms Australia has experienced in recent history. After years of tireless campaigning by disability advocates for a fairer system, the NDIS was created and Australian's living with permanent and significant disability were finally able to enjoy greater choice and control of the supports and services they need to lead fulfilling lives.

We welcome the NDIS, but also acknowledge that there are still improvements that need to be made. Importantly, we also recognise that almost 90% of people with disability in Australia are not eligible for the NDIS, which means the vast majority of people with disability in Australia must rely on other community and mainstream supports. In some instances, these supports are not suitable for some people, and occasionally, the required supports are not available in the mainstream and community sector. We remain committed to provide home and community support services for people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS for the entire life of Council's home support program. We will also advocate for the continuous improvement of the NDIS wherever possible, and advocate for a better system with proper supports for the many thousands who are not eligible for the scheme.



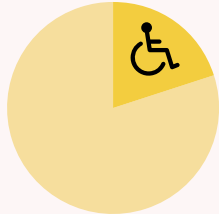
Ensure equal and dignified access

2. **The Social Model of Disability**

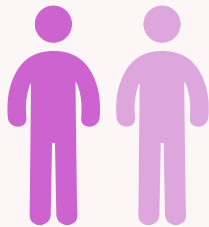
The Social Model of disability is another important approach that underpins this plan. The social model of disability recognises that people are disabled by the barriers created by society, not because they have an impairment, limitation or condition. This is contrasted with the medical model where disability is seen to be a medical problem that needs to be fixed or cured. While there is value in the medical model approach in certain medical settings, the social model is the preferred lens to effectively advocate for reversing inequality, combatting ableism and removing barriers for people with disability.



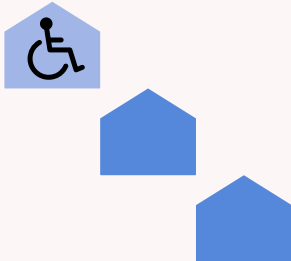
3. Our Community



20%
of Moreland's
population have
a disability



1 in 2
people over
the age of 65
have a disability



1 in 3
households
includes a person
with a disability



People with
disability are
2x
more likely to
live in poverty



People with
disability are **6x** more likely to
have poor health



The unemployment rate of people with disability is double than people without disability

Disability is more common than we think. In Moreland, **20% of the population have a disability, and one in every 3 households in Moreland includes a person with disability.** Despite disability being very common, the general perception in the community is that it is uncommon. One of the reasons for this is that most disability is not visible or immediately apparent. Autism, anxiety, depression, deafness, blindness, HIV/AIDS, multiple sclerosis, and intellectual disability are all just some examples of the many disabilities that are less obvious. People with invisible disability often report that they are unfairly treated and harassed because other people mistakenly believe they do not have a disability.

This does not to suggest that people with more visible disabilities are advantaged in any way. In fact, when disability is more obvious, people are still discriminated and can be perceived either as inspirational heroes who have triumphed in the face of adversity or victims who are in need of saving and charity. Both these perceptions are disrespectful and harmful.



Intersectionality

People with disability are not necessarily defined by their disability. A person's identity can be defined by things like their **gender, sexuality, race, culture, ethnicity, friendships, religion, preferences, age** and so on. When a person with disability identifies from another marginalised group, discrimination can be intensified, and this person can experience double or triple the level of discrimination. Thinking about disability in this way is sometimes referred to as intersectionality. This approach is considered best practice and it helps us to better understand the systemic barriers and inequalities that are connected in our society. This plan does not leave any person with a disability behind, regardless of their disability, gender, background, identity, or beliefs.



First Nations people with disability

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are the longest surviving culture in the world and enrich our communities in unique and meaningful ways. However, the impacts of colonisation has had devastating effects on indigenous communities. **First Nations people with disability are amongst some of the most disadvantaged members of the community.** The rate of disability amongst Aboriginal people in Australia is more than double than non-indigenous people. We recognise the unacceptable disadvantage that exists for First Nations people with disability, and we will work towards closing the gap on disproportionate inequality and repair the damage inflicted by colonisation and years of systemic racism.



Carers

Carers play a critical role in providing unpaid care to people with disability in our community. **Over 11% of people in Victoria are carers and this figure is likely to be much higher as many people who have a caring role do not identify as carers.** Carers can be children, parents, partners, relatives, friends, and older people. While there is considerable diversity amongst carers, a significant majority of carers are older people and most are women (over 70%). Caring can be a very physically and psychologically demanding role, and quite often carers must balance their own personal interests with their caring responsibilities. Carers make a vast contribution to our society and economy. A report commissioned by Carers Australia in 2020 estimated the annual cost of replacing unpaid carers to be \$77.9 billion.

The objectives of the plan – Our commitment



We are committed to addressing the interests and issues raised by our community to remove barriers and eliminate discrimination experienced by people with disability. Council will develop an Implementation Plan with specific actions to deliver on this commitment. These actions will be aligned with the following 5 key areas and the objectives described under each area.



Equal access to ALL areas of community life

- » Council will improve the accessibility of Council buildings, infrastructure and open spaces and go beyond principles of Universal Design, whenever possible, so they can be accessed by everyone.
- » We will improve the accessibility of Council's information, programs and services to increase the participation and social inclusion of people with disability.



Improve employment, education and economic security for people with disability

- » Council will work to improve employment and education opportunities for people with disability, both within Council and the local community.
- » We will support our staff with disability to feel safe, supported and equal members of our team.
- » We will advocate for stronger economic security for people with disability, especially those who are underemployed or unable to participate in the labour market.
- » We will work with others to improve local employment, education and training opportunities for people with disability.



Promote inclusion and participation in the community of people with disability

- » Council will promote the inclusion, participation and capacity building opportunities for people with disability.
- » We will provide opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers to be involved in civic life and co-design our work.
- » We will provide inclusive programs, services and communication to people with disability.
- » We will build the capacity of community organisations and the private sector to increase the opportunities for people with disability to participate in community life.

The objectives of the plan – Our commitment



Change the attitudes and practises that lead to discrimination of people with disability

- » We will build the capacity of our staff to be disability confident and to identify and remove disability discrimination.
- » We will not tolerate and call out any form of discrimination against people with disability.
- » We will advocate for the removal of systemic barriers that lead to inequality and discrimination.
- » We embrace the Human Rights Model and the Social Model of Disability.
- » We will take an intersectional approach to disability access and inclusion.
- » We will celebrate disability.
- » We will lead by example.



Support the health, wellbeing and safety of people with disability in all settings and contexts

- » We will protect the health, wellbeing and safety of our staff with disabilities, and staff who are carers.
- » We welcome the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with disability and will encourage and support people to share their stories.
- » We will work with community, allied health organisations and other relevant stakeholders to reduce the health, housing and safety inequalities experienced by people with disability.
- » We will support people with disability, families and carers through the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action plan – How will we meet these objectives?



To deliver our commitment to these 5 key areas Council has developed a separate Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan lists several measurable, achievable and relevant goals and corresponding actions for each of the 5 key areas.



Monitoring and reporting



Council is committed to the ongoing monitoring and reporting of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Progress will be monitored and addressed through an Accountability Framework that will include the following methods to ensure we are held accountable:

An annual review and evaluation of the actions identified in the Implementation Plan



An annual report of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in the annual Council Report



Council will submit its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to the Australian Human Rights Commission



Council will include the DAIP within its Risk Register. This means that Council must assess the risk of any actions that are not delivered on time

Appendix 1



A list of the legislation, policies and industry standards that are relevant to the Moreland Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022 -2026.



Equal access to
ALL areas of
community life

Moreland Policies

- » Moreland Council Plan
- » Health & Wellbeing Plan
- » Moreland Human Rights Policy
- » Living and Ageing Well in Moreland Framework
- » Moreland Children, Young People and Families Plan

Commonwealth and State legislation

- » Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- » Carer Recognition Act 2010
- » Victorian Disability Act 2006
- » Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- » Victorian Mental Health Act 2014
- » Charter of the Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

International, National & Victorian Strategies

- » The Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- » National Disability Strategy 2010 - 2020
- » Victorian State Disability Plan 2017 - 2020
- » Every Opportunity: Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018-2020
- » The social model of disability
- » The human rights model of disability

Industry Standards

- » Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standard
- » Disability Standards Accessible Public Transport
- » Disability Education Standards
- » Australian Standards 1428; 2860
- » Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 & 2.1



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