



Whitehorse Disability Action Plan 2026 - 2030

Acknowledgement of Country



Whitehorse City Council
ngarrgunj Wurundjeri
Woi-wurrung Guljin Kulin
marra ngarrgu nugal biik.
Nganyinoo gahgook
nanggit-alnhanboo,
yelingwa ba gamadji.

Whitehorse City Council
acknowledges the
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
people of the Kulin Nation
as the Traditional Owners of
the land. We pay our
respects to their Elders past,
present and emerging.

Statement of Meaning

The manna gum leaves are spreading the Acknowledgement of Country.

Auntie Gail Smith from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation provided the translation of Council's Acknowledgement of Country in Woi-wurrung language.

Expression of Appreciation

Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the time, experiences, information and knowledge shared in the development of the Whitehorse Disability Action Plan. We would like to thank:

- People with disability
- Families and carers of people with disability
- Alkira Centre, Box Hill Institute and *cape* Group Australia
- Members of the Whitehorse Disability Advisory Committee and Whitehorse Children's Advisory Group- Junior Voicenators

Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	1
Expression of Appreciation.....	1
Contents.....	2
Message from the Mayor.....	3
Introduction	4
Disability in our community.....	5
Legislative and strategic alignment	6
Community engagement	7
Council's roles in delivering the Plan.....	8
Developing the Plan	8
Delivering the Plan	12
Action Plan	13
Priority Area 1: Addressing barriers to accessing goods, services, and programs. ..	14
Priority Area 2: Accessing the Built Environment.....	17
Priority Area 3: Reducing Barriers to Employment	21
Priority Area 4: Increasing Community Participation.....	24
Priority Area 5: Addressing Discriminatory Attitudes and Practices	27
References.....	29
Appendix	30

Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Whitehorse City Council, it is my honour to present the Whitehorse Disability Action Plan 2026-2030.

This Plan reinforces Council's enduring commitment to building a community where people of all abilities have equal opportunities to participate, connect, and thrive.

Through this Plan, we renew our focus on inclusion, accessibility, respect and equity, principles that are essential to a vibrant and resilient Whitehorse.

The priorities of this Disability Action Plan are firmly grounded in our Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029, which centres on fostering a connected, inclusive and active community where everyone feels a sense of belonging. The Integrated Council Plan's emphasis on welcoming spaces, accessible services and healthy, connected neighbourhoods reflects the values we share as a community and the outcomes we strive to achieve for people with disability, their families and carers.

This Plan has been developed through meaningful engagement with people with lived experience of disability, carers, advocacy groups and local organisations. Their insights have shaped our actions and commitments, reinforcing that effective inclusion starts with listening. Together, we will work to remove barriers, enhance accessibility, build community capacity, and ensure that all residents can live, learn, work and participate fully in Whitehorse.

Council recognises that disability inclusion is central to community wellbeing. By embedding inclusive practices across our services from public spaces and infrastructure to community programs and communications, we are striving to make Whitehorse a place where everyone belongs, contributes and prospers.

I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this Plan's development. I invite all members of our community to join us in advancing disability inclusion and fostering a Whitehorse that is accessible, welcoming and equitable for all.

Cr Kirsten Langford

Mayor, City of Whitehorse

Introduction

People with disability are active and valued members of the Whitehorse community who make significant economic and social contributions to the local area. Council recognises that people with disability, their families and carers continue to experience a range of structural, systemic and attitudinal barriers when participating in community life.

The Whitehorse Disability Action Plan 2026 -2030 describes the work Council will undertake over the next four years to remove these barriers and create a positive change for the community. This Disability Action Plan is guided by changes focused on improving the lived experiences of people with disability.

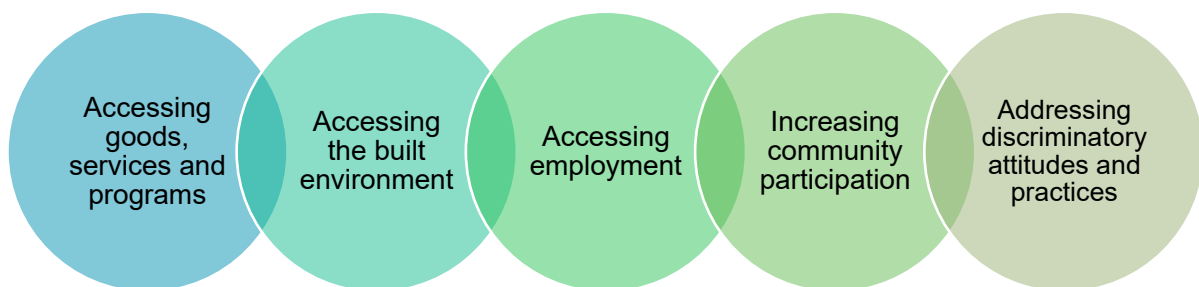
The Disability Action Plan sets out to:

- Promote and protect the rights of people with disability
- Reduce discriminatory attitudes and practices
- Address barriers in the social, built, economic and natural environments where Council has key responsibilities
- Work collaboratively with people with disability, community organisations, businesses and other levels of government to implement the actions contained in this Plan

The Whitehorse Disability Action Plan is informed by community engagement, the Integrated Council Plan and other Council strategic plans, state and federal government legislation and policy directions and best practice research.

As a result of this work Diagram 1 outlines the priority areas identified for the Whitehorse Disability Action Plan.

Diagram 1: Disability Action Plan Priority Areas



Disability in Our Community.

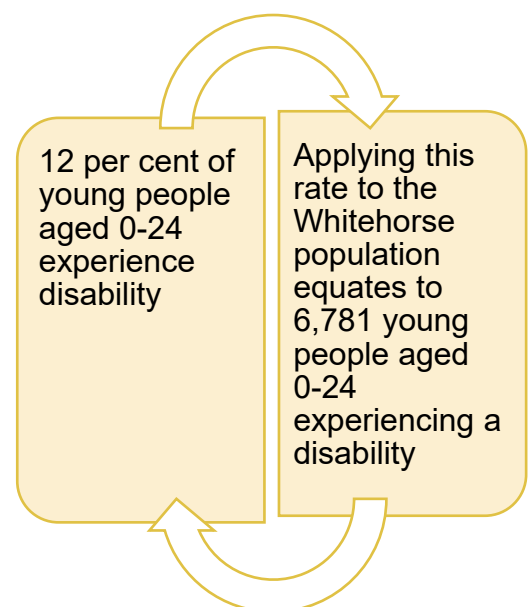
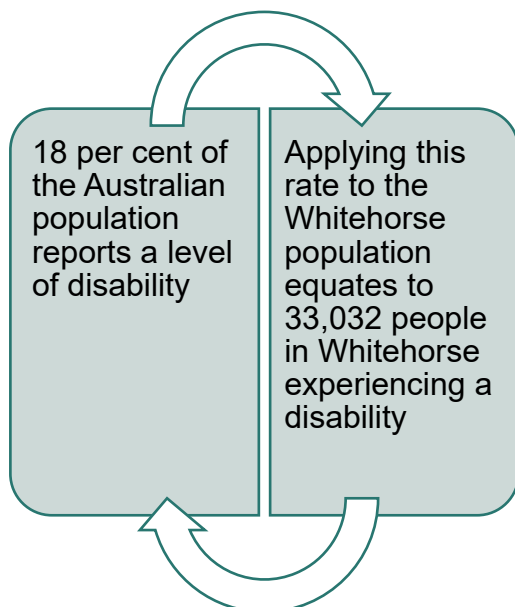
The Whitehorse Disability Action Plan utilises the word 'disability' as an umbrella term to reflect the broadest range of impairments impacting body function and or its structure, that limit activity or restrict participation.

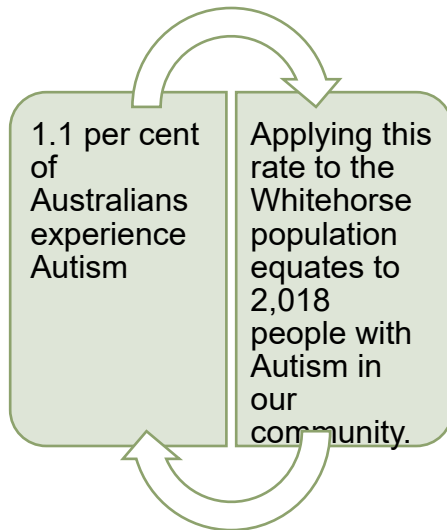
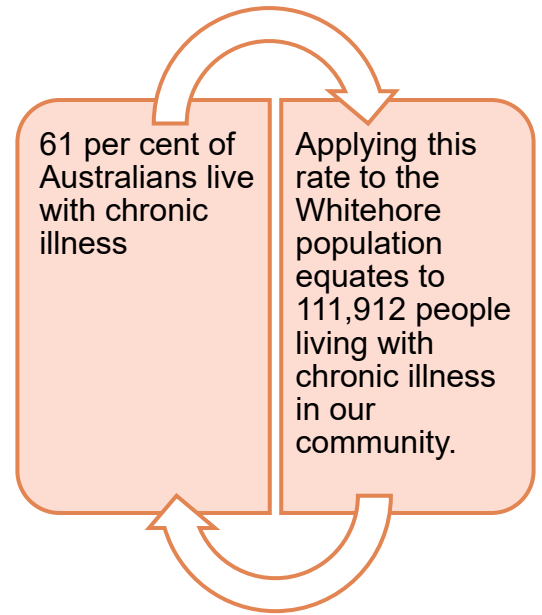
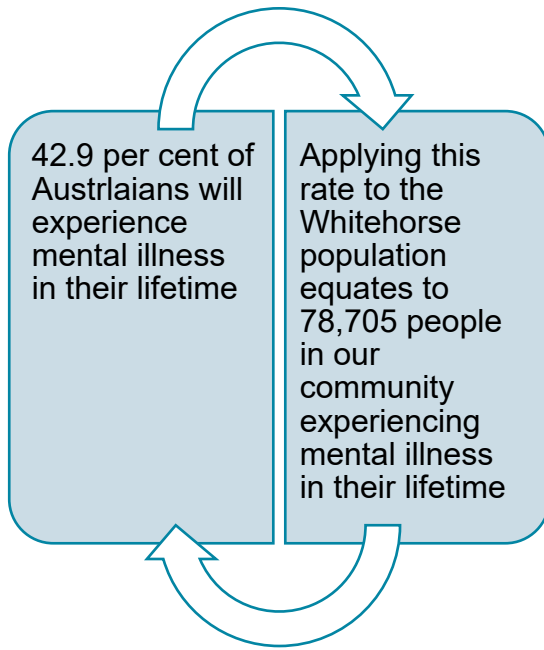
Council acknowledges that disability can occur at any time, prior to or at birth, acquired through accident, illness, trauma or injury.

People with disability may experience a range of physical, psychological, neurodiverse, cognitive, intellectual or sensory impairments. In addition, Council recognises that a diverse range of social, environmental, biological and psychological factors impact an individual's mental health, resulting in experiences of mental illness. Mental ill health can occur in all age groups and may be present where a person experiences other forms of disability and or chronic health conditions.

Council respects that each person's experience of disability is unique and influenced by the type and severity of disability, life experiences and interactions with societies structures. Individual characteristics including age, gender, sexuality, race, and cultural background can influence the experiences, perspectives, priorities and needs of people with disability.

The following diagrams present the prevalence rates taken from the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2022 (ABS, 2024) and estimated the prevalence in our local community based on the March 2026, Whitehorse population of 183,462. More detailed demographic and disability specific data can be found on Council's website and links in the reference section of this Plan.



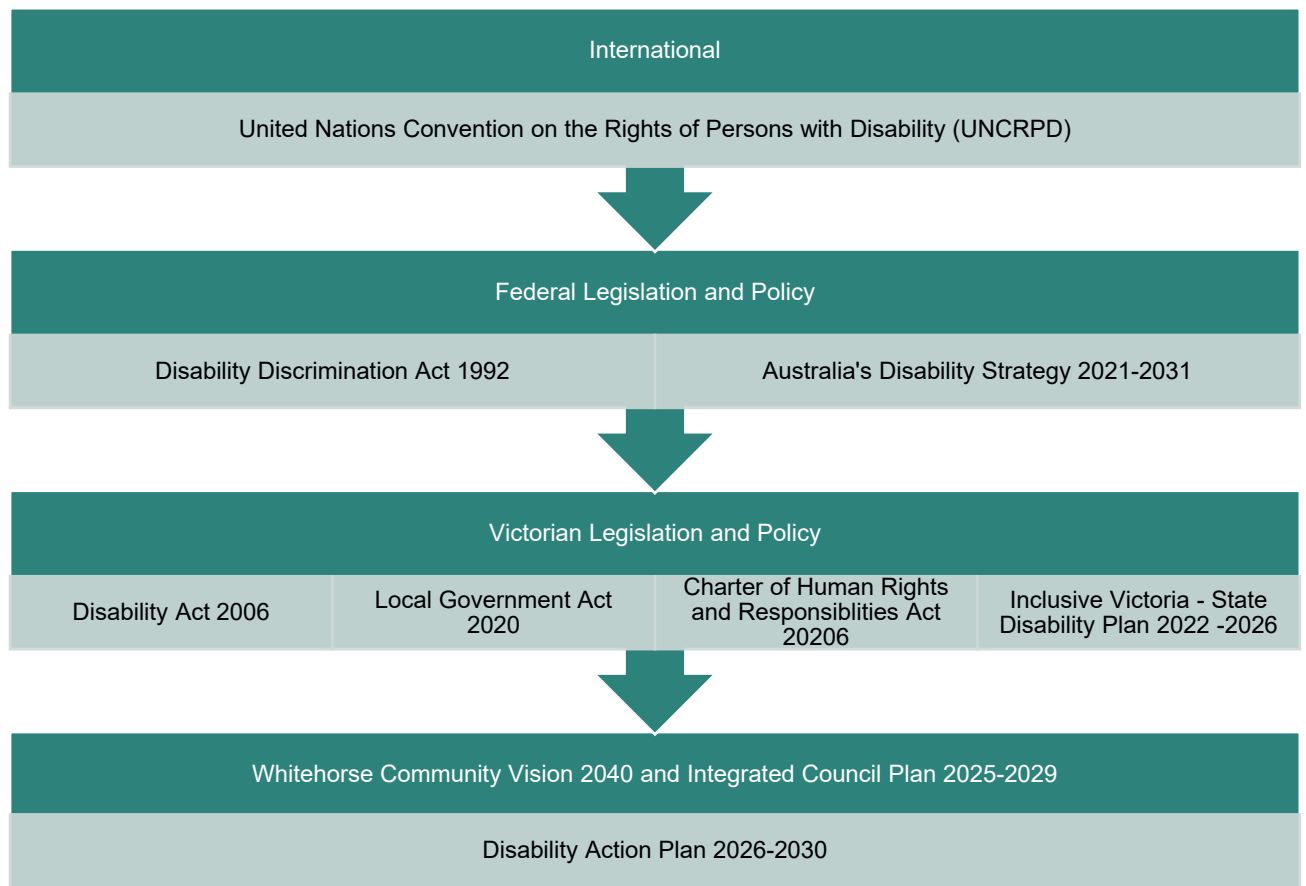


Legislative and Strategic Alignment

The Whitehorse Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 utilises the human rights and social models of disability (see Appendix for detail) to deliver on Council’s legislative commitments and align with Council’s strategic documents.

As depicted in Diagram 2, the Plan responds to Council’s legislated obligations contained in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and Victorian Disability Act 2006 and aligns with the Whitehorse Community Vision and the priorities of the Integrated Council Plan.

Diagram 2: Australia's Disability Legislative and Policy Framework



Community Engagement

Through our engagement opportunities Council sought to understand the local experience of:

- a) Accessing goods, services, and programs.
- b) Accessing the built environment
- c) Community participation
- d) Gaining and maintaining employment
- e) Discriminatory attitudes and practices

To engage people with disability, their families and carers and the broader community in the development of this plan Council we undertook twelve face to face opportunities in September and October 2025. Through this process we engaged with more than three hundred community members. The Disability Action Plan Community Survey was also available during this time; we had forty-seven responses to the survey with the majority of respondents identifying as a person with disability or as having lived experience of mental illness. For more information, please review the Disability Action Plan Community Engagement Report ([hyperlink to be added](#)).

Council's Roles in Delivering the Plan

Council contributes to disability inclusion through a number of complementary roles. These roles reflect the different ways Council can influence change both within the organisation and across the municipality. While Council plays an important leadership role, achieving disability inclusion requires collective action across the community. Through partnerships, collaboration and community engagement, Council will work with organisations, businesses and residents to remove barriers and support participation for people with disability.

Council may act in a number of roles, including:

- **Leader** – setting direction, demonstrating commitment and influencing community attitudes.
- **Funder** – allocating resources to support accessible infrastructure, programs and initiatives.
- **Partner** – collaborating with organisations, community groups and people with disability.
- **Advocate** – promoting inclusion and influencing broader systems and policies.
- **Policy Maker** – embedding accessibility and inclusion in Council policies and planning frameworks.
- **Service provider** – delivering accessible services, programs and infrastructure.
- **Employer** – creating an inclusive and supportive workplace.

Different roles may be relevant to different actions. In some cases, Council will directly deliver change; in others, it will influence, partner, fund or advocate for change.

Developing the Plan

Our approach

This Disability Action Plan is guided by a framework that is focused on delivering positive change informed by the lived experience of people with disability.

The framework recognises that inclusion is achieved not through individual actions alone, but through sustained efforts to remove barriers and strengthen the conditions that enable participation.

The approach ensures the Plan remains focused not only on what Council will do, but on the difference those actions are intended to make.

Theory of change

People with disability continue to experience barriers across the built environment, information, services, employment, community participation and decision-making. Council cannot remove all barriers alone, but it can influence the systems, environments, relationships and practices that shape inclusion.

This Plan assumes that when Council strengthens the *Conditions for Inclusion* across the municipality – including accessible systems, environments,

communication, engagement practices, community attitudes and partnerships – barriers to participation are reduced. Over time, this supports improved access, greater participation, stronger influence in decision-making, and a greater sense of respect, value and belonging for people with disability. This is known as the ‘theory of change’ and is represented in Diagram 3

Diagram 3: Theory of change

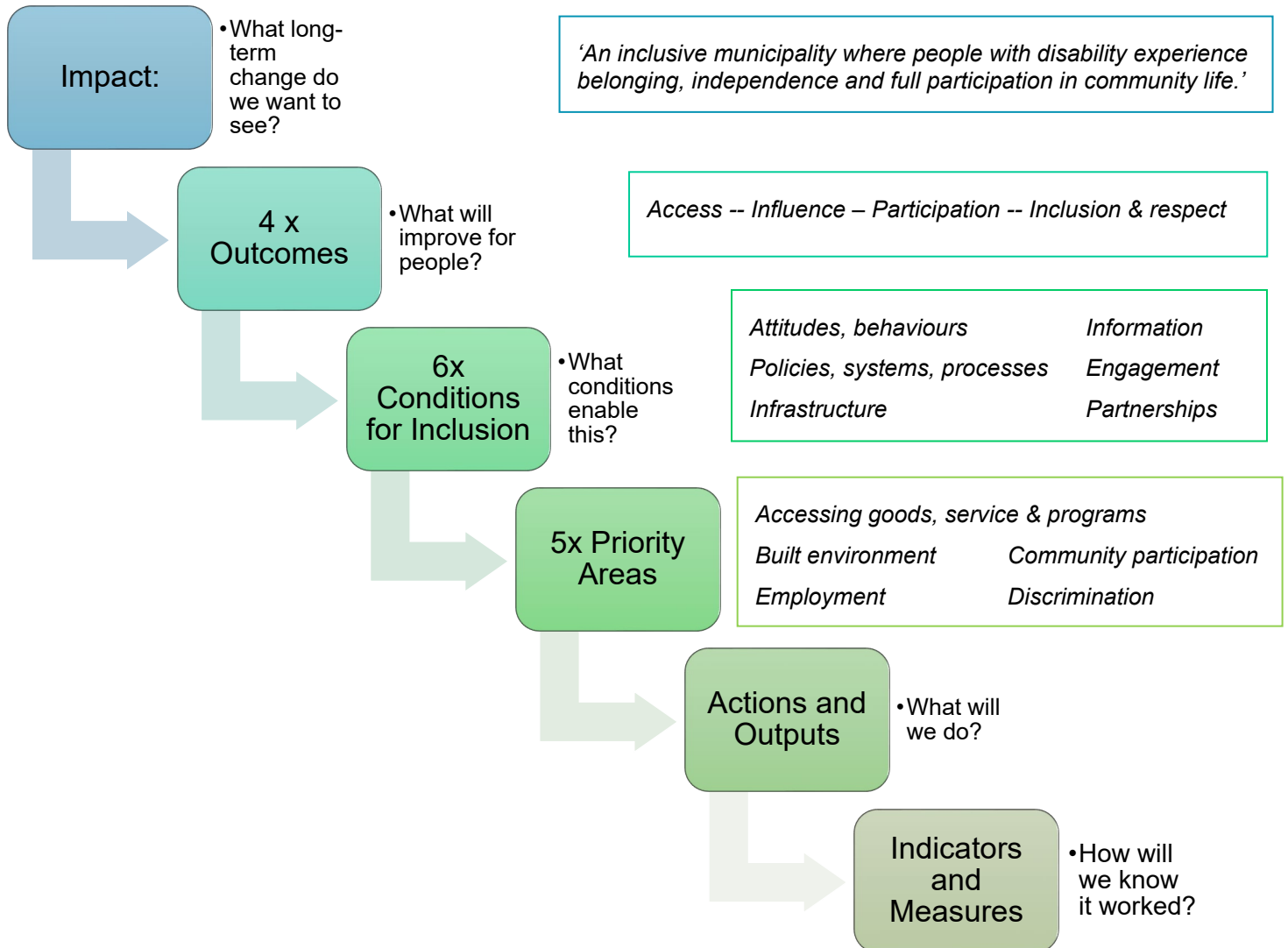


How the Outcomes Framework works

The framework, depicted in Diagram 4, is designed to ensure the Plan delivers on the change Council wants to see, by focusing on four key outcomes that reflect the experiences of people with a disability in the community, guided by six key environmental conditions to enable actions aligned to five key priority areas to be delivered on.

Council will also evaluate the progress in achieving the change through continuous monitoring of relevant indicators and measures applied to each action.

Diagram 4 Outcomes Framework



Impact

At the highest level, the Plan seeks to achieve the following long-term impact:

'An inclusive municipality where people with disability experience belonging, independence and full participation in community life.'

Outcomes for people with disability

The Plan focuses on outcomes that reflect the experiences of people with disability in the community. These outcomes describe the changes that occur when barriers are removed and inclusive practices are embedded across Council and the broader community.

These outcomes include:



Access: People with disability can access places, services and information.



Participation: People with disability can participate fully in community life.



Influence: People with disability influence decisions that affect them



Inclusion & Respect: People with disability feel respected, valued and included in the community

These outcomes guide Council's priorities and help ensure that the Plan remains focused on improving the lived experience of people with disability.

Conditions for inclusion

Achieving these outcomes requires the right conditions to exist across Council and the community. The Plan identifies six Conditions for Inclusion that support disability inclusion across the municipality. These conditions represent the organisational and community environment that enables participation.



Inclusive and Respectful Community – Community attitudes, behaviours and practices promote respect, dignity and inclusion.



Inclusive policies, systems and processes – Council policies, governance and operational systems embed accessibility and disability inclusion.



Accessible infrastructure and environments – Public spaces, buildings, transport and infrastructure are accessible and support safe, independent movement.



Accessible information and communication – Council information, communication channels and services are accessible and usable for people with diverse communication needs.



Meaningful engagement – People with disability are actively involved in shaping Council decisions, programs and services.



Partnerships and collaboration – Council works with organisations, community groups and businesses to strengthen inclusion.

Together, these conditions provide the foundations for a more inclusive municipality.

Priority action areas

Council's actions are organised around five priority areas that reflect legislative requirements and key areas where barriers commonly occur. These priority areas guide the development and implementation of actions within the Plan.

The priority areas are:

1. **Accessing goods, services and programs:** Council services, programs and information are inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs of people with disability.
2. **Accessing the built environment:** Public spaces, buildings and infrastructure are accessible and support safe, independent movement.
3. **Reducing barriers to employment:** Council and the broader community support inclusive employment pathways for people with disability.
4. **Increasing community participation:** People with disability are able to participate in community life, events, leadership and decision-making.
5. **Addressing discriminatory attitudes and practices:** Attitudes, behaviours and communication across Council and the community promote respect, inclusion and equity.

These priority action areas describe the main domains in which Council will deliver action. Actions within each priority area contribute to one or more Conditions for Inclusion and, collectively, to improved outcomes for people with disability.

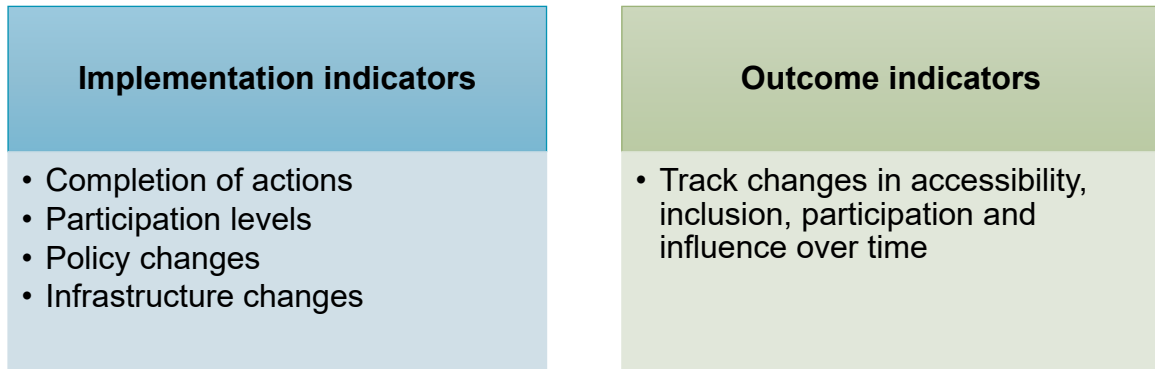
Delivering the Plan

Council actions will implement these priority areas, working collaboratively with people with disability, community organisations and other stakeholders.

To support monitoring and evaluation each action is linked to the outcomes it is expected to influence. Measures will include both implementation indicators and outcome indicators, these are explained further in Diagram 5. Taking this approach

enables Council to understand what is working and identify opportunities for improvement and demonstrate progress towards a more inclusive community.

Diagram 5 Examples of implementation and outcome indicators



Action Plan

In formulating the following actions, consideration was given to:

- Information shared by people with disability and their families and carers, and the broader community.
- Research and available data relating to people with disability.
- Federal and state government legislation and policy directions
- Council's current commitments, resources and operating environment.
- Legislated obligations relating to the Disability Action Plan

The Action Plan section provides an overview of what we heard from the community, and related data insights prior to presenting the actions that Council will take over the coming four years.

Priority Area 1: Addressing barriers to accessing goods, services, and programs.

Even though services exist, people with disability still face barriers to using them. We need to go beyond basic requirements and design services that are easy to use from the start. This includes clearer communication, early support, better support for carers, and actively promoting opportunities so everyone can take part in community life.








What we heard from the community








- When asked to rate the level of agreement with the statement 'I can easily access Council services that meet my needs of the needs of the person with disability I support'. 42.55 per cent agreed with this statement and 6.38 per cent strongly agreed. The remaining respondents neither agreed or disagreed (27.66 per cent), disagreed (27.66 per cent) or strongly disagreed (6.38 per cent).

What research identified

- In Victoria only, 5.4 per cent of children enrolled in preschool in the year before school had a disability, compared with 8.3 per cent of children aged 4-5 years in the community (AIHW, 2025)
- People with disability have significantly lower digital inclusion (61.4) compared with people without disability (73.2), limiting access to information, services and participation (AIHW, 2025).

Actions that Council will undertake:

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
1	Explore the introduction of the Access Key Program across priority Council facilities	27/28	Active Whitehorse Facilities	Leader, Service Provider	Accessible information and communication 	Access 
2	Review and update the Carer Online Resource Hub to provide current and accessible information to families and carers of people with disability	26/27	Positive Ageing	Service Provider	Accessible information and communication 	Access 
3	Conduct a review of Maternal Child Health Services to identify service barriers for families where disability is present	27/28	Maternal Child Health Services	Service Provider	Inclusive policies, systems and processes 	Access 
4	Review and update Maternal Child Health Services website	28/29	Maternal Child Health Services	Leader, Service Provider	Accessible information and	Access 

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
	and printed material using plain language principles				communication 	
5	Develop and promote a database of inclusive sport and recreation opportunities available to people with disability in the community	29/30	Active Whitehorse Participation	Leader, Funder	Accessible Information and Communication 	Access 
6.	Provide inclusive participation programming training to sport and recreation clubs	27/28	Active Whitehorse Participation	Leader	Partnerships and Collaboration 	Access 
7.	Increase the range of inclusive programming at The Round	26/27 and ongoing	The Round	Service Provider	Inclusive policies, systems and processes 	Access 

Priority Area 2: Accessing the Built Environment

Many people with disability still find it hard to access buildings, transport, parks and public spaces. As more people live with disability, including older people and those with hidden disabilities, we need to make all environments safer, easier to use, and more inclusive for everyone.

What we heard from the community

When asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement 'In Whitehorse, I can easily access buildings, spaces, parks, playgrounds facilities etc.' Most people (69.67 per cent) agreed with the statement, a further 8.51 per cent strongly agreed with the statement. Remaining respondents disagreed (19.16 per cent), strongly disagreed (4.28 per cent) or remained neutral (8.51 per cent).







What research identified

- Only 25 per cent of people with disability take part in sport or physical activity once a week (AIHW, 2025)
- People with disability are 60 per cent less likely to meet national physical activity guidelines than people without disabilities (AHIW, 2025)
- Of the 5.2 million people aged 5 years and over with disability living in households, 18% were unable to use any form of public transport, with a further 7% unable to use all available services (SDAC, 2022)






Council's Annual Report 2024-2025 indicates:

- 90 percent or above compliance rate with Council's Road Management Plan audits
- 9.7 per cent of playgrounds in the municipality offer accessible play opportunities.

Actions that Council will undertake:

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
8	Deliver community education programs that increase the safe use of shared pathways	26/27 and ongoing	Transport Engineering	Leader	Accessible Infrastructure and Environments 	Access 
9	Expand the Connect with Confidence Program to assist people with disability use public transport	27/28 and ongoing	Positive Ageing	Leader	Accessible Infrastructure and Environments 	Participation 
10	Continue to review the accessibility of footpaths and kerb ramps to reduce trip hazards	26/27 and ongoing	Engineering Works	Service Provider	Accessible Infrastructure and Environments 	Access 

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
11	Advocate for more accessible car parking in the community	28/29	Transport Engineering	Service Provider	Accessible Infrastructure and Environments 	Access 
12	Advocate for increased accessible transport and transport precincts in the municipality	26/27 and ongoing	Major Transport Project	Advocate	Partnerships and Collaboration 	Participation 
13	Conduct access and egress inspections of Council buildings to identify obstructions along the accessible path of travel	27/28	Facilities Maintenance	Service Provider	Accessible Infrastructure and Environments 	Access 
14	Develop understanding and embed Universal Design Principles in Council's infrastructure projects	27/28 and ongoing	Community Strengthening	Leader	Accessible Infrastructure and Environments	Access 

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
						
15	Increase the accessibility of furniture and equipment in playgrounds, parks and open spaces	27/28	Project Delivery	Funder	Accessible Infrastructure and Environments 	Access 
16	Engage people with disability in the design of key Council buildings and facilities.	26/27 and ongoing	Project Delivery	Policy Maker	Meaningful Engagement 	Influence 

Priority Area 3: Reducing Barriers to Employment

People with disability want to work but often face barriers. We can address this by making hiring practices more inclusive, offering flexible work options, educating employers, and showing leadership in employing people with disability. Access to meaningful work helps reduce inequality and supports independence.

What we heard from the community




- Employer attitudes (35 per cent) were the most reported barrier to employment and or volunteering in the previous 12 months, followed by confusing position descriptions and not knowing how to find job vacancies on Council's website (15 per cent each) and interviews not being held in accessible spaces (10 per cent).

What research identified

- Unemployment for people with disability (7.5%) in 2022 was more than twice the rate for people without disability (3.1%). For people with a profound or severe limitation the unemployment rate increases to 10.7% (SDAC, 2022)
- 88% of people employed people with disability do not require additional support from their employer. (AIHW, 2025)
- Graduates with disability take 61.5% longer to gain full time employment than other graduates (AIHW, 2024a)

Actions that Council will undertake:

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
17	Deliver training and awareness initiatives to strengthen Council people leaders understanding of the benefits of employing people with disability.	26/27	People and Culture	Leader	Inclusive and Respectful Community 	Inclusion and Respect 
18	Promote the benefits of employing people with disability to local businesses through Councils business networks and communication channels.	26/27 ongoing	Investment & Economic Development	Leader	Partnerships and collaboration 	Participation 
19	Undertake a review of progress against the Job Access National Disability Recruitment Process Review.	27/28	People and Culture	Leader	Inclusive policies, systems and processes. 	Participation 

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
20	Continue to offer work experience and tertiary placement opportunities to students with disabilities.	26/27 Ongoing	Youth Services	Policy Maker	Inclusive policies, systems and processes. 	Inclusion and Respect 
21	Continue to offer apprenticeships, traineeships and internships to people with disability.	26/27 Ongoing	People and Culture	Policy Maker	Inclusive policies, systems and processes. 	Inclusion and Respect 
22	Review Council's Social Enterprise Policy and the social impacts achieved by social enterprises operating in Council buildings	27/28	Community Strengthening	Policy Maker	Inclusive policies, systems, and processes 	Inclusion and Respect 

Priority Area 4: Increasing Community Participation

Feeling included depends on things like transport, accessible places, inclusive programs and clear information. While some people with disability feel included, others especially those with higher support needs, still face barriers. We need to work with people with disability to design better opportunities, provide clear information, and create a strong sense of belonging for all.









What we heard from the community





- When asked to rate their agreement with the statement 'I feel included in community life in Whitehorse', 51.1 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement, a further 11.11 per cent strongly agreed. The remaining respondents remained neutral (24.44 per cent) or disagreed (13.33 percent) with the statement. No respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

What research identified

- Only 25 per cent of people with disability take part in sport or physical activity once a week. People with disability are 60 per cent less likely to meet national physical activity guidelines than people without disabilities (AIHW, 2025).
- 1 in 5 (19%) people with disability aged 15–64 experience social isolation (lack of social contact with others), compared with 9.5% without disability (SDAC, 2022).
- In 2022, 69% of males and 73% of females with disability participated in social activities. Less people with severe or profound disability (65%) participated in social activities compared with 71% of people with other disability status (SDAC, 2022).

Actions that Council will undertake

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
23	Engage people with disability and advocacy groups in the design, review and evaluation of Councils leisure and recreation opportunities	27/28 and ongoing	Active Whitehorse Facilities	Service Provider	Meaningful Engagement 	Influence 
24	Engage young people with disability in Council youth service programs	26/27 ongoing	Youth Services	Service Provider	Meaningful Engagement 	Influence 
25	Reflect the voices of children and young people with disability in Council engagement opportunities	26/27 ongoing	Community Engagement	Policy Maker	Meaningful Engagement 	Influence 
26	Deliver community activations that are accessible to people with disability	26/27 ongoing	Investment & Economic Development	Service Provider	Inclusive and Respectful Community 	Inclusion and Respect 

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
27	Develop a communication plan with associated methods and channels to promote Council programs, events, and services to people with disability.	26/27	Communication, Advocacy and Investment	Service Provider	Accessible Information and Communication 	Participation 
28	Include accessibility features such as accessible parking and viewing areas on promotional material and website information	28/29	Community Strengthening	Policy Maker	Accessible Information and Communication 	Participation 

Priority Area 5: Addressing Discriminatory Attitudes and Practices





Negative attitudes and discrimination still prevent many people with disability from taking part in everyday life. Some groups, including young people, women and LGBTIQ+ people with disability, are affected more than others. To create change, we need education, awareness, and initiatives led by people with disability to promote respect, inclusion and equal rights.

What we heard from the community

- Respondents were asked to rate the frequency of their experiences in relation to the following three statements:
 - I have experienced negative or discriminatory attitudes or practices because of my disability.
 - I have witnessed negative or discriminatory attitudes or practices towards someone else because of disability.
 - As a person with a disability or supporting a person with a disability, community activities or settings have been avoided due to the attitudes and behaviours of others.
- When responding to the three statements, the majority of respondents were more likely to sometimes experience (40.91 per cent) or witness (51.11 per cent) negative or discriminatory attitudes and practices because of disability or avoid settings due to the attitudes and behaviours of others (47.73 per cent). A smaller percentage of respondents regularly or always experienced negative or discriminatory attitudes and practices (18.18 per cent and 2.27 per cent respectively), witnessed negative or discriminatory attitudes and practices (15.56 per cent and 4.44 per cent) and avoided settings due to the attitudes and behaviours of others (9.09 per cent and 2.27 per cent). Respondents also indicated that they have never experienced (38.64 per cent) or witnessed (28.80 per cent) negative or discriminatory attitudes and practices because of disability or avoided settings due to the attitudes and behaviours of others (40.91 per cent).

What research identified

- In Victoria, Whitehorse is ranked 5th highest for dementia prevalence. In 2024, 3,524 Whitehorse residents were living with dementia (Dementia Australia).
- One in ten (9.9 per cent) of people with disability aged 15 years and over experienced discrimination, the experience of discrimination increased to one in five (19 per cent) of people with profound or severe limitation (SDAC, 2022)

	Action	Timeframe	Lead Team	Council Role	Condition for Inclusion	Outcome area
29	Develop a program of training to provide a range of disability awareness training to Council Officers including but not limited disabilities, psychosocial disability and dementia awareness	26/27 and ongoing	People and Culture	Leader	Accessible Information and Communication 	Inclusion and Respect 
30	Continue to build and strengthen Council's approach to accessible communication	27/28	Community Strengthening	Leader	Accessible Information and Communication 	Access 
31	Promote disability awareness through Days of Significance events and campaigns	26/27 and ongoing	Community Strengthening	Leader	Inclusive and Respectful Community 	Inclusion and Respect 

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024) Disability Ageing and Carers Australia: Summary of Findings, reference period 2022, released 4 July 2024. [Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers \(ABS, 2024\)](#)

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Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. [CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006](#)

Victorian Disability Act 2006 [DISABILITY ACT 2006](#)

Victorian Local Government Act 2020 [LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020](#)

Whitehorse Community Vision [Community Vision 2040 | Whitehorse City Council](#)

Whitehorse Disability Action Plan – Community Engagement Report

Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan [Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 | Whitehorse City Council](#)

Appendix

A Human Rights Approach

Disability Action Plans are positioned within the Australian and Victorian disability legislation and policy frameworks, with each level of government seeking to address Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD). In Victoria, the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 provides an additional human rights lens for the development and implementation of Council's disability action plan. The Disability Action Plan in taking a rights based approach utilises the Human Rights Model and the Social Model of Disability, we are also seeking to embed universal design principles in our practices.

Human Rights Model of Disability

A human rights model of disability acknowledges a person's impairment as part of human diversity, The model also acknowledges people with disability need equitable support, even after societal barriers have been addressed, so people with disability can enjoy their human rights on an equitable basis with other members of the community.

Social Model of Disability

Embedded in the UNCRPD, the social model of disability recognises that attitudes, practices and structures can be disabling and act as barriers preventing people from fulfilling their potential and exercising their rights as equal members of the community. The Whitehorse Disability Action Plan focuses on fostering the inclusion and participation of people with disability in our community by addressing the barriers experienced by people with disability.

Universal Design

Universal Design requires the design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible (UNCRPD).

Legislative Requirements and Strategic Alignment

The Disability Action Plan 2026-2030 aligns with the Whitehorse Community Vision 2040 and the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029.

Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision

In 2020, utilising a deliberative and a broad community engagement process the Whitehorse 2040 Community Vision was developed. The Community Vision themes are:

- Diverse and Inclusive Community
- Movement and Public Spaces
- Innovation and Creativity

- Employment, Education and Skill Development
- Sustainable Climate and Environmental Care
- Whitehorse is an Empowered, Collaborative Community
- Health and Wellbeing

Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029

The Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 is a roadmap for the future that guides Council's program of work until 2029.

To ensure that community health and wellbeing is a key part of our strategic approach the Whitehorse Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is for the first time integrated into the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan.

Through the implementation of the Integrated Council Plan, we aim to create a city where everyone can live, work, learn and thrive.

The Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan contains the following five strategic directions: Community, Built; Economy; Natural and Governance.

Whilst local government has a focus on the priorities of the local community, it also has obligations to be responsive to a broad range of federal and state legislation and policy directions (Local Government Act 2020). The key legislation guiding the development of the Whitehorse Disability Action Plan are the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Victorian Disability Act 2006.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) articulates that people with disability have the same fundamental rights as all people in the community. The DDA aims to eliminate discrimination towards people with disability across a range of life areas including work, accommodation, education, employment, access to premises, clubs and sports and in the provision of goods facilities, services, land and existing laws and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs. Section 61 of the DDA articulates that action plans must seek to address discrimination through the development of policies and programs, and set achievable goals and targets, and a means of evaluating policies, programs and outcomes of the disability action plan.

Victorian Disability Act 2006

Section 38 of the Victorian Disability Act 2006 requires all public bodies including local governments to develop a disability action plan that addresses the following four key areas:

- a) Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities.
- b) Reducing barriers to persons with disability obtaining and maintaining employment.
- c) Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability.
- d) Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with disability.

e) Victorian Carers Recognition Act 2012

The Disability Action Plan also aligns with the objectives of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 -2031 and Inclusive Victoria, State Disability Plan 2022-2026.

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the Charter) articulate twenty rights that protect the values of freedom, respect, equality and dignity. The Charter applies to all people in Victoria. The Charter requires that public authorities such as Council to act consistently with the articulated rights and give consideration to these rights when making decisions.