

## **FINAL REPORT - EQUITY, ACCESS, AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2013 - 2023**

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Report Author: Executive Officer Health and Wellbeing  
Responsible Officer: Director Communities  
Ward(s) affected: All Wards;

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### **SUMMARY**

Council's Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023 (The Strategy) meets Council's legislative obligations under the Victorian Disability Act (2006) and requirements for a Disability Action Plan. The Strategy concluded in 2023, with the next iteration currently being developed.

This report highlights the achievements of Council over the past ten years of the outgoing Strategy and to share the achievements of Disability Advisory Committee in 2023. These are included as attachments to this report:

- Attachment One: Final Report: Yarra Ranges Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013 - 2023 (Disability Action Plan).
- Attachment Two: Summary Report: Yarra Ranges Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013 - 2023 (Disability Action Plan).
- Attachment Three: Disability Advisory Committee Achievements 2023.

Council has completed many projects that contribute to access, equity, and inclusion across the Yarra Ranges. It should be noted that this report does not feature all of them.

The endorsed reports will be shared with community to promote the Strategy's success and to better align internal and external advisory functions and annual reporting functions for Council.

## RECOMMENDATION

***That Council endorse the Yarra Ranges Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013 - 2023 Final Report, Summary Report and Disability Advisory Committee Achievements 2023.***

## RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council endorsed Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013 – 2023 (Item 7.7, 13 May 2014).

Council endorsed appointment of Disability Advisory Committee Members 2022–2026, (Item 10.6, 20 September 2022).

## DISCUSSION

### ***Purpose and Background***

Council has a responsibility under the Victorian Disability Act (2006) to develop and maintain a Disability Action Plan. Council's Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013 – 2023 (Disability Action Plan) expired in 2023, the next iteration is being developed.

The Final Report (Attachment One) shares examples of completed projects and initiatives implemented throughout the lifecycle of the outgoing Strategy, as well as key reflections. A wide range of innovative projects have been undertaken, though not all are featured in this report. In addition, a Summary Report (Attachment Two) has been developed to provide a snapshot view of the achievements of the outgoing Strategy and to ensure accessibility of Council reporting for community. The Disability Advisory Committee Highlights 2023 (Attachment Three) is included to align Council Strategy with key Advisory Committee functions and to streamline annual reporting processes for Council.

All reports will be shared with community via Council's website to promote and celebrate the Strategy's success in advancing disability access, equity, and inclusion across the Yarra Ranges.

### ***Options considered***

Only one option was considered given the cessation of The Strategy.

### ***Recommended option and justification***

For Council to endorse the achievements of the outgoing Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013 – 2023 (Disability Action Plan), including Attachments One – Three.

To ensure the final reports of the outgoing Strategy are published and are in an accessible format for community.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

The development of the Final Report and Summary Report has been completed using existing resourcing and provisions from existing operational budgets.

A small portion of funding for printing and distribution of the final reports has been factored into the project scope of developing the next iteration of Disability Action Plan.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

### ***Connected and Healthy Communities***

The Strategy promotes communities which are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive, and socially well connected, with quality services accessible to everyone.

### ***Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places***

The Strategy promotes advancement in the realisation of quality facilities and infrastructure that meets current and future needs of people with a disability.

### ***High Performing Organisation***

An innovative, responsive organisation that listens to people with disability and delivers quality, value for money services to our community.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

### ***International***

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### ***National***

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992

### ***State***

Victorian Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft 2022

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

Gender Equality Act 2020

## **Gender Impact Assessment**

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) on the Summary Report is not required. A GIA has been conducted on the development of the next Disability Action Plan for Council.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

This report does not have economic implications.

### ***Social Implications***

This report illustrates examples of Council's efforts in advancing disability access, equity, and inclusion for people with disability. This work includes an understanding of the determinants of health including education, employment, housing, economic participation, transport, gender, the environment, social inclusion, violence, health literacy and power over decision making. This is included in the Final Report (Attachment One).

### ***Environmental Implications***

In the context of climate change, people with disability, particularly women are often among those most adversely affected in an emergency, sustaining disproportionately higher rates of morbidity and mortality, and at the same time being among those least able to have access to emergency support. Meaningful participation, inclusion, and leadership of people with disability and their unpaid carers, in disaster response planning and evacuations is demonstrated in the Final Report (Attachment One).

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Yarra Ranges Disability Advisory Committee members are key contributors providing input into, guiding implementation, and bringing lived experience to decision making across all aspects of Council business. This is summarised in the Disability Advisory Committee Achievements 2023 (Attachment Three). They have also been consulted on the content of both the Final Report (Attachment One) and Summary Report (Attachment Two).

Following advice on Attachments One –Three, it is intended that the endorsed reports will be distributed to people with a disability, unpaid carers, service providers and will be published on Council's website in both written and digital formats.

Council is currently developing the next Disability Action Plan and has already completed one phase of community consultation to inform this. It is anticipated that following the publication of Attachments One –Three, this will encourage further interest from community members who will have the option to participate in a second phase of consultation later this year.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The membership of three key functions for Council has informed the content and design of the Final Report (Attachment One) and Summary Report (Attachment Two). They are:

- Access and Equity Reference Group
- Project Reference Group
- Disability Advisory Committee.

Furthermore, interviews with key staff, stakeholders and previous Disability Advisory Committee members have also informed the content of this report.

The development of the next Disability Action Plan will build upon the success of the outgoing Strategy and use key learnings from community consultation to inform improved outcomes.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Reporting on the outgoing Strategy provides an opportunity for Council to celebrate success and to streamline reporting processes. It is anticipated that annual reporting will increase transparency for community. This has been a learning of the outgoing Strategy as the impact of the Strategy is largely undocumented and has not regularly been reflected or reported on. The next Disability Action Plan will deliver a strengthened governance structure and streamlined reporting processes.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Final Report – Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023
2. Summary Report - Equity, Access, and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023
3. Disability Advisory Committee Achievements 2023