

3.5 Draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek the Services Delegated Committee's endorsement of the draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28 (the draft Plan, **Attachment 1**) for public exhibition between 12 September and 10 October 2023.

Background

An estimated 20,500 people in Boroondara (or 11.4% of the population) live with a disability compared to 17.7% in Australia (source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, 2018). At the 2021 Census, 7,516 Boroondara residents required assistance with core activities due to a severe or profound disability, representing 4.5% of the Boroondara population compared to 5.8% of residents across Australia.

The draft Plan is the City of Boroondara's sixth disability action plan and demonstrates Council's continued commitment to making our City more inclusive and accessible for people with disability.

The draft Plan replaces the Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22, which expired at the end of 2022. Under the Victorian *Disability Act 2006* Council is required to develop a disability action plan to reduce barriers and improve access and inclusion for people with disability.

Key Issues

The draft Plan (**Attachment 1**) has been informed by extensive research and community consultation with people with disability, carers, families, service providers, and community organisations.

The purpose of the draft Plan is to continue to promote equality and reduce, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disability within the municipality.

The draft Plan identifies five themes emerging from the research and consultation. They are:

- Theme 1 - Celebration and belonging
- Theme 2 - Access and safety
- Theme 3 - Inclusive community
- Theme 4 - Employment and volunteer opportunities
- Theme 5 - Participation in decision-making.

Each theme has a strategic objective outlining what the community wants Council to achieve through the implementation of the draft Plan. The strategic objectives are aspirational, and Council will work towards achieving them, recognising this will be an ongoing journey beyond the life of this draft Plan and requires input from other levels of government, organisations and the community.

The draft Plan provides a four-year vision and a two-year implementation plan for delivering actions, which is included in Appendix 1 of the draft Plan. The implementation plan includes 15 actions, which will be delivered over the first two years of the draft Plan. A new implementation plan will be developed in 2026. This

will ensure the actions stay relevant and respond to current and emerging issues and opportunities.

An evaluation plan will be developed with feedback and advice from the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee. The evaluation plan will monitor and assess progress towards realising the outcomes and impacts of the actions.

Next Steps

Once the draft Plan is endorsed by Council, it will be presented for public exhibition. Subject to Council endorsement, anticipated dates for this are from 12 September to 10 October 2023. During this time the community will be able to make comments on the draft Plan, which will be considered and changes incorporated where relevant before the draft Plan is presented to Council for adoption in late 2023.

Officers' recommendation

That the Services Delegated Committee resolve to endorse the draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28 (**Attachment 1**) for public exhibition from 12 September to 10 October 2023.

Responsible director: Kate McCaughey, Director Community Support

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek the Services Delegated Committee's endorsement of the draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28 (the draft Plan, **Attachment 1**) for public exhibition between 12 September and 10 October 2023.

2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

The Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 (BCP) is Council's key strategic document. It includes the Community Vision, four-year Council Plan and four-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and is structured around seven priority themes.

The draft Plan supports the community vision as outlined in the BCP for 'a sustainable and inclusive community'. The draft Plan aligns with strategies under the seven priority themes of the BCP. It is informed by the BCP wellbeing commitment to work together with our community and local organisations to ensure health and wellbeing is at the centre of everything we do. The following three health priorities are relevant to the draft Plan:

- improving mental wellbeing and social connection
- increasing active living
- preventing all forms of violence.

The draft Plan plays an important role in guiding the work across Council to ensure people with disability are considered in the planning, design and delivery of Council facilities, services, programs, activities and workforce.

3. Background

3.1 Profile

People with disability are diverse. Culture, language, sexuality, age, ability, socioeconomic status, and life experiences differ amongst people with disability. People's experience of disability also differs, as disability can be visible, invisible, permanent, episodic, from birth or happen at any point during someone's life.

In the City of Boroondara, it is estimated that around 20,500 people, or 11.4% of the Boroondara population have disability based on the findings from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018 Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey. This is lower than the Australian estimate of 17.7% of Australians having disability. At the 2021 Census, 7,516 Boroondara residents required assistance with core activities due to a severe or profound disability, representing 4.5% of the Boroondara population compared to 5.8% of residents across Australia.

In Boroondara, there are 2,395 active participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The most common primary disabilities of NDIS participants within the municipality include:

- autism (849)
- psychosocial disability (310)
- intellectual disability (305)
- developmental delay (188).

The most common age groups represented as active NDIS participants in Boroondara are:

- 7 to 14 years (591)
- 55 to 64 years (325)
- 0 to 6 years (298)
- 45 to 54 years (252).

3.2 Legislative context

The Victorian *Disability Act 2006* requires public sector bodies, including councils, to prepare a disability action plan for the purpose of:

- a) reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- b) reducing barriers to persons with a 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 a disability.

The *Disability Act 2006* also states that Council must report on the implementation of its Disability Action Plan in its Annual Report.

3.3 Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22

The Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22, Council's fifth disability action plan, concluded at the end of 2022 and will be replaced by the draft Plan. Some of the key achievements of the Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22 include:

- Twenty-seven grants valued at \$180,259 were awarded through the Boroondara Annual Community Strengthening Grants and Triennial Operational Grants for projects and programs to support disability access and inclusion.
- Two Changing Places facilities were built in Canterbury Community Precinct and Victoria Park Regional Playground. Changing Places are fully accessible toilets with hoists. The Canterbury Community Precinct facility was funded by a grant from the Victorian Government.
- Victoria Park Regional Playground was redeveloped to offer a genuinely inclusive experience.
- The Y (formerly known as the YMCA), in partnership with Disability Sport and Recreation and Council, was successful in receiving an AAA Grant for over \$130,000 from the Victorian Government to deliver the Disability Sport and Recreation Hub. The project delivered a disability sports and recreation hub at Boroondara Sports Complex in December 2022.
- Ensuring the design of the Kew Recreation Centre is suitable for all ages, abilities, and caters to a wide range of health and wellbeing needs. The design also incorporates the Boroondara Stroke Support Hub.
- Planned for the integration of disability services in the Canterbury Community Precinct.
- The Y held an All Abilities Come and Try event at Boroondara Sports Complex on 10 April 2022. This event showcased six accessible sports, included 11 information stands, with around 250 people attending.
- The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC) hosted the Volunteering and Disability Discussion Forum in 2022. The forum was part

- of BVRC's focus on building the capacity of member organisations to break down barriers to volunteering.
- In 2022, the BVRC released a video resource for leaders of volunteers, to raise awareness of the barriers people with disability face when volunteering.
 - The BVRC has received Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) 2022-2026 funding through Volunteering Victoria as part of a consortium with Eastern Volunteers to develop a four-year strategy to reduce barriers to volunteering opportunities for three priority groups including people with disability.
 - Developing Access Keys, which provide access information and a visual story about a location and experience for all Boroondara Leisure and Aquatic Facilities, Kew Traffic School and the Boroondara Youth Hub.
 - Boroondara Arts presented 'Through Our Eyes' by QArt Studio, a community exhibition in 2022. The QArt Studio is a professionally operated art studio in Kew. Within the studio, artists with intellectual disabilities are given support by qualified managers to achieve the creative vision for their artworks and designs.
 - Vision Australia completed usability testing of City of Boroondara's website in early 2023. The Digital team is currently actioning recommendations from the accessibility audit provided by Vision Australia.

The learnings and achievements of the previous Plan have informed the development of the draft Plan. The draft Plan will build on the work undertaken in the previous Plan and support the whole-of-organisation approach by making sure accountability and leadership are embedded across Council.

4. Outline of key issues/options

The draft Plan has been developed to demonstrate Council's continuing commitment to improving access and inclusion for people with disability in Boroondara and recognises that this is an ongoing journey.

The draft Plan responds to what Council heard was important to our community during the community consultation and meets Council's legislative requirements under the Victorian *Disability Act 2006*.

The draft Plan provides a four-year vision and a two-year implementation plan for delivering actions. A new implementation plan will be developed in 2026. This will ensure the actions stay relevant and respond to current and emerging issues and opportunities. As outlined below, a detailed evaluation plan will also be developed to measure the outcomes and impact of the draft Plan.

4.1 Consultation and research

The development of the draft Plan was informed by five stages of research and consultation, which are summarised in section 5 below and outlined in detail in **Attachment 2** of this report.

Outlined below is an overview of the name, vision and purpose, themes and strategic objectives of the draft Plan.

4.2 Name of the draft Plan

Members of the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee (CDAC) were consulted on the name of the draft Plan. Based on the outcomes of this, the name of the draft Plan has been changed from the Boroondara Disability Action Plan to the Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. This name was preferred as it incorporates the goal of the draft Plan, which is to improve access and inclusion for people with disability.

4.3 Vision and purpose of the draft Plan

The vision of the draft Plan is:

‘An inclusive and accessible Boroondara where people with disability participate in community life, have equal opportunities, and feel proud of who they are.’

The draft Plan’s purpose is to continue to promote equality and reduce, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disability. The draft Plan recognises this can only be achieved by working with and listening to people with disability.

The draft Plan is guided by six principles that are informed by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*. The principles are:

- disability is a natural aspect of human diversity
- everyone has equal access, rights and opportunities
- people with disability are free to make their own choices and be respected for who they are
- people with disability are experts in their own lives and need to be involved in decision-making that impacts them
- people with disability have the right to be included in society as anybody else
- barriers to disability inclusion can be impacted by intersectionality. Intersectionality is when different aspects of a person’s identity such as disability, race, class, gender, and sexual identity can compound discrimination and disadvantage.

4.4 Themes and strategic objectives

As shown in Table 1 below, five themes were identified through the analysis of the research and community consultation, which informed the development of the draft Plan. Strategic objectives were developed for each theme and reflects what the community told us they want achieved for our City. The strategic objectives reflect the aspirations of our community and Council is committed to working towards realising these strategic objectives. We recognise that the journey to achieve them will take longer than the life of the draft Plan and will be an ongoing process for Council. However, Council cannot do this alone - it will require effort and input from other tiers of government, organisations and the community.

Table 1: Description of themes and strategic objectives

Themes	Strategic objectives
Theme 1: Celebration and belonging	People with disability feel accepted by the community and can feel proud of their identity.
Theme 2: Access and safety	Boroondara’s places and spaces are safe and easy to access and use for people with disability.

Themes	Strategic objectives
Theme 3: Inclusive community	Boroondara is inclusive and people with disability can participate in social and community life.
Theme 4: Employment and volunteer opportunities	There are employment and volunteer opportunities for people with disability in Boroondara.
Theme 5: Participation in decision-making	People with disability have opportunities to participate in decision-making that affects their lives.

4.5 The Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan, which is Appendix 1 in the draft Plan (**Attachment 1**) outlines 15 actions that will be implemented over the first two years of the draft Plan. The actions were developed in response to the issues raised during the consultation, analysis of research and discussions with staff across Council.

The wide range of departments responsible for implementing actions in the draft Plan will ensure the whole-of-Council approach continues to improve access and inclusion for people with disability in Boroondara.

Key actions include:

- Action 1: Engage people with disability including from diverse backgrounds and community organisations to hold a minimum of two community activities or events annually to recognise/celebrate dates of significance to people with disability (e.g., International Day of People with Disability).
- Action 2: Consult with people with disability to develop and deliver a communication campaign that increases the community's understanding of disability and addresses discrimination towards people with disability (also known as ableism).
- Action 5: Continue to improve accessibility on paths of travel within parks and open spaces as well as streets and roads through maintaining and upgrading features such as accessible parking, tactile indicators, kerb access, signage, line markings, and infrastructure such as seating.
- Action 10: Promote the benefits of being accessible and inclusive for people with disability to volunteer organisations.
- Action 11: Facilitate the delivery of a disability inclusive employment pilot program with relevant partners, which places local people with disability into meaningful employment with local businesses.
- Action 13: Identify a pilot project to co-design with people with disability and organisations to inform Council's approach to co-designing projects.

A new implementation plan will be developed for the last two years of the draft Plan to ensure the actions remain relevant and respond to new and emerging issues.

5. Consultation/communication

As noted above in section 4, the draft Plan was informed by an extensive communication and engagement plan to ensure we heard from people with disability, their families, carers, advocates, support organisations, specialist schools and businesses with links to the disability sector. Meetings were also held with officers from departments across Council to inform them about the

findings of the community consultation and to develop actions for the draft Plan. In total, Council analysed 350 responses to inform the development of the draft Plan. This included hearing from 211 people through the community consultation for the development of this draft Plan and analysing 139 responses related specifically to disability access and inclusion from the community consultation in late 2020 to early 2021 for the renewal of the Boroondara Community Plan.

Feedback to inform the development of the draft Plan was also sought from CDAC at the following four meetings: 15 June 2022, 14 September 2022, 15 February 2023 and 31 May 2023. Individual CDAC members also submitted feedback following the May 2023 meeting.

Outlined in Table 2 below is an overview of the key stages of consultation and research. Further detail is provided in **Attachment 2** to this report.

Table 2: Summary of draft Plan's research and consultation stages

Stage	Description
Stage 1	Evaluation of Disability Action Plan 2018-22 and other relevant Council plans, policies and strategies.
Stage 2	Research and benchmarking of relevant data, research, reports, plans and legislation.
Stage 3	Community and service provider consultation including surveys (available in Easy Read, hard copy and online) and in-depth interviews.
Stage 4	Workshops with community members and organisations (including consultation with CDAC).
Stage 5	Draft Plan development.

Once the draft Plan has been endorsed by the Services Delegated Committee, it will be placed on public exhibition from 12 September to 10 October 2023. This includes being available for viewing online on Council's Engage page and in hard copy format in our libraries and the customer service centre. The opportunity to comment on the draft Plan will be widely promoted through Council's communications channels and networks. Community members and organisations will be invited to provide written, audio or video submissions on the draft Plan via the Engage page on Council's website. An Easy Read version of the draft Plan will also be promoted to the community via Engage and key networks for feedback during this period.

The public exhibition period will provide Council with an opportunity to inform the community about the draft Plan and to seek general feedback on the draft Plan for consideration before it is finalised. Feedback from the public exhibition on the draft Plan will be reviewed and where relevant changes will be incorporated into the final draft Plan before being presented to Council for adoption in late 2023. A final meeting with CDAC about the community feedback and the final draft will also be part of this process.

6. Financial and resource implications

The preparation of the draft Plan was undertaken within the operational budget of the Community Planning and Development Department. The actions in the implementation plan in Appendix 1 of **Attachment 1** will be undertaken within the operational budget or capital works budget of the relevant departments.

Grant opportunities may be sought for actions 2 and 13 to enhance what can be delivered.

7. Governance issues

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have a general or material conflict of interest requiring disclosure under chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Boroondara City Council.

The recommendation contained in this report is compatible with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006, as it does not raise any human rights issues. It is consistent with the Charter's objective to improve service quality and design, particularly for people with disability within our community.

8. Social and environmental issues

Improving access and inclusion for people with disability is essential for ensuring people with disability can participate fully in community life. Council recognises that making Boroondara more accessible and inclusive for people with disability improves access for everyone and will have economic, social and health benefits for all community members. The draft Plan will build on the work across Council under the previous Disability Action Plan and continue to guide work across Council to improve access and reduce barriers to participation in all aspects of Boroondara community life.

9. Evaluation and review

An evaluation plan will be developed with feedback and advice from CDAC to assess progress towards the outcomes and impacts of the actions. The actions in the draft Plan will be monitored through Council's internal corporate reporting system. The progress of actions in the draft Plan will also be reported in Council's Annual Report in line with the requirements under the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* and an update will be provided annually to CDAC.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is due to present its final report to the Australian Government by 29 September 2023. Council officers will review the recommendations from the report, as there may be recommendations related to local governments.

The Victorian Government is currently considering the purpose and reporting requirements of disability action plans as parts of its review of the *Disability Act 2006*. Council officers will continue to monitor progress of the review, which may impact local government disability action plans.

The draft Plan is scheduled to be refreshed and updated in 2028. A new implementation plan is scheduled for development in 2026.

10. Conclusion

The draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28 will be presented to the community for comment from 12 September to 10 October 2023. Following the public exhibition period, the draft Plan incorporating any changes required from the public exhibition period will be presented to Council for adoption in late 2023.

Manager: **Fiona Brown, Manager Community Planning and Development**

Report officer: Cassandra Chatwin-Smith, Social Inclusion Policy and Project Officer



Draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028

September 2023

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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Thank you

The City of Boroondara would like to thank the people with disability, their families, and carers who took part in the consultation for this draft Plan. We recognise they may have faced barriers to participate. We appreciate their time, experience, and stories.

Thank you to the community groups and organisations who shared their experiences, ideas, and connected us with community members during the consultation.

Finally, thank you to the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee members for their support, advice, and guidance in developing the draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28.

1. Introduction

The draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28 (the draft Plan) is the City of Boroondara's sixth disability action plan. The draft Plan demonstrates Council's continued commitment to making our City more inclusive and accessible for people with disability. It aims to build on the achievements of our previous plans and recognises improving access to places and spaces and opportunities for participation in the civic, economic and social fabric of our City is an ongoing journey.

Our vision for the draft Plan is:

An inclusive and accessible Boroondara where people with disability participate in community life, have equal opportunities, and feel proud of who they are.

Council's key strategic document is the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 and includes a community vision for '*a sustainable and inclusive community*.' The draft Plan supports our community's vision in the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31.

The draft Plan's purpose is to continue to promote equality and reduce, remove, and prevent external barriers for people with disability. According to the World Health Organisation 'barriers are factors in a person's environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability'. For example, inaccessible physical environments, a lack of appropriate assistive technology, and negative attitudes towards people with disability.¹ Council recognises that making Boroondara more accessible and inclusive for people with disability will have economic, social and health benefits for all community members.

The draft Plan is guided by the following principles that are informed by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*:

- disability is a natural aspect of human diversity
- everyone has equal access, rights and opportunities
- people with disability are free to make their own choices and be respected for who they are
- people with disability are experts in their own lives and need to be involved in decision-making that impacts them
- people with disability have the right to be included in society as anybody else
- barriers to disability inclusion can be impacted by intersectionality. Intersectionality is when different aspects of a person's identity such as disability, race, class, gender, and sexual identity can compound discrimination and disadvantage.²

The draft Plan meets Council's requirements in the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* to develop a disability action plan. It applies a whole-of-Council approach as used in previous plans. This joint approach will make sure accountability and leadership are embedded across Council.

This draft Plan will guide Council's efforts to improve Boroondara for people with disability. It provides a four-year vision and two-year implementation plan (see **Appendix 1**) for delivering actions. A new implementation plan will be developed for the final two years of the draft Plan. This will make sure the actions stay relevant and respond to current and emerging issues and opportunities. The key achievements of the previous Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-2022 are shown in **Appendix 2**.

1.1. Corporate framework



Figure 1: Council's integrated planning and reporting framework

As shown in Figure 1, the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31 (BCP) is Council's key strategic document. The 10-year BCP includes the:

- Community Vision
- 4-year Council Plan
- 4-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The BCP sets the strategic direction for the City of Boroondara and includes seven priority themes and six health priorities. It outlines how we will deliver our community's aspirations, and protect, improve and promote our community's health and wellbeing.

The BCP's vision, wellbeing commitment, themes and health priorities guide the draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028.

1.2. Council's role

There are various roles Council can play to implement the actions in this draft Plan. The key roles include Council being a planner, policymaker, service provider, advocate, landowner, funder, enabler, partner and employer.

By implementing the actions in this draft Plan, Council intends to improve access and inclusion for people with disability in the Boroondara community and as employees of Council.

1.3 Key concepts

1.3.1 Definition

The concept of disability is broad and evolving. Our definition of disability is based on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022-2026. We define disability as meaning a long-term impairment that when interacting with various external barriers, prevents or limits community participation.

An impairment can be:

- physical
- mental health
- intellectual
- cognitive
- learning
- communication
- sensory.

It can be permanent, episodic, visible, or invisible.

1.3.2 Understanding disability

This definition is informed by what is referred to as the social model of disability. This concept was created by people with disability. It recognises that barriers in a community or environment can prevent or limit community participation. This means a website not being screen reader friendly is disabling, not a person's need to use a screen reader. Another example is a flight of stairs with no ramp or lift into a building is disabling not a person's need to use a wheelchair. Using the social model of disability means Council can strive to better detect, remove and prevent external barriers for people with disability.

This model also gives people with disability more autonomy, choice, and self-determination.³ It supports the human rights of people with disability to make their own choices, be seen as individuals and respected for who they are, have equal opportunities and access and be included in society as anybody else.

1.3.3 Language

Disability is understood in different ways in our community. Factors such as experience, identity, and culture can shape peoples' notions of disability. This means people can have different preferences for how their disability is described. We understand that language and people's language preferences can change.

We use 'person-first' language in this draft Plan. This language supports a person's right to be understood without reference to their disability. An example of this language is saying 'person with disability'. Person-first language is important to many people with disability.

We also understand that many people with disability prefer 'identify-first' language, as they consider their disability a key part of who they are. An example of this language is saying 'disabled person'.

Council respects people's right to choose how they are described. When people share their preferences with us (i.e., person-first or identify-first language), Council will endeavour to refer to people according to their preferences.

2. Background

2.1. Community snapshot

People with disability are diverse. Culture, language, sexuality, gender identity, age, ability, socioeconomic status, and life experiences differ amongst people with disability.⁴ People's experience of disability also differs, as disability can be:

- visible
- invisible
- permanent

- episodic
- from birth
- happen at any point during someone's life.

Outlined below are some statistics about disability in Australia and Boroondara.

Australia

- 17.7% of people in Australia (about 4.4 million people) are estimated to have disability. Of this number, 32% (about 1.4 million people) have a severe or profound disability.⁵
- The prevalence of disability generally increases with age. In Australia:
 - 7.6% of children aged 0-14 have disability
 - 9.3% of people aged 15-24 have disability
 - 13% of people aged 15-64 have disability
 - 50% of people aged 65 and over have disability.
- For about three in four (76.8%) people with disability, the main type of disability (that is, their main condition or the one causing the most problems) is physical. For the remaining one in four (23.2%), the main type of disability is mental or behavioural.⁶
- One in every four people with disability in Australia are culturally and linguistically diverse.⁷
- Indigenous Australians are 1.9 times as likely as non-Indigenous Australians to have disability or restrictive long-term health condition.⁸
- 39% of LGBTQIA+ people aged 14 to 21 identify as having disability or a long-term health condition.⁹
- Nationally just under five out of 10 (47.8%) people with disability are employed compared with eight in 10 (80.3%) people without disability.¹⁰
- In Australia, 41% of people with disability aged 15 to 64 have income from wages or salary, compared with 73% of people without disability.¹¹

Boroondara

- 11.4% of Boroondara residents, around 20,500 people, are estimated to have disability.¹²
- In 2021, 4.5% of Boroondara residents, 7,516 people, are estimated to have a severe or profound disability compared to 5.8% of residents across Australia.¹³
- More females in Boroondara have disability than males.¹⁴
- In Boroondara, there are 2,395 active participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The most common primary disabilities of these active NDIS participants are:
 - autism (849)
 - psychosocial disability (310)¹⁵
 - intellectual disability (305)

- developmental delay (188).¹⁶
- The most common age groups represented as active NDIS participants in Boroondara are:
 - 7 to 14 years (591)
 - 55 to 64 years (325)
 - 0 to 6 years (298)
 - 45 to 54 years (252).
- In Boroondara, 24 active NDIS participants identified as Indigenous (or 1.0%) and 305 (or 12.7%) identified as culturally and linguistically diverse.¹⁷
- 14.3% of Boroondara residents are carers, which is higher than the national average of 11.9%.^{18,19}
- 60.0% of carers in Boroondara are female.²⁰

2.2. Policy context

This draft Plan is informed by the following international, national and state legislative frameworks and policies. These work together to uphold and protect the rights of people with disability.

International

- [The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)

National

- [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(DDA\)](#)
- [Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](#)

State

- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)
- [Victorian Disability Act 2006](#)
- [Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022-2026](#)
- [Victorian Autism Plan.](#)

3. Methodology

The development of this draft Plan was informed by five stages of consultation and research including:

- Stage 1 - Evaluation
- Stage 2 - Research and benchmarking
- Stage 3 - Community and service provider consultation

- Stage 4 - Workshops with community members and organisations
- Stage 5 - Plan development.

The opportunity to participate in the community consultation was promoted extensively through disability groups, organisations, and networks to ensure we reached people with disability, their families, carers, advocates, support organisations, specialist schools and businesses with links to the disability sector. A variety of accessible communication methods and tools were also used. These included:

- instructional information in plain language, Easy Read and Auslan
- an online and paper plain language survey
- an online and paper Easy Read survey
- an option to provide submissions in a written, audio or video format
- interviews with community members and representatives from organisations
- workshops with people with lived experience of disability or those who work in the disability sector.

Workshops were also held with the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee to seek their feedback and advice to inform the development of the draft Plan.

Through the five stages of consultation and research Council gathered feedback from 350 community members and organisations. This included hearing from 211 people through the community consultation for the development of this draft Plan and analysing 139 responses that included references to disability access and inclusion from the community consultation in late 2020 to early 2021 for the renewal of the Boroondara Community Plan. This enabled Council to gain a greater understanding of the challenges faced by people with disability and opportunities to increase access and inclusion. A detailed description of the five stages of research and consultation and who we heard from is provided in a separate consultation report of this draft Plan.

4. What we heard

Outlined below is a list of the topics raised during the community consultation to inform the development of the draft Plan.

It is important to note some of the ideas raised fall outside Council's scope of work or services. However, where appropriate, Council advocates to other levels of government on issues or plays a role in facilitating partnerships between different groups in the community.

The key topics that emerged in the consultation were:

- more accessible spaces, amenities, and infrastructure in Boroondara
- more communication by Council in accessible formats about services, programs and supports for people with disability
- more inclusive opportunities for recreation, community and social participation
- Council to demonstrate leadership in disability access and inclusion and to upskill its staff
- Council to support 'nothing about us without us', which is to involve people with disability in decision-making that impacts their lives
- Council and the community to support and encourage disability pride (i.e., taking pride in and celebrating people with a disability in our community)
- improving community attitudes towards people with disability
- better accessibility moving around Boroondara
- concerns about safety moving around in the community for people with disability
- appropriate and affordable housing for people with disability
- more employment opportunities for people with disability
- issues with accessing health services and the NDIS
- issues with funding models for disability organisations
- disability organisations experiencing issues providing supports and services due to volunteer shortages.

These findings provided the foundation for the development of the vision, themes, strategic objectives, and actions in this draft Plan. For a high-level overview of each of these topics see the separate consultation report for this draft Plan.

5. Plan objectives

The draft Plan has five themes, which emerged from our consultation and research. They are:

1. Theme 1 - Celebration and belonging
2. Theme 2 - Access and safety
3. Theme 3 - Inclusive community
4. Theme 4 - Employment and volunteer opportunities
5. Theme 5 - Participation in decision-making.

Strategic objectives have been developed for each theme and reflects what the community told us they want achieved for our City. The strategic objectives reflect the aspirations of our community and Council is committed to working towards realising these strategic objectives. We recognise that the journey to achieve them will take longer than the life of this draft Plan and will be an ongoing process for Council. However, Council cannot do this alone - it will require effort and input from other tiers of government, organisations and the community.

Theme 1: Celebration and belonging

Strategic objective: People with disability feel accepted by the community and can feel proud of their identity.

Theme 2: Access and safety

Strategic objective: Boroondara's places and spaces are safe and easy to access and use for people with disability.

Theme 3: Inclusive community

Strategic objective: Boroondara is inclusive and people with disability can participate in social and community life.

Theme 4: Employment and volunteer opportunities

Strategic objective: There are employment and volunteer opportunities for people with disability in Boroondara.

Theme 5: Participation in decision-making

Strategic objective: People with disability have opportunities to participate in decision-making that affects their lives.

6. Implementing the Plan

To ensure the draft Plan remains relevant and achievable, it will provide a four-year vision and include two-year action plans for implementing initiatives. Actions in the first two years of the draft Plan will be reviewed to determine the actions for the last two years. This will ensure actions remain fit for purpose and consider contextual changes. The implementation plan for the first two years of the draft Plan is included in **Appendix 1**.

7. Monitoring and evaluating the Plan

Council will regularly monitor, report, and evaluate our performance in delivering on the draft Plan. Council is committed to working with people with disability, their families, carers, community groups, organisations, and the broader community to implement the draft Plan.

To monitor progress and support implementation of the draft Plan we will:

- develop an evaluation plan with input and advice from the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee that will include an outcomes' framework
- report against actions in Council's internal corporate reporting system
- publish Council's progress in our Annual Report, as per our requirements under the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*

- provide a yearly update to the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee on the progress of actions in the Plan
- conduct a review at the two-year mark of the Plan. This is to ensure we continue to make progress with the Plan and reflect the aspirations and priorities of people with disability in our community
- monitor the progress of the draft Disability Inclusion Bill and the Disability Royal Commission and review and incorporate any new requirements and recommendations
- regularly seek input from the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee, which includes members of the community and local stakeholders with connections to disability
- refresh and update the Plan in 2028.

7.1. Accountabilities

For all queries or feedback regarding this draft Plan, please use the contact details below.

Social Inclusion Project Officer
(03) 9278 4017
dap@boroondara.vic.gov.au

To request this document in your preferred accessible format, contact us using any of the methods below.

- **Online**
[Make an enquiry.](#)
- **Phone**
Call us anytime on [\(03\) 9278 4444](tel:(03)92784444).
- **Email**
You can email boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au.
We check our emails during business hours and will get back to you as soon as we can.
Business hours are Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:15pm.
- **In person**
Come to the customer service counter at our Council offices at 8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell Victoria 3124.
Opening hours are Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 5:15pm.
- **Mail**
Write to us at:
Private Bag 1, Camberwell Victoria 3124.

You can contact Council using several accessibility services, including those listed below.

- [National Relay Service](#) (NRS) helps people to make and receive calls.
- **TTY (Teletypewriter)**
Call [133 677](#) then ask for [\(03\) 9278 4444](#).
- **Voice Relay**
Call [1300 555 727](#) then ask for [\(03\) 9278 4444](#).
- **NRS Chat (internet relay)**
[Make an NRS Chat call](#) on the NRS website, then enter [\(03\) 9278 4444](#).
- **Interpretation services**
For information in your preferred language, call our free interpreter service on [\(03\) 9278 4002](#).

8. References

8.1. Definitions

Ableism: discrimination or prejudice towards people with disability. It is based on the false belief that people with disability are less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute to or participate in society or of less value than people without disability. It allows people without disability to exclude and oppress people with disability.

Accessibility: the extent to which people with disability can access something like an office, worksite or public area.

Co-design: the process of involving people with disability in designing, delivering and evaluating a policy, program or service.

Disability pride: is a movement that supports people with disability to feel safe to celebrate their identity, culture and community. It is about shunning the negative view of disability or the idea that disability makes a person less valuable. It supports people with disability to feel proud of who they are.

Inclusive: everyone can take part and feels like they belong.

Invisible disabilities: also known as hidden disabilities or non-visible disabilities is a broad term which can include any disability that may not be immediately apparent to others. Some examples of invisible disabilities include:

- physical conditions (e.g., chronic pain, diabetes)
- mental health conditions (e.g., Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, anxiety)
- neurological conditions (e.g., epilepsy)
- neurodiversity (e.g., autism, ADHD, dyslexia).²¹

Universal design: making spaces, policies and programs that are inclusive, accessible and can be used independently by all people.²²

Appendix 1: 2024-26 Implementation Plan

The implementation plan includes actions Council will undertake over the first two years of the draft Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28. Another implementation plan will be developed for the final two years of the draft Plan. Operating budget and capital works budget in the table below means the annual budget for the relevant teams will cover the activity. It does not require additional project funding or funding from other sources. Grant opportunities may be sought for actions 2 and 13 to enhance what can be delivered.

Action No.	Theme	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures	Resources Required
1.	Theme 1 - Celebration and belonging	Engage people with disability including from diverse backgrounds and community organisations to hold a minimum of two community activities or events annually to recognise/celebrate dates of significance to people with disability (e.g., International Day of People with Disability).	Community Planning and Development Support: Arts and Culture Health and Wellbeing Services Library Services Liveable Communities	People with disability feel that their contributions and achievements are celebrated and acknowledged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events held by Council. Number of people with disability engaged by Council to partner/deliver events. Number of participants at events. Participant feedback from events. 	Operating budget
2.	Theme 1 - Celebration and belonging	Consult with people with disability to develop and deliver a communication campaign that increases the community's understanding of disability and addresses discrimination towards people with disability (also known as ableism).	Community Planning and Development Support: Customer and Communications Health and Wellbeing Services Arts and Culture	People with disability feel included in the community and experience less disability related discrimination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people with disability involved in the development of the campaign including members of the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee. Number of opportunities to promote the campaign through Council's communication channels. Number of community interactions with the campaign (e.g., comments, discussions). Feedback from participants involved in the campaign. 	Operating budget or grant opportunity

Action No.	Theme	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures	Resources Required
3.	Theme 1 - Celebration and belonging	Increase knowledge and understanding within Council by researching and incorporating best practice access and inclusion, accessible communication, and universal design principles and capturing these learnings in planning tools for use by the whole organisation.	Community Planning and Development	Council staff have a greater understanding and apply best practice access and inclusion, accessible communication, and universal design principles in their work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of professional development opportunities provided to Council staff. • Number of staff who attend training sessions. • Feedback from staff who attend training sessions. • Number of tools, resources and articles promoted to staff that support access considerations for events and activities. 	Operating budget
4.	Theme 2 - Access and safety	New Council major capital works and renewals including facilities, playgrounds, parks, and shopping precincts incorporate Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010 and the Australian Standards, and where possible incorporate universal design principles.	Capital Projects Environmental Sustainability and Open Space Support: Asset and Capital Planning Building Services Planning and Placemaking	Improved safety and access to Council's facilities and open spaces by people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new Council major capital works and renewals projects that the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee is advised about and consulted on. • Major projects and renewals where assessment and feasibility is undertaken to incorporate universal design. • Number of applications submitted for grant funding where there is an opportunity to support universal design in Boroondara facilities. • Percentage of projects promoted through our Engage page in an accessible format. • Number of district and regional playground renewals with at least 1-2 accessible pieces of playground equipment provided. 	Capital works budget

Action No.	Theme	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures	Resources Required
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of building projects issued with building permits involving disability access. 	
5.	Theme 2 - Access and safety	Continue to improve accessibility on paths of travel within parks and open spaces as well as streets and roads through maintaining and upgrading features such as accessible parking, tactile indicators, kerb access, signage, line markings, and infrastructure such as seating.	Traffic and Transport Asset and Capital Planning Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces Support: Capital Projects Facilities Waste and Infrastructure	Increased safety and accessibility to Council's facilities and open spaces for people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of footpath inspections completed under the Road Management Plan, which includes inspection of tactile indicators and disability access. Percentage of footpath defects first response make safe actions completed within the timeframes specified in the Road Management Plan. Number of bus shelters installed or upgraded by the Victorian Government in response to advocacy from Council. Number of upgrades of accessible parking bays to meet current standards. 	Operating budget
6.	Theme 3 - Inclusive community	Encourage more community organisations and people with disability to apply for grants through the Community Strengthening Grants, Individual Participation Grants and the Community Arts Venue Grants for programs and activities for people with disability.	Community Planning and Development Health and Wellbeing Services Liveable Communities Arts and Culture	Increase opportunities for people with disability to participate in social and community life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of projects funded that demonstrate opportunities for participation by people with disability. Number of improvements identified and completed related to the accessibility of the current grants program. Number of capacity building opportunities provided to potential grant recipients through information 	Operating budget

Action No.	Theme	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures	Resources Required
					sharing and the Community OnBoard program.	
7.	Theme 3 - Inclusive community	Increase the participation of children, young people and adults with disability in our families, youth, active ageing, libraries, sports and recreation, and arts and culture programs.	Health and Wellbeing Services Arts and Culture Liveable Communities Support: Library Services	Increased opportunities for people with disability to participate in Council programs and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partnerships that support inclusive programs and activities. • Number of disability inclusive programs that include disability access considerations such as Auslan and relaxed. • Number of artists with disability and disability organisations featured in the community exhibition program. • Website traffic on Boroondara's accessible sport and recreation offerings webpage. 	Operating budget
8.	Theme 3 - Inclusive community	Ensure Council's website is accessible by complying with the latest version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and provide content to support greater understanding of accessible facilities, parks, playgrounds, programs and activities in Boroondara.	Digital Experience Community Planning and Development Support: Arts and Culture Strategic Communications Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces Customer and Communication Asset and Capital Planning Health and Wellbeing Services	People with disability can use Council's website and information about disability access in Boroondara is easy to find on the website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of priority documents on Council's website audited and remediated to ensure they comply with the latest version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). • Feedback from the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee on the disability access webpages. • Number of visits to disability access pages. • Number of consultations that include an access service and consideration like Easy Read, sensory items, Auslan interpretation or subtitled video. 	Operating budget

Action No.	Theme	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures	Resources Required
			Library Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of venues on the enterprise booking tool that include accessibility information. Feedback from user testing by people with disability provided as required. 	
9.	Theme 4 - Employment and volunteer opportunities	Build knowledge and skills within Council to be a more accessible and inclusive workplace for people with disability.	People, Culture and Development Support: Customer and Communication	Council is a more accessible and inclusive workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of actions implemented in Council's Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-25. Number of staff who undertake disability related training or workshops. Number of Diversity and Inclusion Working Group meetings. Number of HR policies reviewed for accessibility requirements as they fall due. Feedback provided in anonymous survey on the level of engagement of staff with disability. 	Operating budget
10.	Theme 4 - Employment and volunteer opportunities	Promote the benefits of being accessible and inclusive for people with disability to volunteer organisations.	Community Planning and Development Support: Customer and Communication	People with disability engaged in volunteer opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of disability related training sessions provided to volunteer organisations. Number of participants in training sessions. Evaluation of volunteer organisations disability confidence following training. Number of resources provided to volunteer organisations that promote the benefits and note the legal 	Operating budget

Action No.	Theme	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures	Resources Required
					obligations of improving access for people with disability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of volunteers with disability referred through the BVRC. 	
11.	Theme 4 - Employment and volunteer opportunities	Facilitate the delivery of a disability inclusive employment pilot program with relevant partners, which places local people with disability into meaningful employment with local businesses.	Liveable Communities Community Planning and Development Support: Customer and Communication	People with disability engaged in ongoing meaningful employment by local businesses in Boroondara.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of local businesses that participate in the pilot. Number of people with disability that participate in the pilot. 	Operating budget
12.	Theme 4 - Employment and volunteer opportunities	Review Council's procurement policy to identify ways to enhance social procurement opportunities.	Chief Financial Office Community Planning and Development Support: Liveable Communities	Employment and volunteer opportunities for people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An enhanced procurement policy which facilitates social outcomes such as employment opportunities for people with disability. 	Operating budget
13.	Theme 5 - Participation in decision-making	Identify a pilot project to co-design with people with disability and organisations to inform Council's approach to co-designing projects.	Community Planning and Development	People with disability inform the development and delivery of a Council project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-design process identified for Boroondara. Number of external stakeholders consulted to inform the co-design pilot, including people with disability. Feedback from Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee and Council staff involved in the project. 	Operating budget and grant opportunity

Action No.	Theme	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Measures	Resources Required
14.	Theme 5 - Participation in decision-making.	In collaboration or consultation with people with disability and community partners, advocate to the Victorian and Australian governments, and peak bodies, to address social, equity, health and wellbeing issues that impact people with disability (e.g., NDIS, mental health, social isolation, people sleeping rough, family violence, built environment and transport).	Community Planning and Development	Improved social, economic, health and wellbeing outcomes for people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of advocacy opportunities identified in consultation with disability organisations and the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee. • Number of advocacy submissions. • Outcomes of advocacy submissions. 	Operating budget
15.	Theme 5 - Participation in decision-making	Develop a detailed evaluation plan to measure the success of the actions in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28 with input and advice from the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee.	Community Planning and Development	People with disability inform the evaluation of the Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee on the development of the evaluation plan. • Outcomes' framework identified. • Evaluation plan reviewed and amendments identified. 	Operating budget

Appendix 2: Summary of the achievements of the Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-2022

Outlined below are some of the key achievements of the Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-22.

Council Grants

- Twenty-seven grants valued at \$180,259 were awarded through the Boroondara Annual Community Strengthening Grants and Triennial Operational Grants for projects and programs to support disability access and inclusion.

Facilities and environments

- Two Changing Places facilities were built in [Canterbury Community Precinct](#) and Victoria Park Regional Playground. Changing Places are fully accessible toilets with hoists. The Canterbury Community Precinct facility was funded by a grant from the Victorian Government.
- [Victoria Park Regional Playground](#) was redeveloped to offer a genuinely inclusive experience.
- The Y (formerly known as the YMCA), in partnership with Disability Sport and Recreation and Council, was successful in receiving an AAA Grant for over \$130,000 from the Victorian Government to deliver the [Disability Sport and Recreation Hub](#). The project delivered a disability sports and recreation hub at Boroondara Sports Complex in December 2022.
- Ensuring the design of the Kew Recreation Centre is suitable for all ages, abilities, and caters to a wide range of health and wellbeing needs. The design also incorporates the Boroondara Stroke Support Hub.
- Planned for the integration of disability services in the Canterbury Community Precinct.

Events and programs

- The Y held an All Abilities Come and Try event at Boroondara Sports Complex on 10 April 2022. This event showcased six accessible sports, included 11 information stands, with around 250 people attending.
- The Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre (BVRC) hosted the Volunteering and Disability Discussion Forum in 2022. The forum was part of BVRC's focus on building the capacity of member organisations to break down barriers to volunteering.
- In 2022, the BVRC released a [video resource for leaders of volunteers](#), to raise awareness of the barriers people with disability face when volunteering.
- The BVRC has received Volunteer Management Activity (VMA) 2022-2026 funding through Volunteering Victoria as part of a consortium with Eastern

Volunteers to develop a four-year strategy to reduce barriers to volunteering opportunities for three priority groups including people with disability.

- Developing [Access Keys](#), which provide access information and a visual story about a location and experience for all Boroondara Leisure and Aquatic Facilities, Kew Traffic School and the Boroondara Youth Hub.
- Boroondara Arts presented [‘Through Our Eyes’ by QArt Studio](#), a community exhibition in 2022. The QArt Studio is a professionally operated art studio in Kew. Within the studio, artists with intellectual disabilities are given support by qualified managers to achieve the creative vision for their artworks and designs.
- Vision Australia completed usability testing of City of Boroondara’s website in early 2023. The Digital team is currently actioning recommendations from the accessibility audit provided by Vision Australia.

Endnotes

- ¹ World Health Organization (2001), [*International classification of functioning, disability and health*](#).
- ² Victorian Government (2021), [*Understanding Intersectionality*](#).
- ³ Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (2019), [*Social Model of Disability*](#).
- ⁴ Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2022), [*Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan \(2022–2026\)*](#).
- ⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), [*Disability, ageing and carers, Australia: summary of findings*](#).
- ⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022), [*People with disability in Australia*](#).
- ⁷ People with Disability Australia (2021), [*The Experiences and Perspectives of People with Disability From Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*](#).
- ⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019), [*1.14 Disability – AIHW Indigenous HPF*](#).
- ⁹ LGBTIQ+ Health Australia (2021), [*Snapshot of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Statistics For LGBTIQ+ People October 2021*](#).
- ¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), [*Disability, ageing and carers, Australia: summary of findings*](#).
- ¹¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022), [*People with disability in Australia*](#).
- ¹² The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines disability as any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months.
- ¹³ The 2021 Census defines severe or profound disability as sometimes or always needing help with daily self-care, mobility or communication activities because of disability, long-term health condition, or old age.
- ¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, '2018 SDAC LGA modelled estimates' [data set], [*Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*](#), and Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 and 2021, Core Activity Need for Assistance (ASSNP) by LGA and Type of Non-Private Dwelling (NPDD) [Census TableBuilder Pro], accessed 23 August 2023.
- ¹⁵ The NDIA defines psychosocial disability as disability that may arise from a mental health issue. Not everyone who has a mental health condition will have a psychosocial disability, but for people who do, it can be severe, longstanding and impact on their recovery. People affected by psychosocial disability may find it

challenging to set goals and make plans, engage in education, training and employment and other social and cultural activities (Chess Connect, 2023).

¹⁶ The NDIA defines developmental delay as when a child's development is not at the level expected for their age, and significantly impacts their ability to perform daily routines and activities.

¹⁷ NDIS (March 2023), 'Participant numbers and plan budgets data March 2023 (CSV 6.1MB)' [data set], [Data Downloads](#), accessed 23 August 2023.

¹⁸ The 2021 Census defines a carer as someone who spent time during the 2 weeks prior to Census night providing unpaid care to family members or others because of a disability, long term illness or problems related to old age.

¹⁹ .id (2022), [City of Boroondara: Unpaid care](#).

²⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), [Unpaid Assistance to a Person with a Disability \(UNCAREP\)](#) by LGA, Age and Sex [Census TableBuilder Pro], accessed 24 October 2022.

²¹ Victorian Equal Opportunities & Human Rights Commission (2022), [Public statement: Invisible disabilities](#).

²² Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2023), [Disability](#).

Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28

Consultation results

July 2023

Responsible Directorate: Community Support



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1 Introduction

The following report provides an overview of the methodology undertaken to inform the development of the draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2028. It also provides an overview of how many people we heard from and the key findings from the community consultation undertaken in June 2022 that informed the development of the vision, themes, strategic objectives and implementation plan in the draft Boroondara Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-28.

2 Overview of research and consultation

Outlined below is an overview of the research and consultation steps that informed the development of the draft Plan. Also outlined below is the number of people who participated in each stage of consultation.

2.1 Stage 1: Evaluation

An evaluation was undertaken of the progress, success, and learnings from the Boroondara Disability Action Plan 2018-2022 and other relevant plans, policies, and strategies across Council. This provided information about actions that could continue or be expanded in the next Plan and areas for further action.

2.2 Stage 2: Research and benchmarking

A review was undertaken of the Australian Census and other relevant data related to disability and inclusion. Key research, reports, plans, and legislation were also reviewed.

Benchmarking against the Inclusive Victoria: State disability plan 2022-2026 and 11 other Victorian council disability action plans was undertaken. The benchmarking looked at consultation approaches, actions and evaluation methods.

2.3 Stage 3: Community and service provider consultation

The community and service providers were consulted between June and September 2022.

Community members were invited to complete a short survey to understand peoples' backgrounds, experiences and ideas for improving disability access and inclusion in Boroondara. The opportunity to participate was promoted extensively through disability groups, organisations, and networks to ensure we reached people with disability, their families, carers, advocates, support organisations, specialist schools and businesses with links to the disability sector.

To encourage participation, a variety of accessible communication methods and tools were also used. These included:

- instructional information in plain language, Easy Read and Auslan
- an online and paper plain language survey
- an online and paper Easy Read survey
- an option to provide submissions in a written, audio or video format.

In-depth interviews were also undertaken with community members and representatives from organisations providing services to people with disability. This enabled Council to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges experienced by people with disability and opportunities for greater disability inclusion in Boroondara. It also enabled Council to gather information about the needs and issues that service providers were seeing in the community and any issues they were experiencing related to service provision.

2.4 Stage 4: Workshops with community members and organisations

The findings from the survey and interviews were presented in 10 workshops. Workshop participants were selected because they had lived experience of disability, disability support or worked in the disability sector.

To support access and greater participation in the workshops, we met with people 'where they were at'. The workshops were conducted at:

- sports clubs
- day programs
- staff meetings
- art classes
- other programs across the community.

This approach meant we could reach a diversity of people.

Workshop participants were asked to verify the accuracy of our findings from the other data collection methods against their own experience and if anything was missing from the findings.

Four workshops were also conducted with members of the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee during the meetings on 15 June 2022, 14 September 2022, 30 November 2022 and 31 May 2023. The Committee includes:

- residents with disability
- carers or family members of a person with disability
- representatives from local disability organisations.

Its role is to guide Council's policy, plans and activities that support disability inclusion. In these workshops, members provided advice, feedback and guidance to inform our consultation approach and the development of the draft Plan.

2.5 Stage 5: Plan development

Through the research and consultation with the community, service providers and the Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee, we gathered valuable information about the barriers people with disability face and opportunities to increase access and inclusion in Boroondara. The findings were shared with Council staff and informed the development of the themes, strategic objectives and actions in the draft Plan.

3 Consultation

3.1 Who we heard from

We prioritised hearing the voices of people with disability, their families, carers, advocates, support services, specialist schools and organisations with links to the disability sector. Within these cohorts, we tried to capture intersectional experiences by speaking with women, young people, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and people with a diverse range of disability experiences. **Table 1** below provides a breakdown of the number of responses to each type of consultation.

Table 1: Consultation method and number of responses

Consultation method	Number of responses
Community surveys	79 responses including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63 responses to the online plain language survey • 10 responses to the online Easy Read survey • 6 responses to the paper plain language survey.
In-depth interviews with community members	3 community members
Community submissions	9 audio, written or video submissions
In-depth interviews with organisations	11 representatives from organisations
Community and organisation workshops	10 workshops conducted with community members and organisations with a total of 98 participants.
Boroondara Community Disability Advisory Committee workshops	4 workshops conducted with 11 members
TOTAL number of participants	211

We also analysed 139 responses from the community consultation undertaken in late 2020 and early 2021 for the refresh of the Boroondara Community Plan for comments specifically relating to disability access and inclusion.

4 Summary of topics from the community consultation

The table below provides a brief overview of the topics raised during the community consultation that informed the development of this draft Plan.

Table 2: Brief overview of topics from the community consultation

Topic	Brief overview
Better accessibility moving around Boroondara	Getting around Boroondara was commonly reported as a barrier faced by people with disability. Infrastructure in the built environment, such as footpaths and steps into shops were noted as not being accessible and impacting people's mobility and independence. Suggestions on how to improve the built environment to support greater movement around Boroondara included:

Topic	Brief overview
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving footpaths • clearer signage • more lighting • more pedestrian crossings • accessible parking for carers • replacing steps outside shops with small ramps • incorporating universal design into places and spaces. <p>Improving access to public transport, especially trams, was also critical to facilitating inclusion. It was noted that Boroondara has many old railway stations with access issues.</p> <p>Some respondents want to see more accessible parking bays and better enforcement of them.</p>
Accessible spaces, amenities, and infrastructure	<p>Accessible spaces, amenities and infrastructure was recommended to improve inclusion and enable people with disability to participate in community life more fully.</p> <p>Amenities and infrastructure like toilets and playground equipment for people with disability at parks, reserves and facilities were reported as lacking. Limited quiet spaces available and the possibility of public spaces causing sensory overload was noted as a deterrence for going out.</p> <p>Suggestions to improve access to public spaces and amenities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of more, cleaner and accessible toilets in parks, reserves and facilities, including Changing Places facilities • more accessible public seating, benches and tables • more all abilities and age inclusive play equipment in playgrounds • fenced play areas to support parents and carers to ensure children's safety • improving access into and through buildings by improving lifts and widening doors. <p>Organisation respondents also reported challenges finding appropriate and accessible facilities to operate from and support their work with people with disability.</p>
Safety	<p>The importance of Council considering accessibility in emergency evacuation procedures and emergency management plans was noted.</p> <p>Respondents highlighted the need for more action and support for people with disability experiencing family violence.</p>
Inclusive opportunities	<p>More inclusive opportunities for recreation, community, and social participation were noted. This included wanting</p>

Topic	Brief overview
for recreation, community and social participation	<p>opportunities to participate in everything from local businesses, libraries, parks, sports facilities to neighbourhood house programs.</p> <p>It was suggested that a broad offering of events and activities to suit different needs and interests should be provided and affordability and equitability should be considered.</p> <p>The creation of more sensory sensitive spaces and activities for neurodiverse people, such as quiet times at libraries, gyms, and reduced lighting, were also suggested.</p> <p>Some respondents noted the experience of isolation from friends, particularly during lockdowns. It was noted that re-entering the community was particularly hard on people with disability. It was recommended more needs to be done to 'meet people where they're at' and inform and involve them about what's happening in the community.</p>
Better communication	<p>Improvements to communication were identified, as some respondents did not know what activities, programs, and services were available for people with disability, their families, and carers in Boroondara. It was noted that better communication would help ensure people can understand and find information about what is available and accessible for people with disability.</p> <p>Suggestions to improve Council communication included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proactively promoting services and programs on offer to people with disability using fewer PDFs and incorporating Easy Read, Auslan, Braille, and other language translations on Council's website. <p>It was noted that accessibility needs to be considered not just in online communications but in-person and print.</p>
Employment opportunities	<p>Employment opportunities for people with disability was a frequent topic raised. People with disability face barriers to entering the workforce, transitioning to paid employment and maintaining work.</p> <p>It was suggested Council can lead by example by employing more people with disability. It was noted that it is important that people with disability hold senior roles not just front-of-house and administration roles. Career development of people with disability should be supported.</p> <p>Other suggestions included Council sharing its learnings with businesses to increase awareness about the importance of employment opportunities for people with disability and offering work experience for students with disability.</p>

Topic	Brief overview
Community attitudes	<p>Educating Council staff and the community about disability was identified as important. This would help reduce stigma, promote human rights, and understanding of the importance of autonomy and self-determination of people with disability in the community.</p> <p>Stigma was noted as a barrier for people with disability that are not visible, such as people experiencing mental illness or people who are neurodiverse.</p>
Appropriate and affordable housing	Access to appropriate and affordable housing is insufficient for people with disability. Council could advocate to other levels of government for more affordable and accessible housing.
Council staff and leadership	<p>Council should be a leader in this area by better responding to queries relating to disabilities and providing training to staff.</p> <p>Council could also use its networks to create connections amongst councils, organisations, carers, and local businesses to improve accessibility in the community and grow mainstream employment opportunities for people with disability.</p>
Nothing about us without us	<p>It is essential that people with lived experience of disability are involved in decision-making that affects their lives. Council was encouraged to meaningfully consult and engage with people with disability to understand their needs and ensure that they are met.</p> <p>Co-design was regularly raised by respondents as a valuable process for Council to use. It refers to the process of involving people with disability in designing, delivering, and evaluating a policy, program or service.¹ It was suggested that Council could use this process to enable people with disability more choice and control in decision-making.</p>
Accessing health services and the NDIS	Several barriers were raised as preventing people from accessing health services and the NDIS. Organisations noted there were staff and service shortages impacting the availability and standard of care. They also remarked on the eligibility challenges with the NDIS. For example, recent changes in the NDIS eligibility requirements in early childhood space are presenting financial barriers to families accessing important early intervention treatment.
Organisation funding	Current funding models for disability organisations present challenges. Funding is often short-term and program based, which makes it difficult to grow and continue valuable programs and supports.
Volunteer shortages	Organisation respondents reported difficulties retaining, recruiting, and engaging volunteers to help provide services and programs to people with disability. The main cause of the decline in the number of volunteers was COVID-19.

¹ Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2022) [Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan \(2022–2026\)](#)

Topic	Brief overview
Support and encourage disability pride	People with disability want to be able to be proud of who they are, embrace their disability and not hide it. Council could promote disability pride by supporting positive representation of people with disability and celebrating the experiences, insights, and skills of people with disability in the community.