



Borough of Queenscliffe

Access and Inclusion Plan 2024–2025

DRAFT

Introduction

This draft brings together various ideas that have emerged from multiple conversations and sources over the past 18 months.

It is anticipated that the Lived Experience Disability Group will have a key role in supporting the implementation of the plan and in reporting on progress against the plan. The resources available to the Group are limited and the one year plan is deliberately brief, with priority given to actions that are achievable, whilst ensuring the plan is broad enough in scope to embrace opportunities that may arise.

A key action of the initial 12 month plan is the development of a four year Plan 2025–2029. This approach will bring the plan into line with the four year Council term and other key strategic documents the Borough is required to prepare on a four year cycle aligned with Council terms.

Development

The process of developing this plan has drawn on a number of sources including but not limited to:

- Australia’s Disability Strategy (2021-2031)
- Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan (2022-2026)
- Borough of Queenscliffe Disability Action Plan (2004)
- Lived Experience Disability Group Priority Actions
- Changing Places Grant Funding Guidelines
- Draft Victorian Disability Inclusion Bill

These inputs were complemented by the individual insights of Lived Experience Disability Group Members and prioritised into shorter and longer term goals across a number of group meetings in the second half of 2023. This plan focuses on the ‘shorter term goals’ with most longer term goals flagged for inclusion in the four year plan that will be developed over the coming twelve months.

It was noted that many items from the Borough’s 2004 Disability Action Plan remain relevant and so a key element of developing the next four year plan will be to review the items in the 2004 action plan.

Summary of Themes and Actions

The Plan has been structured to reflect both the high level strategic themes of National and Victorian documents and the language of residents. In many cases themes are linked or items cross over more than one major Theme.

Participation	
Activity	Goals
Decision making / Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will support and facilitate the Group and will engage in a partnership approach to achieving increased access and inclusion for our community.
Social Inclusion and Social Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group will provide quarterly updates to Council.
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group and Council will develop a four year action plan 2025 to 2029 incorporating a review of the items in the Borough's 2004 plan.
<p><i>Future opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Group and Council to seek opportunities to incorporate lived experience of disability into projects, consultations, and programs.</i> <i>Group to share knowledge of socialisation opportunities and strategies to overcome barriers to participation.</i> <i>Group to consider opportunities for capacity building – examples in table below.</i> 	
Access	
Activity	Goals
Changing Place Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group will build knowledge through a 'Changing Places Tour' of existing facilities. Group and Council will Identify a preferred location for a Changing Places facility.
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council will engage Group in a review of the access guidelines in Council's Events Policy with option to explore 'minimum standards'.
Information and Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group and Council will collaborate to further increase accessibility of Council's communications and consultations. Group and Council will collaborate to make the Lived Experience Disability Group project webpage more 'useful'.

Future Opportunities

Access activity in the areas of, Beach and Parks, Shops and Facilities and Transport could be informed by the following goals:

- *Group to consider opportunities to engage with local event providers to maximise accessibility. Some local providers have already expressed interest in meeting with the group.*
- *Group to consider opportunities to engage with local traders group to discuss access issues – Local Traders have already indicated interest in meeting with us.*
- *Group to consider conducting a ‘Lived Experience Review’ of the road crossings already in place in main shopping strips in Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale.*
- *Group may learn to implement the Universal Mobility Index, or if this is too onerous – at least undertake some ‘Lived Experience Reviews’ of local sites.*

Built and Natural Environment

Activity	Goals
Access and Traditional Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional Owners have been consulted on the level of involvement they wish to have in development of this plan. They have advised they would like to see the near final draft and be given an opportunity to comment. This will be done during the public consultation phase.

Future Opportunities

Built and natural environment activity in Housing and access in heritage settings , could be informed by the following goals:

- *The group could look for opportunities to showcase examples of good practice.*

Employment

Activity	Goals
Support access to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council will review its existing employment policies to improve Access and Inclusion.

Capacity Building

A number of opportunities exist for the group to build the capacity of people with a lived experience of disability to support them to be more informed and effective advocates regarding decisions that affect them.

Capacity building activities that the group may elect to explore include:

- Learn how to do the Universal Mobility Index assessments so we can do our own assessments.
- Consider opportunities to increase awareness of signage standards and requirements for various settings.
- Consider opportunities to increase awareness and knowledge of the new building code.
- Consider opportunities to increase awareness of how heritage and accessibility interact and identify strategies and examples which achieve good outcomes.
- Consider opportunities to increase its knowledge and awareness of how to harmonise improved access with the values and priorities of traditional owners.
- Consider opportunities to increase awareness of employment access and inclusion standards issues and opportunities.

Actions 2024–2025

1. Participation	
Themes	Actions
<p>1.1 Decision making / Advocacy</p> <p>International, Australian and Victorian access and inclusion strategies place the highest emphasis on people with lived experience being fully incorporated into any decisions and actions which affect them.</p> <p>Locally, the Lived Experience Disability Group arose from community advocacy to Council to commit to increasing access and inclusion.</p> <p>Council has committed to a partnership approach with the group to improve access and inclusion in the community.</p> <p>An Access and inclusion ‘Month’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobility Scooter hire - Open days to accessible houses - Walk in my shoes day 	<p>Council will support and facilitate the Group and will engage in a partnership approach to achieving increased access and inclusion for our community.</p> <p>Group and Council will develop a four year action plan 2025 to 2029. This is to undertake a review of the items in the Borough’s 2004 Plan and identify actions for possible inclusion in the 2025-2029 Plan.</p> <p>Group and Council to seek opportunities to incorporate lived experience of disability into projects, consultations and programs.</p>
<p>1.2. Social Connection & Social Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'day in the life' experience - Story-telling - Opportunities to hear from and connect with people with disabilities - Reduce stigma and feeling of isolation: 	<p>Start planning for an access and inclusion month.</p> <p>Group to share knowledge of socialisation opportunities and strategies to overcome barriers to participation.</p>
<p>1.3 Capacity building</p> <p>Take opportunities to provide input to other groups or businesses plans.</p> <p>Existing opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blues Train - Local traders - Point Lonsdale Lighthouse project 	<p>See comments on capacity building above.</p>

2. ACCESS	
Themes	Actions
<p>2.1 Access: Changing Places Facility</p> <p>Changing Places are accessible toilets with additional features to enable people with high physical support needs to access the community. Ideally a Changing Places Facility includes an adult change table, ceiling hoist, step free shower and an accessible toilet.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has operated a number of rounds of funding to offset some of the cost of providing such a facility. Based on previous rounds, the Borough could be a high priority for such funding. It is not known if or when there will be a further funding round.</p> <p>A key criteria for the funding has been that the applicant demonstrates community involvement in choosing the proposed location for the Changing Places Facility.</p>	<p>Group to build knowledge through a ‘Changing Places Tour’</p> <p>Group to work with Council to Identify a preferred location for a Changing Places facility in the Borough.</p> <p>Support Council (or other eligible agency) to be ready to submit a grant application for a future Changing Places Funding Round.</p> <p>Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal Mobility Index audits or ‘Lived Experience Reviews’ - Access to beaches and parks - Signage and wayfinding - Advocacy Participation and Capacity Building
<p>2.2 Access: Beaches & Parks</p> <p>Ramp access to beach/lighthouse/piers</p> <p>Sand mats and hire service for beach wheel chair How do we marry improved access to beach and park with environmental protection = wholistic and well planned Use the 'universal mobility index' (UMI)</p> <p>Existing opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boat Ramp – Hansa Crane to get on and off boats. - Explore location for Changing Places Facility 	<p>Group to consider learning how to do the Universal Mobility Index assessments so we can do our own assessments</p> <p>If too onerous – at least undertake some ‘Lived Experience Reviews’ of local sites.</p> <p>Review / assess locations in Borough and identify opportunities to enhance access and prioritise for future action</p> <p>Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support implementation of the Active Transport Strategy
<p>2.3 Access: Shops & Facilities</p> <p>Access to shops = narrow doorways, steps and busy/occupied shop fronts</p> <p>See if any traders are willing to offer mobility scooter charging for free.</p>	<p>Group to consider opportunities to engage with local traders group to discuss access issues – Local Traders have already indicated interest in meeting with the group.</p>

<p>Explore solutions outside the box – like encouraging businesses to consider ‘café window’ access where the existing access is poor and difficult to fix.</p> <p>Where there is opportunity, participate in ‘Master Planning’ activities which set the future goals for specific locations.</p> <p>Note: Whilst Council has a lot of statutory power regarding building and structures – It can only enforce the requirements of the relevant legislation at the time a permit is required. For instance, Council has almost no power to make a property owner change an existing building unless they are doing major works.</p> <p>Council’s role includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Footpath condition - Gutter condition - Planning / Building Permits 	<p>Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universal Mobility Index audits or ‘Lived Experience Reviews’ - Advocacy / Education
<p>2.4 Access: Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low floor community bus - Accessible transport - Safe crossing points on the Point Lonsdale Road and Flinders St to access beaches e.g. At Pt Lonsdale Rd/Williams Rd - Electric community bus - More footpaths on the more popular local street e.g. Williams Rd, Kirk Rd - Footpath on Fellows Rd to enable access all the bus stops - Bicycle and e-scooter speed limits on Point Lonsdale Esplanade e.g. 20 km/hr - Make the car parking spaces in Point Lonsdale wider so can easily open car door! 	<p>Group to consider conducting a ‘Lived Experience Review’ of the road Crossings already in place in main shopping strips in Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale.</p> <p>In partnership with Active Transport Strategy, explore with officers and community how to maximise transport and access outcomes.</p>
<p>2.5 Access to events</p> <p>Review current BoQ policies and procedures around event management Expect event organisers to have approved access plans Expect event organisers to have targets around employing people with disabilities and volunteers.</p>	<p>Council to engage Group in a review of the access guidelines in Council’s Events Policy with option to explore ‘minimum standards’</p> <p>Group to consider opportunities to engage with local event providers to maximise accessibility. Some local providers have already</p>

	<p>expressed interest in meeting with the group.</p> <p>Links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing Places Facility - Universal Mobility Index audits or 'Lived Experience Reviews'
<p>2.6 Access: Information/signage</p> <p>Equitable access to information in accessible formats is essential for people living with a Disability to be informed and to participate.</p> <p>The 2025 to 2029 plan could consider including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploration of how accessibility to Council's communications and engagements can be maximised. - Exploration of Map apps of accessible toilets and venues/entrances - Improve signage (public and business) - Beach access signage - Connected accessibility (being able to get everywhere you need to go in an accessible way) - Identify where Council's and other authorities have references to wayfinding in their strategic documents and requirements 	<p>Work collaboratively with Council to further increase accessibility of Council's communications and consultations.</p> <p>Group to consider opportunities to increase awareness of signage standards and requirements for various settings.</p> <p>Group to incorporate signage and wayfinding considerations into any access audits or reviews they undertake</p>
<h3>3. Built and Natural Environment</h3>	
<p>Themes</p>	<p>Actions</p>
<p>3.1 Housing</p> <p>Access to suitable, affordable and well located housing for people living with Disability is a major issue. Increasing access is a key element in International, Australian and Victorian access and inclusion strategies.</p> <p>This theme generated lively discussion and multiple ideas but was also a comparatively lower priority theme in local conversations.</p> <p>The 2025 to 2029 plan could consider including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative housing options (long-term vision) - Promotion of dual occupancies to enable 'on-site' carers 	<p>In the coming 12 months the group could empower itself by getting educated on the new building code.</p> <p>The group could also look for opportunities to showcase examples of good practice.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate for local developments and projects to do better than just meet minimum access requirements - Explore how the Borough can increase its influence and advocate that all new properties are built to at least 'Universal Design' standard - Explore holding an open day for accessible housing <p>Note: Like 'Access' above, this is an area where Council has a lot of statutory power, but Council can only require and enforce the requirements of the relevant legislation. For instance, Council can't just decree that all new dwellings must be built to 'universal access standards'.</p>	
<p>3.2 Access in Heritage Settings</p> <p>Increasing Accessibility within the existing built environment is both a high priority and featured prominently in our local conversations. It was recognised that changes are typically very expensive and limited by resourcing and multiple owners and stakeholders.</p> <p>This becomes even more complex in Heritage settings where the features which promote heritage values can also impede accessibility.</p> <p>The 2025 to 2029 plan could consider including:</p> <p>Explore how heritage and accessibility interact and identify strategies and examples which achieve good outcomes.</p> <p>Explore creating wider footpaths in busy areas.</p>	<p>Group to consider opportunities to increase awareness of how Heritage and accessibility interact and identify strategies and examples which achieve good outcomes.</p>
<p>3.2 Traditional Owners</p> <p>It is essential to ensure that changes to increase access in the built and natural environment are harmonised with the values and aspirations of traditional owners.</p> <p>The 2025 to 2029 plan could consider including:</p> <p>Explorations with traditional owners regarding how access can be increased in harmony with traditional ownership.</p>	<p>Traditional Owners have been consulted on the level of involvement they wish to have in development of this plan.</p> <p>They have advised they would like to see the near final draft and be given an opportunity to comment.</p> <p>Traditional Owners will be consulted during the public consultation phase.</p>

4. Employment

Themes	Actions
<p>In Australia, unemployment and underemployment among people living with a Disability is much higher than in most OECD countries.</p> <p>Increasing workforce participation is a key element in International, Australian and Victorian access and inclusion strategies, but was a much lower priority theme in local conversations.</p> <p>The 2025 to 2029 plan could consider including:</p> <p>Develop an employment plan which seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contribute to resolving labor shortage in our community- Support people to contribute their underutilised skills <p>Work in partnerships with community, business and Council to create inclusive employment practices.</p> <p>Identify regional partners who could work with the group to enhance employment outcomes.</p>	<p>Ask Council to review its existing employment policies to improve Access and Inclusion.</p> <p>Group to consider opportunities to increase awareness of employment access and inclusion standards issues and opportunities.</p>

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