



**CENTRAL
GOLDFIELDS
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

Central Goldfields Shire Disability Action Plan 2013 -2016

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Central Goldfields Shire

"Achieving together"

Vision: The Central Goldfields Shire Council's vision is:

"To be a highly desirable community in which to live, learn, work and visit"

Central Goldfields Shire recognises and supports the rights of people with disabilities.

*We will pro-actively promote the "**Achieving together**"*

Action areas within the Central Goldfields Shire to facilities, services and employment. This approach recognises that planning, development and implementation for these areas needs to include the whole community regardless of levels of mobility or disability.

Aim:

To continually improve access to services and facilities provided by the Central Goldfields Shire for people with disabilities and ensure that planning for future services, facilities and infrastructure incorporates recognition of the needs of people with disabilities.

Context

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability in a broad range of areas, including access to premises, work accommodation, transport and education.

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

Is located at the geographical centre of Victoria, the Central Goldfields Shire covers some 1,550 square kilometers and has an estimated residential population of just over 13,000 people.

Maryborough is the Shire's major business centre with a population of around 8000. Maryborough has gained recognition in recent years as having some of the finest sporting facilities in regional Victoria, together with significant historical buildings dating back to the gold mining era of the 1850s. Other towns in the Shire include Bealiba, Carisbrook, Dunolly, Majorca, Talbot, Bowenvale-Timor and the rural districts surrounding these centres. All are famous for their heritage architecture and significant agriculture industries.

The Shire is located within one hour drive from main provincial centres of Ballarat and Bendigo and only 2 hours from Melbourne. The first democratically elected Council for Central Goldfields Shire was elected on 15 March, 1997. In 2005 the Minister, for Local Government, determined that the number of Councilors to represent the Shire be increased from five to seven Councilors'.

The Shire

- has a unique combination of natural qualities;
- has significant manufacturing, retail and agricultural sectors;
- is of cultural and historical significance;
- is strategically placed in terms of economic and tourism potential.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics data confirms that Central Goldfields Shire has significant challenges— particularly in the areas of household incomes,
- educational attainment and employment rates. Of greater significance,
- Council has its “Go-for-Gold” action plan, a robust and innovative plan to address these challenges.

The shire is currently experiencing significant growth with key infrastructure projects and residential developments reaching fruition. The State Government's commitment to the shire has seen recent investments in the areas of health, education and law and order, together with assistance to economic development activities initiated by the Council.

What is a Disability?

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) defines disability as;

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviors.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a disability;

- which he or she has
- which he or she used to have
- which he or she may have in the future
- which is imputed to him or her
- of an associate, such as a friend, partner, carer or family member of the person.
- Both permanent and temporary disabilities are covered under the DDA.

Disability Discrimination Act (1992) - Summary

The objectives of the Disability Action Plan are:

- to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination on the grounds of disability in the areas of: work; accommodation; education; access to premises; clubs and sport; and the provision of goods; facilities; services and land; and existing laws; and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs.
- to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and
- to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

What is a Disability Action Plan and Why Does Central Goldfields Shire Council Need One?

A Disability Action Plan is a document that;

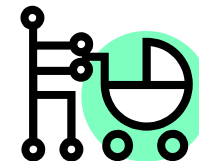
- Describes what a service provider, in this case Central Goldfields Shire Council, intends doing to make the services and facilities it already provides as accessible to, and appropriate for people with disabilities as can reasonably be achieved.
- Guides Council in eliminating discriminatory practices.
- Describes what actions Council will take to further improve the physical and social environment for people with disabilities.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission also encourage service providers to develop action plans and formally register it with their organization, this is widely accepted as best practice amongst service providers. Central Goldfields Shire Council recognizes the importance of access to and within the community for everyone. This includes the ability to participate in the social, cultural and political life of that community. Council realizes that this is a fundamental basis for creating healthy communities.

To assist in facilitating such community access, Council also recognizes the importance of eliminating, as far as possible, disability discrimination from the provision of its services and facilities.

Council has identified five key groups within the community that benefit strongly from Council's actions within the broad disability framework. These groups are;

1. People with a permanent disability
2. People with a temporary disability
3. Aged persons
4. Parents with young children who use prams
5. Family and friends of the above four groups



Commitment

The Central Goldfields Shire's Councilor's recognizes that, people with some form of disability affects about one in five Australians. Disability prevalence rates have increased slightly from 18% of the population in 1993; to 19% in 1998 and 20% in 2003. The prevalence rate is expected to increase as the population ages (ABS)

The Disability Action Plan covers everyone with a disability. The definition of disability in the Disability Action Plan is as broad as possible. It includes:

- physical
- intellectual
- psychiatric
- sensory or neurological disability
- learning disabilities
- physical disfigurement
- the presence in the body of disease causing organisms.

The Disability Action Plan also protects people with disabilities being discriminated against because:

- they are accompanied by an assistant, interpreter or reader; or
- they are accompanied by a trained animal, such as a guide or hearing dog: or
- they use equipment or an aid, such as a wheelchair or a hearing aid.

The Disability Action Plan also protects relatives, friends, carers and co-workers of people with disabilities from discrimination.

Types of discrimination

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person with a disability is treated less favourably, or it is proposed to treat a person less favourably, than a person without the disability would be treated in similar circumstances.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a person with a disability is expected to comply with a requirement or a condition that is unreasonable and that cannot be complied with due to the disability, but which a person without a disability would generally be able to comply with.

The Disability Action plan covers access to all the below:

▪ Libraries	▪ Public paths & walkways	▪ Educational institutions
▪ Shops / Stores	▪ Banks, credit unions etc	▪ Parks and gardens
▪ Public toilets	▪ Restaurants, cafes, hotels	▪ Pools / leisure facilities
▪ Cinemas & theatres	▪ Social & sports clubs	▪ Government offices and services
▪ Public transport – trains,	▪ Sports & Entertainment Venues	▪ Hospitals & medical centres & dental services
▪ Legal & services	▪ Travel agents & tourist venues and accommodation	▪ Resource Centres

KEY DISABILITY ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING PLAN PREPARATION

Physical Access

Barriers result in the exclusion of people with disabilities or make it very hard to navigate around facilities or services once inside. Lack of physical access and transport can prevent people with disabilities from engaging health services, education, employment, voting, shopping, tourism, recreation and so on. Access barriers to facilities, services and premises can occur and because oversights at the planning stage of infrastructure or service development, old buildings, ignorance or unwillingness to undertake necessary modifications to service delivery or building design.

Council will work, coordinate and plan with Central Goldfields Shire stakeholders in order to maximise movement around the City for people with disabilities. The Central Goldfields Shire has a major role in ensuring the accessibility of the 'physical' environment through service provision in its Infrastructure, Building, Planning Engineering and Design Sections.

Access to Information

Access to information is crucial in order for all members of the community to lead rewarding and independent lives. Planning to release information in alternative formats for example; large font or audio versions of publications will be part of all information distribution strategies. Access to information includes the provision of 'Auslan' Sign Language interpreters to events and functions.

Central Goldfields Shire will ensure the provision of accessible information to all members of the community regarding Council services and policies, Council Committee meetings, events and other opportunities to actively improve people's independence and autonomy.

Barriers to Community Participation

People that require accompanying carers or a support person to attend leisure and cultural events have encountered financial barriers to their participation, as this person also has to pay to attend. Some progress on this point will be made with the introduction of the proposed 'Companion Card' in Victoria that will enable carers in this situation to attend the event or activity free of charge. (Advance bookings are still required at some events.)

Leisure and Other Activities

Being involved in activities provides the opportunity to develop a range of social and employment skills, to meet other people and find peer support. Common barriers to participation include negative attitudes, insufficient or irrelevant services and funding (including transport and equipment), limited income and staff training, physical access and a lack of information.

Attitudes towards People with a Disability

Attitudes are the place where everything begins. Attitudes towards people with disabilities may be said to be changing as a result of the de-institutionalisation of many people and their visibility on the street and in the community. Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities result in poor outcomes in terms of employment, education, health, social and recreational needs, self-esteem. Negative attitudes towards people with disabilities limit people with disabilities from reaching their potential and achieving their goal of independence.

Central Goldfields Shire has a role to play in training its staff to work effectively with all members of the community. By exhibiting a commitment to continually improving its activities in meeting the employment, health, social and recreational needs of people with a disability, Council will be excelling in its leadership, coordination, planning, and service provision responsibilities. By creating positive experiences and opportunities, Council will contribute to a decrease in negative attitudes towards people with a disability.

The Councillors and staff of the Central Goldfields Shire commit themselves to work for all citizens and future generations by enhancing community engagement and social inclusion creating a robust, diverse and sustainable "new economy" and moving to greater environmental sustainability.

Values

- **Consultation** with all our stakeholders, inviting participation within the limits of required confidentiality.
- **Good Governance** that is open, transparent and accountable.
- **Innovation** based on new ideas and continuous learning.
- **Integrity** that is reflected in our public, professional and private dealings.
- **Leadership** on behalf of our community through advocacy to others who have an influence on our Shire's future.
- **Responsiveness** to our customers needs.

Key disability issues as identified at community consultation

Transport

- Limited access to suitable and affordable public transport and taxis
- Limited accessible community transport
- Lack of accessible parking facilities close to user's destinations

Employment

- Not all position descriptions reflect a non-discriminatory approach
- Aged & Disability - specialised training of staff regarding working with people who have specialised needs, continuity of care
- Insufficient infrastructure to accommodate staff with disabilities

Leisure and other Activities

- Inconsistent standards of 'companion' payments across the whole community
- Events and festivals need to address access issues for people with disabilities.
- Limited access to tourism and recreation facilities (which are not structured outside of working hours) due to physical and attitudinal barriers
- Limited promotion of accessible venues and events

Barriers to community participation

- Limited advocacy role by Council in regard to planning for people with disabilities
- Complexity and diversity of disability needs to be taken into account when planning services
- Limited awareness re: "Good Access is Good Business"
- Limited accessible tourist destinations and accommodation
- Restricted opportunity for employment

The Objectives of the Action Plan:

The objectives in this plan are based on the understanding that the main issues facing people with disabilities on a daily basis are interconnected and require a number of concurrent initiatives to address them effectively. The themes and associated objectives for this plan are as follows:

1. **Leadership and Advocacy** – Objective: To ensure that Council leads the way in reflecting "Achieving Together principles within the Council's Plan, policies and in its dealings with key community groups and bodies.
2. **Access to Services** – Objective: To ensure that all Council services address and remove any access issues on an ongoing basis.
3. **Access to Buildings and Infrastructure** – Objective: To ensure that the community is able to access all infrastructure, buildings, facilities and that Council will seek to remove barriers to access that currently or potentially exist.
4. **Information** – Objective: To ensure that all Council information and communication is not only accessible to people with disabilities in a range of formats but is a comprehensive and well coordinated resource.
5. **Human Resources** –Objective: To demonstrate a commitment to "Access for All" through non-discriminatory work practices and policies.
6. **Community Development and Participation** – Objective: To ensure that all Council's community development and participation activities are accessible to people with disabilities.

KEY DISABILITY ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING PLAN PREPARATION

Physical Access

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Central Goldfields Shire will ensure the provision of accessible information to all members of the community regarding Council services and policies, Council Committee meetings, events and other opportunities to actively improve people's independence and autonomy.

STRATEGY AND TIMELINES

1. Leadership and Advocacy

Objective	Strategy	Timelines
To demonstrate a commitment to "Access for All" throughout Council and with related business partners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oversee the implementation of the Disability Action Plan. 2. Participate in the annual ongoing review and evaluation of the Action Plan. 3. Incorporate outcomes from the review and evaluation processes. 4. Allocate resources through the organisational budget process to facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan 	<p>ongoing ongoing ongoing ongoing</p>
To ensure that all access issues are identified and addressed through community consultation and active participation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a diverse communication process that allows input by all stakeholders. 2. Establish a process that allows community input and discussion on disability issues as well as service planning within Council 3. Facilitate opportunities for people with disabilities to participate effectively in community consultation. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Quarterly Access committee .On going.</p> <p>Quarterly Access committee meetings. Ongoing</p>
To ensure that the Corporate Plan and organisational policies reflect an "Access for All" philosophy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the Council's Plan and incorporate any changes required to reflect "Access for All" 2. Review organisational policy and incorporate any changes required to reflect "Access for All" in relation to employment of people with disabilities. 3. Review individual Business Unit policies and incorporate any changes required to reflect "Access for All". 	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>
To ensure that Council has a process for advocating on behalf of people with disabilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that all existing Council planning processes use an "Access for All" approach. 2. Establish an ongoing process to identify issues and concerns for people with disabilities. 3. Publicise Council's commitment to "Access for All" using a range of communication formats. 	<p>Annually and ongoing</p> <p>Community quarterly meetings.</p> <p>Annually</p>

2. Access to Services

Objective	Strategy	Timeline
To ensure that the implementation of the Action Plan considers all access issues on an ongoing basis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan and lodge Action Plan with Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. 2. Ensure that access issues identified as part of the development of the Action Plan are addressed. 3. Maintain a process within each Business Unit that identifies future or potential access issues and community issues for people with disabilities. 4. Use all new Council buildings and facilities as best practice models to promote "Access for All" within the community. 	<p>December 2010</p> <p>When identified and Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

3. Access to Buildings and Infrastructure

Objective	Strategy	Timeline
To ensure the community is able to provide universal access to all Council's infrastructure facilities, with due consideration of Marlborough's heritage and environmental aspects.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a priority program for future budgets to progressively upgrade all current Council infrastructures. 2. Develop and review Council policy for new and existing infrastructure in accordance with the principles of DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 3. Ensure that any new infrastructure is constructed in accordance with the DISABILITY ACTION PLAN principles 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
ROADS:		
To ensure that the community has unimpeded access to Council's road and footpath infrastructure, with due consideration of Maryborough's heritage and environmental aspects.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake an ongoing assessment of all Council's owned and/or controlled roads and footpaths (including risk assessment and needs analysis) to identify impeded access and availability for the community. 2. Implement a priority program for the upgrade of existing infrastructure to DISABILITY ACTION PLAN standards. 3. Submit funding application bids to both Council & other relevant funding authorities for DISABILITY ACTION PLAN implementation programs. 4. Develop and review Council policy for new and existing infrastructure in accordance with the principles of DISABILITY ACTION PLAN. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Identified by Planning Dept and Ongoing and as and when identified funding opportunities.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Remove obstructing advertising signage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All permits for temporary signs to be located on the kerbside of footpath, at least 2 metres from building wherever possible. 2. Local Laws & Traffic to enforce compliance with local laws and permits. 	<p>As identified and Ongoing</p>

Removal of privately owned plants/obstruction on paths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advertise in a range of formats, the requirements under local law of pruning vegetation and obstruction on pathways. 2. When complaints received Local Laws to contact property owner and request owner to prune /remove obstructions. 3. Where owner takes no action, council will undertake work and charge the property owner. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>As identified and ongoing</p>
COUNCIL BUILDINGS		
To develop a strategy that ensures the community is able to access all Council controlled and used buildings safely and with dignity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop a draft document to guide planning for access for people with disabilities to Council controlled buildings. 2. Undertake an assessment of all Council owned and/or controlled buildings (including risk assessment and needs analysis) to identify impeded internal and external access and availability for the community. To apply for funding to assist in the assessment 3. Develop and review Council policy for new and existing building infrastructure in accordance with the principles of Disability Discrimination Act and universal access. 4. Develop and implement a process for identifying potential upgrade for compliance during maintenance of all Council controlled buildings 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed assessment in 2003 and will be ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
COMPLIANCE AND REGULATION		
Ensure that all publicly accessible buildings that are subject to Council approval are Disability Action Plan compliant.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure developers and private building surveyors are aware and accountable of their responsibilities under the DISABILITY ACTION PLAN. 2. Promote Disability Action Plan compliance through handouts on applications. 3. Review planning permit conditions and establish new permit conditions to reference Disability Action Plan standards and requirements. 4. All approval procedures and Council's own planning documents to comply with the Disability Action Plan within the scope of the Planning & Environment Act 1987. 5. Council officers undergo appropriate training on the Disability Action Plan 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing as application are received. Completed and will be ongoing.</p> <p>Annually and ongoing.</p> <p>Annually and on Induction</p>
Illegal use of designated accessible parking bays and parking on footpaths.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enforcement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to complaints from individuals. • Issue fines to offenders as appropriate 	<p>As and when identified and ongoing</p>

	2. Place articles in local papers to raise awareness of enforcement and regulations required By Laws Officers to impose an appropriate fine for illegal use of designated parking spaces.	Annually
OPEN SPACES		
Maintenance	1. Maintain surfaces in an even, safe condition. 2. Trim plant material back from walkways and entries.	As and when identified and ongoing
Council planting obstructing paths	1. Consider access issues in determining location & type of trees planted. 2. Prune plant material clear of pathways, and designated parking spaces – complaints rectified within service standard.	Training for Park and Garden staff annually and Ongoing

4. Information

Objective	Strategy	Timeline
To ensure that all Council information and communication activities are accessible and consider the needs of people with disabilities	1. Develop a Style Manual for all publications and advertising material that meets the needs of all users including people with disabilities, particularly people with vision and language impairment. 2. Provide access and customer service awareness training to staff. 3. Advertise availability of documentation in alternative formats and develop as required. 4. Advertise what services, programs and facilities that are accessible, to ensure community members are aware of what is available. Central Goldfields Leisure guide is updated annually.	Annual subscription to Browesaloud. (verbal Information on Council's web site. Annually and in Induction. Ongoing Annually
To provide a comprehensive and coordinated resource,		

information and support service for people with disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop resources that include information about various disabilities, support groups, accessible buildings, services and businesses. 2. Establish a community awareness program that promotes the "Access for All" approach. 	Completed and will be monitored for changes annually. Annual information sessions.
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5. Human Resources

Objective	Strategy	Timeline
To demonstrate commitment to an "Access for All" approach through non-discriminatory work practices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide induction and ongoing training to staff regarding access issues for people with disabilities through the development of a comprehensive staff training program. 2. Ensure that all position descriptions are non-discriminatory. 3. Review Occupational Health and Safety processes to ensure the needs of employees with disabilities are included. 4. Ensure emergency evacuation procedures for people with disabilities are included in safety programs. 	<p>Annual training sessions and on Induction.</p> <p>Completed Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

6. Community Development and Participation

Objective	Strategy	Timeline
To ensure that all of Council's economic development activities are accessible to and consider the needs of people with disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitate assessment of major streetscapes to identify access barriers and develop a prioritised action program to rectify these prior to further development. 2. Provide training, advice and support to traders in relation to the concept of 'Good Access is Good Business' 3. Develop a Tourism Strategy that includes the needs of people with disabilities and identify the opportunities for increased tourism as a result. 4. Support and promote the development of accessible tourist accommodation. 5. Develop and implement community education programs targeting awareness of access issues. 6. Support and promote the State Government's 'Companion Card' to all the relevant social, sporting and recreation organisations. 	<p>Parks and Gardens will assess annually .</p> <p>Annually and ongoing</p> <p>Accommodation section is finalized and on the Web site. Updated annually.</p> <p>Annually</p>

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Acknowledgements

This document was prepared by the Rural Access Officer and Community Services Officer in consultation with the Planning Section in Council and the staff and Councilors’, community organizations, residents, government agencies, service providers and the Disability Committee group.

Copies of the Central Goldfields Shire Council Disability Action Plan are available from the Shire’s Office in hard copy.
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