



Inclusive
Central Goldfields Shire Disability Plan
2022-2027





Acknowledgement

The Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the country on which we work and live, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge their significant cultural heritage, their fundamental spiritual connection to the country, and value their contributions to a diverse community.

We are proud to embrace the spirit of reconciliation, and learn more from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, how best to improve their health, and social and economic outcomes.

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It's with much pleasure I present the Central Goldfields Shire Disability Plan 2022-2027.

We know that, according to the 2016 Census, over eight percent of the Shire's population receives the Disability Support Payment and 14 percent are an unpaid carer of a person with a disability.

This is why this Plan is so important to us.

We're committed to providing opportunities for people of all abilities to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

We want the Central Goldfields Shire to be a community that is equitable, inclusive and accessible. A community where people feel included, valued and respected.

This Plan sets out how we will work with our community and local services providers to do this. It provides us with a plan for how, together, we will improve the lives of local people living with disability.

In many ways this Plan has been developed by our community – for our community.

Thank you to the community members who provided us with feedback during its development.

A working group made up of representatives from Asteria, Maryborough District Health Service, Maryborough Education Centre, Intereach, and community members living or caring for someone with a disability also played a key role in creating this Plan.

We look forward to seeing this Plan make a real difference to the lives of so many in our community.

Cr Chris Meddows-Taylor
Mayor, Central Goldfields Shire



Welcome to the Central Goldfields Shire Disability Plan 2022-2027.

I'm proud to say this is the first Disability Plan for the Central Goldfields Shire. As an organisation we are committed to lead by example within our community.

It's the result of many conversations with our community and service providers and I'd like to congratulate our staff who have led this process.

We know we can't do this alone, but by working in partnership with our community we can reduce the barriers faced by people living with disability.

While the Plan outlines focus areas for the next five years, it is also a living document that will respond to shifting priorities and new information, as we work together to create a more inclusive Central Goldfields now and for the future.

We'll continue to review the Plan and update it to reflect social, political and environmental changes as well as any response to recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

We look forward to working with our community and local service providers to improve access and inclusion for people with disability in our community.

Lucy Roffey
Chief Executive Officer, Central Goldfields Shire

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The purpose of Inclusive (Central Goldfields Shire Disability Inclusion Plan 2022-2027) is to guide Council's approach in all of its activities to promote inclusivity by becoming a Shire that is equitable, inclusive and accessible for individuals living with disability.

It is important to note that Inclusive has been developed at a time of rapid and substantial change. Thinking and actions that adhere to a "Business as Usual" approach are under increasing pressure as the fundamental principles, platforms and assumptions that underpin this thinking and action are being disrupted. Some of the changes precipitating new thinking and action include:

- Impacts of COVID-19 and a direct focus on essential services whilst protecting individuals from overwhelm
- Major policy and funding reforms taking place across key systems
- Royal Commissions into key components of service provision, including disability, aged care and mental health services
- Ongoing fiscal constraints are putting pressure on local government, organisations and communities

- Demographics of rural communities with significant portions of the population ageing and reducing population numbers in the under 50s
- Rapid advancements in technologies are disrupting old models whilst creating new opportunities for action
- An increasingly engaged citizenry is changing the nature of the relationship between government, institutions and communities

Activities within this plan will undertaken in the context of Post-Pandemic Planning. Council recognises that for the next 12-months its focus will be on supporting community through the Response and Recovery Phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, before moving into a phase of Re-establishment. It will be during the Re-establishment Phase that many of the activities documented within Inclusive will come to life.

Central Goldfields Shire will continue to work with community, including individuals living with disability to ensure we understand impacts and needs throughout the post-pandemic phases.



COUNCIL'S ROLE

The Central Goldfields Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 states our Vision is;

“To be an engaged, flourishing, lively and inclusive community.”

The Central Goldfields Shire has many roles to play to support the creation of an equitable, inclusive and accessible community for individuals living with disability across the Shire. We have a significant role in the provision of infrastructure, community services and information. We also have a partnership role, for example with the State Government in the provision of transport and improving major infrastructure. In addition, Council has a broader influencing role, for example in promoting greater respect within the community for people living with disability.

The Council plays many roles on behalf of the community. To thrive in our every changing environment, Central Goldfields Shire has defined its specific roles as a provider and partner in relation to creating an equitable, inclusive and accessible community for individuals living with disability.

Councils role is as either a:

- **Provider**, for functions we are directly responsible for resourcing, developing and implementing. These are services that Council is directly funded or resourced to undertake on behalf of community, and/ or
- **Partner**, where we will be working with other organisations to deliver relevant initiatives. This could be through providing knowledge, skills, expertise or resources. Partnering involves relationships from mutual agreements, to Memorandums of Understanding to Joint Venture Agreements and beyond.



Community consultation

More than 80 enthusiastic people generated range of ideas to help us develop Inclusive. The community shared examples of good practice and discussed where improvements could be made. People with lived experience of disability provided valuable input into the themes and priorities.

Working together, participants told us that people living with disability want to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Find meaning in their lives
- Make their own decisions
- Be actively involved in their communities
- Live somewhere that feels like home
- Be able to get to places
- Receive an education
- Work
- Feel safe
- Have fun
- Make friends
- Be connected and informed
- Understand their rights
- Have access to the services they need.

Participants in the community consultation considered the specific situations of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women and children. The actions in this plan take those considerations into account.

Central Goldfields Shire would also like to take this opportunity to thank the participants of the Disability Plan Working Group, for their valuable and ongoing contributions and insights throughout the development of Inclusive, we are truly grateful.



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Principles

Principles are values that guide behaviour and create a shared understanding about what is important. This plan is based on the following principles for people living with disability:

- Fundamental human rights, responsibility and autonomy
- Individual worth and dignity
- Participation in social and economic life
- The right to realise physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and intellectual capacities
- The right to make decisions, including supported decisions, and to take risks
- Access to information in appropriate forms
- Respect for cultural or linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs
- Rights to privacy and confidentiality
- Live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- Rights to pursue complaints and access justice
- Acknowledge and respect the crucial role of families, carers and significant persons
- Freedom of association and support to engage in family, social and friendship activities
- Respect the needs and rights of children as they develop
- Acknowledge and respect the abilities, strengths, goals and needs of people living with disability.



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VISION

Our vision is, an accessible and inclusive Central Goldfields Shire based on fairness and respect for people living with disability.

To achieve this vision, Inclusive focuses on the following four key themes:

- Inclusive communities for all
- Accessible communities
- Participation
- Leadership & collaboration

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1.0 - Inclusive communities for all

Social inclusion is a priority for people living with disability as it affects all aspects of their lives. It is our aim that the contributions and rights of people living with disability are valued and understood by all people in our community and that their rights are promoted, upheld and protected. We also want to ensure that people living with disability are supported to advocate for their own rights.

STRATEGY	ACTIVITY	ROLE
1.1 Provide highly accessible high quality customer service	Review Council's customer complaint process, as part of the customer service framework, to determine if enhancements are required to enable residents and staff living with disability to place a complaint for action	Provider
	Select and implement hearing assistance technology available across key Council locations	Provider
	Investigate and implement "touch screens" at Council service areas which incorporate an easy reference to all Council facilities, activities and services	Provider
	Investigate and implement the provision of key Council information in large print and/or symbols	Provider
	Review and update Council's Visual Style Guide regarding font size, colour suggestions, and use of visual symbols on Council publications	Provider
	Review and update Council's Visual Style Guide to ensure diverse images with individuals being positively represented through publications, event promotion and media are including individuals living with disability	Provider
1.2 Develop a Council website that is accessible to everyone	Develop and implement a training program to ensure a portion of staff are trained in Auslan and promote the use of Auslan throughout customer service contact points in Council	Provider
	Review and update Council's Website to ensure compliance with latest guidelines on Web accessibility	Provider
	Investigate and implement screen reader programs	Provider
1.3 Provide an accessible Mobility Map that includes information about the location of accessible toilets, playgrounds, services, car parks and accessible businesses	Provide access to a register of community services available in the community (including a disability specific section) via Council's web site	Provider
	Develop and implement a mobility map by consulting with users on content and use, update the map as required, and make it available in a range of formats	Provider



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2.0 - Accessible communities

The accessibility of the built environment, quality services and information is key to ensuring people living with disability are included and have the opportunity to equally participate in all aspects of community life. It is our aim to increase accessibility to public and community infrastructure, transport, services, information, sport and recreation and the greater community.

STRATEGY	ACTIVITY	ROLE
2.1 Meet standards for access into and within Council owned and leased buildings	Review access compliance of all Council owned buildings and facilities to ensure compliance obligations are being met	Provider
	Develop and implement an infrastructure upgrade program where Council owned facilities are non compliant with access requirements	Provider
	Conduct Council building audits to ensure compliance in emergency evacuation, stair treads, circulation spaces and lift compliance, particularly at customer contact sites	Provider
	Review and revise current procedures and evacuation plans to ensure that people living with disability are considered in Council-wide emergency plans	Provider
	Review policies on leases of Council premises to ensure accessibility features are part of these lease conditions	Provider
	Develop and implement a program of works for the provision of comprehensive change facilities at key community locations throughout the Shire	Provider
2.2 Provide accessible paths of travel into and within Council owned facilities	Undertake a review of the infrastructure surrounding council facilities and develop a program of works to address barriers to access that are identified	Provider
	Identify deficiencies in compliance in kerb ramps, tactile ground surface indicators, continuous path of travel and audio traffic signals and develop a program of works to remedy	Provider
	Develop and implement an audit of street signs to identify non-compliant signage and include recommendations is scheduled program of works	Provider
	Reduce obstructions on footpaths by developing a Safe Street Policy and program of works	Provider
2.3 Accessible public and community transport	Continue to increase percentage of compliant (Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport) at bus stops throughout the Shire	Provider
	Investigate the opportunity for Council to upgrade bus stops and shelters, and make application for funding as appropriate	Partner
	Investigate the opportunity to improve wheelchair lifters and fixing points for electric wheelchairs on public and community transport	Partner
2.4 Provide accessible parking	Ensure new car parking bays for people living with disabilities adhere to Australian Standards	Provider
	Undertake an audit of all disabled car parking bays on Council land to identify any areas of non-compliance with Australian Standards and develop a plan to upgrade non-compliant car parking bays on Council land for people living with disability	Provider
2.5 Enable safe use of mobility scooters	Develop a new policy on the safe use of electric wheelchairs and scooters in Council facilities	Provider
	Train staff in a new Electric Wheelchair (Gopher) Policy of Council	Provider
	Develop and implement a program of works for the provision of mobility scooter charging points throughout the Shire	Provider
	Partner with Vic Roads and/ or Maryborough District Health Service to conduct a community education program on safe use of self-propelled wheelchairs (electric mobility scooters)	Partner

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3.0 - Participation

Community participation is fundamental to social inclusion. It provides independence and choice, social connections and friendships, value, identity and belonging. It is our aim the people living with disability have access to inclusive places of social participation, learning and meaningful pathways to inclusive employment and volunteering opportunities.

STRATEGY	ACTIVITY	ROLE
3.1 Provide equal access to recreation, arts, and culture through activities and events	Design Council run recreation, arts and cultural activities, programs and events to encourage and involve people living with disability	Provider
	Develop an access checklist to assist in planning all events	Provider
	Promote the Companion Card to the community and the facilities which accept the Companion Card	Provider
	Review Council Grant funding guidelines and consider inclusion of a requirement to demonstrate disability access compliance where relevant	Provider
	Ensure that open space redevelopments, upgrades and maintenance follow Australian Standards and include accessibility requirements in design briefs	Provider
	Provide training to local sporting groups on attracting and supporting people living with disability	Partner
	Encourage, develop and support activities at community centres that are accessible for people living with disability	Partner
3.2 Provide equal access to employment	Review of Council's recruitment and induction processes to include analysis of practices in relation to equal access to employment opportunities for people living with disability	Provider
	Review and update Council documentation to ensure employment of people living with disability is incorporated as a procurement criteria	Provider
	Educate local business associations and businesses on the benefits of inclusive employment practices and the benefits of being accessible businesses	Partner
3.3 Provide equal access to volunteering	Provide opportunities for people living with disability to volunteer at Council	Provider
	Review volunteer induction processes and include information and awareness on and working with customers living with disability where appropriate	Provider
	Ensure that coordinators of Council programs utilizing volunteers are able to provide appropriate level of support, including support related to disability	Provider
3.4 Provide equal access to community support	Continue to provide home library service to people who are unable to visit the library due to living with disability	Provider
	Actively promote the availability of public computers fitted with a screen magnifier and Trackball mouse for people with vision impairment and/or motor skill limitations	Provider

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4.0 - Leadership & collaboration

People living with disability want to have a greater role in leading and contributing to community decision-making. It is our aim that the perspectives of people living with disability are actively sought and that they are supported to participate meaningfully in community consultation and engagement activities.

STRATEGY	ACTIVITY	ROLE
4.1 Engage people living with disability in Council planning	Ensure that all Council plans promote accessible and equitable development when planning for the community into the future	Provider
	Ensure Council planning staff members are aware of universal and adaptable access standards for buildings and particularly for housing; enabling people to remain in their homes longer	Provider
	Develop a process to encourage young people living with disability to be more involved in Council governance	Provider
4.2 Train Council staff to be aware of legislative requirements and Council plans	Provide training for all staff on disability awareness; and specific training on the Access to Premises – Buildings Standards for relevant staff	Provider
4.3 Promote community understanding of disability issues	Investigate and implement opportunities to acknowledge the contribution made by carers	Provider
	Develop and implement a process and criteria to recognise and reward businesses and services that are accessible and promote inclusive practices	Provider
	Work with the media to showcase achievements and promote positive stories and images of people living with disability	Partner
	Consider engaging one of the many motivational speakers living with disability to speak at Council events as required	Partner
4.4 Form alliances and partnerships that enable enhanced experiences for individuals living with disability	Develop in partnership an Inclusive Plan Leadership Group with key sector representatives	Partner
	Develop in partnership a Inclusive Plan community advisory committee	Partner
	Develop in partnership a community of practice to share strategies for improving the experience for individuals living with disability across the Shire	Partner



ENSURING INCLUSIVE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

We want Inclusive to generate meaningful change and we also recognise there is still a lot of work ahead. Linking this Plan along with other Council strategies will be required to ensure integration and successful implementation. Monitoring of success is intended to be overseen by the Disability Advisory Committee over the five-year life of the Plan.

We will incorporate the activities within this plan into each business unit's annual operational plan. We will report on our progress each year.

Achieving our vision will take time, extensive collaboration and ongoing reflection. This is why consultation with the community will continue, giving us the opportunity to adapt to the evolving needs of people living with disability.





**CENTRAL
GOLDFIELDS**
SHIRE COUNCIL