

**STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**2 JUNE 2008** **POLICY AND PLANNING**

<b>A1</b>	<b>DISABILITY ACTION PLAN</b>
<b>LOCATION/ADDRESS:</b>	
<b>RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>DAVID YEOUART EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ASSETS AND SERVICES</b>
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	<b>SAM HEWETT MANAGER ASSET SERVICES</b>
<b>FILE NO.:</b>	<b>22/02/12</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<b>ATTACHMENT #1 - DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2008-2012</b> <b>ATTACHMENT #2 – SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS FROM DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2003 -2008</b>

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The City of Port Phillip's Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2003 – 2008 is a document which outlines Council's commitment to increasing accessibility to Council information, Council services and to the built environment for people with disabilities, their families and their carers.
- 1.2. The current Disability Action Plan is to expire in June 2008 and a new Disability Action Plan is required.
- 1.3. This report seeks endorsement of the new Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 and seeks to highlight significant achievements and actions from the existing plan.

**2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1. In 2002, Council endorsed the first 5-year Disability Action Plan 2003-2008 which listed actions from various departments across the organisation for completion within the coming 5-year timeframe.
- 2.2. In this plan, a total of 3 underlying principles were established to frame the DAP – these included;
  - Commitment to access and inclusion in the delivery of services
  - Committed to the removal of barriers to people with disabilities
  - Commitment to consultation with people with disabilities.
- 2.3. A total of 6 strategies were identified which would drive actions. These included
  - An organisational culture that ensured barriers to access are removed
  - Develop accessible communication tools and processes
  - Improve access to Council services and facilities
  - Directly provide services to people with disabilities
  - Consult with people with disabilities to develop and review the Disability Action Plans
  - Ensure contractors consider people with disabilities as they deliver services on behalf of Council.
- 2.4. Actions and responsible departments were identified with timeframes listed for completion of the actions. Each year since 2003, Council has been informed of progress made on actions listed in the plan. Actions that have improved access or removed barriers to access for people with disabilities and are significant, are listed in Attachment #2 - Significant Achievements from Disability Action Plan 2003 -2008.
- 2.5. In December 2006, a decision was made by Council to establish a number of Access and Inclusion Reference Groups which were to be made up of residents with disabilities and their families to assist Council to set priorities for the new Disability Action Plan.
- 2.6. In December 2007, consultation began on developing a new Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012.
- 2.7. A key principle of the new Disability Action Plan was to ensure that all Council Departments had actions listed against them in the plan. In December and January, consultation occurred with each department of Council to identify actions for the plan, generate energy for the accessibility topic, identify champions to drive compliance and to ensure Council received recognition for improving access regardless of the size and/or profile of the action.
- 2.8. The key drivers for the new Action Plan included the following:

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- Opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in consultation and decision making processes;
  - Improved staff awareness and understanding of the needs of people with disabilities;
  - Accessible information and communication processes;
  - Improved physical access to buildings and the built environment;
  - Accessible programs, facilities and services;
  - Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;
  - Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;
  - Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability;
  - Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.
- 2.9. Three divisional Access and Inclusion Reference Groups were convened and met concurrently for the first time in February 2008 and were presented with a list of draft actions from the internal staff consultations. The Access and Inclusion Reference Groups prioritized this list into those they thought warranted some attention for the new action plan (These actions have been included in the Disability Action Plan 2008 -2012)
- 2.10. In March 2008, the Disability Action Group (a staff group to drive the actions) was re-established with cross divisional support and representation. This group are to meet bi-monthly with the aim of ensuring actions are completed, to report back on achievements and to assist the organisation to increase the consciousness of improving access for people with disabilities and their carers.
- 2.11. In August 2008, the Access and Inclusion Reference Groups will be called to a joint meeting with the Victorian Disability Advisory Council (VDAC) principally to launch the new Action Plan and to celebrate achievements of the existing plan. It is also intended to launch a Mobility Map project and an Accessible Dining Guide at that time. The role of the VDAC is to provide advice to the Minister in respect of whole of government policies and strategies to increase the participation of people with a disability in the Victorian Community. This is an opportunity for the City of Port Phillip to promote the new Disability Action Plan 2008 -2012.
- 2.12. As with the existing plan, it is intended to lodge the new Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

**3. RECOMMENDED OPTION**

- 3.1. Endorse the Disability Action Plan 2008 -2012 as a commitment to improving access for people with disabilities and their carers to services, information and to the built environment.
- 3.2. Lodge the Disability Action Plan 2008 -2012 with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)
- 3.3. Nominates the Disability Action Group to monitor the action plan and report back to Council annually on achievements for that previous year.
- 3.4. Notes the progress made on actions listed in the existing Disability Action Plan 2003 – 2008.
- 3.5. **Sustainability assessment**

***SOCIAL EQUITY***

Social Pillar	The social benefits to the community are clear and have been endorsed by the Access and Inclusion Reference Group. These actions are consistent with existing Council policy through the Community Plan and Council plan. Increasing access to information, services and to the built environment should ensure universal access for all residents including those with a disability. Particular emphasis has been placed on supporting carers of people with disabilities through this action plan. There are also actions listed which will assist and support visitors with disabilities to access all that the municipality offers.
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***ECONOMIC VIABILITY***

Economic Pillar	The social benefits to the community of actions through this action plan does not necessarily equate to an increase in the cost of their implementation. Many actions identified are initiatives that are a part of Council's core business and were to be completed in any event. Further, if planning is done well in the beginning, it is estimated that there will be savings made through reducing the need to retro-fit buildings and the built environment which has proved to be expensive in the past.
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***ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY***

Environmental Pillar	There are no negative impacts on the environment through the implementation of this action plan. There are actions planned for Council's parks and open spaces to improve access particularly for people in wheelchairs and there are other actions planned for Sporting grounds and facilities as well as access to the foreshore and beach. All of the above will increase access to the open space assets that Port Phillip boasts
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**CULTURAL VITALITY**

Cultural Pillar	Many of the actions in the plan are specifically targeted at people with disabilities who speak a language other than English. The intent of the plan is to provide universal access for all services, information and the built environment and in order to do this Council departments have developed individual strategies and actions to ensure that their service is able to respond to all residents regardless of their cultural needs.
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**3.6. Policy and legislative implications**

- 3.5.1 This action plan has been developed with a strong focus on Council's obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (2006) particularly in relation to council's implementation of providing the framework for a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to enable people with a disability to more actively participate in the life of the community.
- 3.5.2 Council has a legislated obligation to develop and monitor actions either through a disability action plan or through the Council Plan. Council has complied with this responsibility through the development of the original plan 2003-2008 and this new plan will continue our compliance.
- 3.5.3 Council will meet its obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act (1995) through the implementation of this action plan. This is particularly relevant to the discrimination of people because they might have a disability in the provision of employment and of all services.
- 3.5.4 This action plan has been developed in conjunction with all City of Port Phillip departments and is consistent with policy decisions taken and made by Council before. These decisions include the Ageing Well Policy, the Municipal Early Years Plan, the Tourism Policy, the Footpath Trading policy, Parking Policy, and Council's previous decisions regarding Access and Inclusion Reference Groups and the Disability Action Plan 2003 -2008.
- 3.5.5 This action plan has made reference to and is consistent with Council's commitments in the City of Port Phillip Community Plan 2007 – 2017 and the Council Plan 2007 – 2008.

**3.7. Risk implications**

- 3.6.1 There are risks to Council associated with failing to providing access to services, information and the built environment. People who believe they have been discriminated against may lodge a complaint to the Disability Commissioner, to the HREOC or through to Council itself where the complaints process would need to be accessible. Council may be exposed if it fails to meet access obligations.
- 3.6.2 Council maybe at risk by failing to maintain the built environment to the degree that people with disabilities cannot easily navigate around

the municipality. These risks and any subsequent insurance claim will have a direct financial cost to Council but also adversely impact on Council's reputation as one that provides an accessible municipality. Trip hazards, pram crossings, parking spaces, and access to buildings have particular emphasis in this action plan.

**3.8. Resource implications**

3.7.1 There are resource costs associated with implementing the Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 in relation to the establishment of the Disability Action Group (council's internal monitoring mechanism) and through the establishment of the Access and Inclusion Reference Groups (external monitoring group). However, existing operational budgets will absorb these costs.

3.7.2 There are costs associated with the implementation of actions listed in the plan but it is expected that departments will meet their obligations to complete actions using existing resources.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2006 is clear about Councils' choices in relation to whether they have a Disability Action Plan. In short, the DDA states that if Councils choose not to have a Disability Action Plan then the individual Council Plan must include and explicitly address the following principles and develop actions as a way of increasing access.

- Improved access to services
- Access to employment
- Access to participate and be included
- Ensure a change of attitudes towards people with disabilities

Council may choose to have the above 4 principles addressed in the Council plan but to address the rights of people with disabilities into a specific action plan gives a stronger message of how seriously Council intend to treat access and inclusion issues.

**4.2. Alternative 1**

Council may choose to address the 4 basic principles listed in the Disability Discrimination Act 2006 via the Council Plan. However, to address access and inclusion separately with specific and targeted actions for the whole organization and to address the whole municipality via a Disability Action Plan gives greater weight to the importance of the topic.

**4.2.1. Sustainability assessment**

Social Equity Pillar	No change
Economic Viability Pillar	No change
Environmental Responsibility Pillar	No change
Cultural Vitality Pillar	No change

**4.2.2. Policy and legislative implications**

No change.

**4.2.3. Risk implications**

No change.

**4.2.4. Resource implications**

No change.

**5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

**5.1. Internal**

5.1.1. The people who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are

- Every Department Manager
- Selected Co-ordinators and staff of the City of Port Phillip
- Metro Access Project Officer
- Disability Action Group

**5.2. External**

5.2.1. The external people and/or organisations who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

- The state Department of Human Services

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- Representatives from Consultants "Strategic Essentials" as part of their review of state Disability Action Plans
- Consultants Morris Goding Accessibility Consultants who consulted on the St. Kilda Festival Site and the Triangle Site
- The Older Persons' Consultative Committee
- Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Groups
- Other Local Governments
- Residents through Disability Public Consultation Forums

**6. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1. The Disability Action Group will be responsible for monitoring the successful completion of the Disability Action Plan items each year and will report on achievements. Individual departments will be encouraged to manage and monitor the actions via use of Council's existing tools (Department Action Manager)
- 6.2. The Access and Inclusion Reference Group will be responsible for ensuring priority actions are identified each year and they are communicated back to City of Port Phillip Departments and business units
- 6.3. The Access and Inclusion Reference Group will be jointly meeting with the Victorian Disability Advisory Council (VDAC) in part to launch the City of Port Phillip's Disability Action Plan 2008 - 2012

**7. COMMUNICATION**

- 7.1. The key communication is that Council is committed to improving access for people with disabilities and their carers to services, to information and to the built environment. This will be done by removing barriers to access and developing initiatives which promote universal access to services, information and to the built environment.
- 7.2. The City of Port Phillip's Disability Action Plan 2008 -2012 will be placed on Council's website and will be lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)
- 7.3. Articles to promote the Disability Action Plan will be written for Council's Divercity magazine to coincide with its launch.

**8. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Strategy and Policy Review Committee recommend that Council resolve to:

- 8.1. Endorse the Disability Action Plan 2008 -2012 as a commitment to improving access for people with disabilities and their carers to services, information and to the built environment.
- 8.2. Lodge the Disability Action Plan 2008 -2012 with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)
- 8.3. Nominates the Disability Action Group to monitor the action plan and report back to Council annually on achievements for that previous year.
- 8.4. Notes the progress made on actions listed in the existing Disability Action Plan 2003 – 2008.