

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
JULY 13 2009**

6.	DISABILITY ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	N/A
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	DAVID YEOUART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ASSETS AND SERVICES
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FILE NO.:	22/02/12
ATTACHMENTS:	ATTACHMENT #1 – DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2008 - 2012 ATTACHMENT #2 – DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2008 – 2012 ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The City of Port Phillip's Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 outlines Council's commitment to increasing accessibility to Council information, Council services and to the built environment for people with disabilities, their carers and their families.
- 1.2 Each year of the 5-year Disability Action Plan, Council was promised a progress report outlining those actions in the Plan which have been successfully completed in the previous year.
- 1.3 This is the first annual compliance report since Council adopted the Plan on June 2, 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 2.1 Receive the first annual compliance report for the Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012, noting that Council continues to increase accessibility for people with disabilities to council information, council services and the built environment by delivering the current Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Actions and responsible departments were identified with timeframes listed for completion of those actions. Each year since 2003, Council has been informed of progress made on actions listed in the plan.
- 3.3 In December 2007, consultation began on developing the new Disability Action Plan for the period 2008 – 2012.

Strategic intent of the Disability Action Plan 2008 - 2012

- 3.4 In developing Council's Disability Action Plans, the following strategies underpinned the Plan;
- Creating an organisational culture (and following on from this practices and procedures) that ensures barriers to access and inclusion are removed progressively within the organisation
 - Developing and implementing accessible and inclusive communication tools and processes that ensure people with a disability are given the opportunity to be informed about all aspects of council services and can access them.
 - Progressively implementing better access to, and inclusion within, council facilities and services for all people with a disability
 - Providing direct services to people with disabilities and their carers
 - Consulting with disabled people, their carers and community agencies in the further development, implementation and review of the Disability Action Plan
 - Ensuring that all those who provide service on behalf of council (e.g. contractors) consider the needs of people with a disability and their carers in the delivery of services
- 3.5 The City of Port Phillip is committed to the concept of 'Access for All' and supports the fundamental rights of all people including people with disabilities to access all Council services facilities, programs and employment opportunities. Council does this by ensuring that all residents and visitors could fully participate in the business of local government -
- in the democracy of their local government,
 - can easily receive and provide services,
 - can readily access relevant information which was easy to understand,

- can participate in activities provide by and on behalf of council,
 - can enjoy the built environment of the municipality
- 3.6 A key principle of the new Disability Action Plan was to ensure that all council departments had actions listed against them in the Plan. At the time the current Plan was in development, it was considered that it was only going to have the required impact if accessibility to all Council business was a priority. The integrity of the Plan would be compromised if there were some services, information or the built environment that was inaccessible to people with disabilities and their carers.
- 3.7 The key drivers for the Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 include the following:
- 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 to eliminate the discrimination against persons with a disability.

Process

- 3.8 In June 2008, Council adopted its second 5 year plan - the Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 (Attachment #1 – Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012).
- 3.9 The Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 was then lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).
- 3.10 In March 2008, the Disability Action Group (a staff group who drive the actions) was re-established with cross divisional support and representation. This group regularly meets with the aim of ensuring actions are completed, to

report back on achievements and to assist the organisation to improve access for people with disabilities and their carers.

- 3.11 The success of the Plan can be measured by the number of actions that were achieved against the number of actions promised. Of the 208 actions promised in year 1 of the Plan, all bar 4 actions have been completed (these four are highlighted on Attachment #2 – Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 Annual Compliance Report).
- 3.12 There have been some items raised by residents during the year on particular access issues which will require some additional attention in the coming year. These items include;
- Site specific pram crossings
 - Disabled car parking enforcement
 - Footpath trading, footpath trip hazards, trees overhanging footpaths.
- 3.13 Residents and staff can request that new initiatives be added to the Plan at any time throughout the year and these will be reported to Council through the annual compliance report. A total of 2 new initiatives have been added to the Plan in year 1. In addition, some actions promised for delivery in year 2 (and beyond) of the Plan have been achieved early.

4. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

Organisation Departments

- 4.1 The Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 lists each organisational department and the commitments of that department to people with disabilities, their carers and families. In developing the Plan, each of those sixteen departments was consulted about what they could do to improve access for people with disabilities.
- 4.2 Throughout the year, those departments were regularly consulted about the progress they were making towards completing actions they had committed to which had made information, services or the built environment more accessible.

Disability Action Group

- 4.3 An internal cross-divisional group has met regularly throughout the year to assist to drive the actions listed in the plan and to drive some cultural change towards a more accessible Port Phillip. This group had representation from

- 4.3.1 Community Services

- 4.3.2 Culture and Recreation
- 4.3.3 Infrastructure Services
- 4.3.4 Information Technology
- 4.3.5 Finance
- 4.3.6 Environment and Renewal
- 4.3.7 Asset Services
- 4.3.8 People and Culture
- 4.3.9 Community Development and Engagement
- 4.3.10 Organisational Systems and Support

Access and Inclusion Reference Group

- 4.4 In order to develop the Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012, a resident representative group was developed and consulted with. This group met twice in the previous 12 months in order to assist Council to set priorities for the action plan. Their priorities have been included in year 1 of the Plan.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN

In the Council Plan 2009 – 2013 Council has identified the compliance to the Disability Action Plan as a priority.

“3. Strengthening Our Diverse and Inclusive Community”

“3.1 – Pursuit of social equity – foster a fairer city by promoting diversity, inclusion, access and equity, and supporting community interaction.”

“3.1.4 – Strategy – Provide for equitable access to a range of services by (action)”

“Review and implement the Disability Action Plan”

- 5.1.1 This report demonstrates compliance with the Council Plan.

5.2 POLICY IMPLICATIONS PLAN

- 5.2.1 The Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 has been developed with a strong focus on Council's obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) particularly in relation to council's implementation 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.
- 5.2.2 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 this action plan.
- 5.2.3 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 services.
- 5.2.4 This action plan is consistent with other Council policy decisions. 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 previous Disability Action Plan.
- 5.2.5 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 2009 - 2013.

5.3 FINANCE / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.3.1 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 group). However, existing operational budgets will absorb these costs.
- 5.3.2 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 without requiring additional resources.
- 5.3.3 A small budget is available to finance actions which cannot be met through departmental budgets and which benefit the whole municipality. In 2008/2009 this budget paid for,
- The Council Chamber Hearing Loop.
 - Costs associated with the International Day for People with Disabilities (November 2008)
 - Costs associated with the development of the Disability Framework.

- Access training

5.4 LEGAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1 There are risks to Council associated with failing to providing appropriate 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 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 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.
- 5.4.2 Council may be 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.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

6.1 TIMELINE

- 6.1.1 The Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2012 has been in operation for one year.
- 6.1.2 The Disability Action Group will continue to meet regularly throughout the year to monitor actions listed in the plan and to assist to drive cultural change towards a more accessible City.
- 6.1.3 In July 2010, Council will receive the next Disability Action Plan compliance report.

6.2 COMMUNICATION

- 6.2.1 Council is committed to an accessible municipality.
- 6.2.2 This will be done by removing barriers to access and developing initiatives which promote universal access to services, information and to the built environment.
- 6.2.3 Media releases and articles which promote a more accessible Port Phillip will appear in Diversity and the local press throughout the year as appropriate.
- 6.2.4 Council staff are committed to continually improving their services to improve access to all.