Mount Alexander Shire Council

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2023–2027

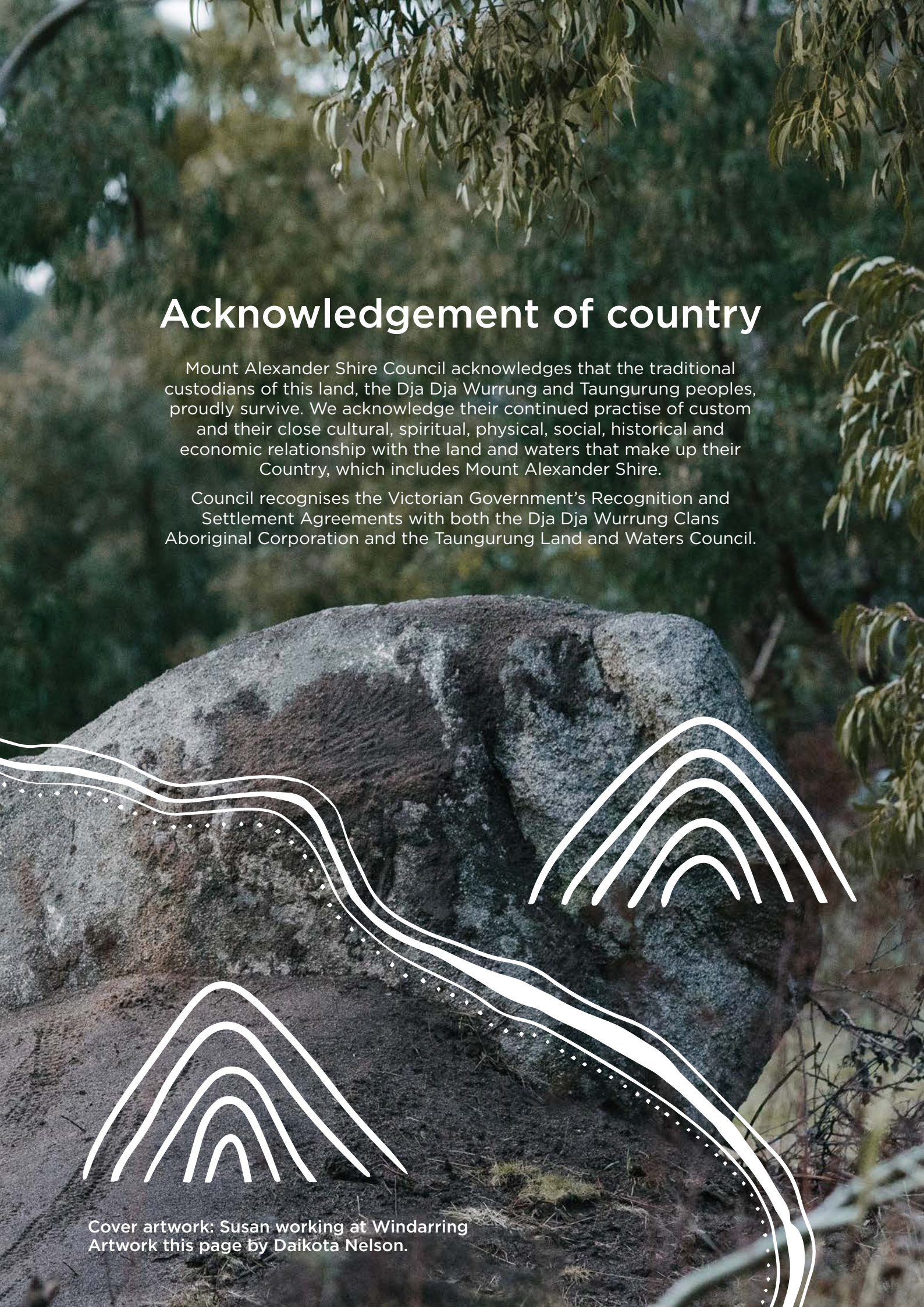
Working together for a healthy, connected shire

Mount Alexander
Shire Council

Acknowledgement of country

Mount Alexander Shire Council acknowledges that the traditional custodians of this land, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples, proudly survive. We acknowledge their continued practise of custom and their close cultural, spiritual, physical, social, historical and economic relationship with the land and waters that make up their Country, which includes Mount Alexander Shire.

Council recognises the Victorian Government's Recognition and Settlement Agreements with both the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council.



Cover artwork: Susan working at Windarring
Artwork this page by Daikota Nelson.

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If you would like this plan in a different format please contact the Social Equity and Inclusion Officer on:

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Mayor and CEO's message

Councillor Rosie Annear
Mayor
Mount Alexander Shire Council

I'm thrilled to present Mount Alexander Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027.

From the start, we wanted this plan to be genuine, inclusive, and highly informed by the voices of people within our communities who live with a disability, care for someone with a disability, or provide disability support services.

Fundamental to achieving this, was the formation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan working group, who helped guide and shape this plan.

I was fortunate enough to sit on this group, and cannot thank the members enough for being so generous with their time, energy, and passion, and for sharing themselves and their stories so willingly. I learned a lot about the impacts of both visible and invisible disabilities, and the barriers that exist – in our shire and beyond – which are preventing many from having the same opportunities as those who live without a disability.

This plan is a work of collaboration and genuine intention to make our shire a place where everyone feels safe and like they belong, have access to the services they need and the spaces and places they want to be, and equal opportunities to participate in daily life.

It's important to remember that it is everyone's responsibility to make sure that we don't inadvertently create barriers for people living with a disability, through our language, attitudes, movements, places and spaces, and events. To truly achieve an equitable, accessible, welcoming, and safe community for everyone, we all have a role to play.

Darren Fuzzard
Chief Executive Officer
Mount Alexander Shire Council

In my early days at Mount Alexander Shire I had the privilege of experiencing a training session initiated by the Mount Alexander Shire Disability Action Group called The Realistic Race.

The purpose of the training was to give myself, and many other Council staff, a brief but powerful insight into the everyday challenges that people with disability experience in getting about our towns and in being a part of our community. It also showed me how brave you must have to be to feel so vulnerable but to do it anyway.

The many initiatives included in this plan are, I hope, a clear statement about how our organisation will do what we can to help make it easier for anyone with a disability to enjoy being an active, respected member of our community. I also hope it means anyone with a disability doesn't have to feel quite so brave to do that because they know they are in a community that values and cares about them.

The plan was developed in accordance with the Victorian Disability Act 2006 and relates directly to the strategic objectives outlined in our Council Plan 2021-2025. It focuses on the following key areas:

- Equal, respectful, and dignified access
- Opportunities and access to employment, volunteering, education, and economic participation
- Promote inclusion and participation and agency in civic life
- Change the attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination of people with disability
- Wellbeing and Safety

Within these five key areas are nearly 60 actions that will be led by teams throughout Council. In doing so, I know it is our whole organisation's hope that it will deliver genuine, meaningful and achievable results that have positive impacts on the lives of community members with disabilities for many years to come.

Image: Accessible parklets

Disability Action Plan Working Group Message

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been developed through significant consultation with people with disabilities, their carers and families, and disability advocates and allies. This diversity extends to us, the working group, and as a collective we have been able to bring many interesting and valid perspectives to this plan. Our insights and experiences have helped to create a planning foundation for Council to dispel discrimination experienced by people with disabilities.

As a group we have illustrated how to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and carers so we can all enjoy a fulfilling life without barriers, have equal access and opportunities and feel included to participate in all aspects of life within the Mount Alexander Shire.

We have been very impressed by the commitment of the Council in listening to our voices to help inform a plan that really reflects the needs of the community.

Mount Alexander Shire Council is taking a role in these progressive steps to ensure that everyone within the Shire feels included, safe and welcome in the community.

What is an action plan?

An action plan is a way to develop, monitor and evaluate strategies and initiatives that Council undertakes. It's a framework we will use to make sure we're doing the best we can to support our community. This Disability Inclusion Action Plan includes activities that various Council teams will undertake over its four-year lifespan.

Throughout the implementation of this plan we will measure our progress allowing us to work towards our goals and ultimately improving our services and community for everyone.

How this plan was developed

We approached this plan by looking at disability through a model of social inclusion, human rights and social equity.

We worked with members of our Disability Inclusion Action Plan Working Group, carers, service providers and individuals with disability, and consulted with the community in a variety of ways to make sure our plan reflects the needs of our community.

Members of the working group included the Mayor, Council staff, community members with disability, carers and representatives of Castlemaine Library and Sports Focus. The working group met regularly discussing research, data and best practice, and shared lived experiences. The group was also involved in workshops and undertaking broad community consultation including surveys and community drop in sessions.

We engaged with the different areas of Council to understand how disability intersects with each team's work and how, at Council, we can all improve. The development and implementation of this plan is a whole of Council commitment.

Most importantly, the foundation of this plan has been developed from all the stories, experiences and voices we heard from our community. It has been a privilege to speak with, listen to and learn from our community. The objectives, actions and outcomes of this plan are a reflection of these interactions.

From our consultation, we established a vison for where we'd like to see Mount Alexander Shire be in the future, and five key areas of focus to help to get us there.

> "We're excited that the Shire is taking this step to ensure that everyone within the shire feels safe, welcomed and included in the community"

Feedback from DAIP Working Group member

Our vision

Our shire is a place that embraces diversity and works together to remove barriers to become genuinely inclusive of people with disabilities.

Our shire is a safe place where everybody can be their authentic self without prejudice and where differences and individual successes are celebrated.

A note on language and terminology

Language is a powerful tool that can influence how a person with disability feels and sees themselves and how they are viewed and treated within society. Language can be used to nurture inclusion, change attitudes and foster disability pride.

The language we use should be respectful and considered and not reinforce existing stereotypes and produce unintended barriers. This plan acknowledges that language evolves with time and can be subjective.

In this plan, we were guided by our working group as well as the *Inclusive Victoria - State disability plan 2022-2026* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* to use 'person-first' language. Throughout this plan we say 'person with disability.' This terminology understands that a person's disability is not a defining feature of who they are.

However, we recognise that many people with disability have different preferences and may choose to use 'identity-first' language. 'Identity-first' language puts a person's disability identity before the person, for example you would say 'disabled person'. For many, their disability is a key element of their identity that connects them to a community for which they proudly advocate.

Social model of disability

Definitions of disability are broad and vary across contexts such as medical, social, human rights and charitable. Not one definition works for every person or situation; however, defining disability can be helpful for people to understand medical needs, receive supports and services, and to fight discrimination.

In this plan, we use the term 'disability' in the context of the social model of disability, which describes disability as a social construct. The social model of disability recognises that it is the interaction between people with disability and inaccessible communities and environments that prevents full and equal participation.

Artwork: Guns and Roses by Ned Middleton

Disability in our community

People with disability have the same rights as other members of the community (*Disability Act 2006*). This includes all disabilities, both visible and invisible, temporary or permanent. However, the statistics and anecdotal evidence show how people with disability are treated unfairly, have fewer opportunities and experience poorer health and wellbeing outcomes.

Every person within a community can play a role in reversing these statistics by being inclusive. An inclusive community works at its best when all citizens of the same community have the opportunity to live, work, contribute and participate without barriers or obstacles to do so. An inclusive community brings benefit to everyone.

> Disability is a normal part of life. Disability is diverse and affects people of all ages. Much disability is not obvious and is invisible

Feedback from DAIP Working Group member

National 2021

1 in 6 people in Australia have a disability

Half of these require daily assistance with self-care, mobility and/or communication

1 in 2 people over the age of 65 has a disability[1]

1 in 4 disabilities are invisible, mental or behavioural[2]

5 in 10 people with disability are employed compared with 8 in 10 people without disability[3]

Mount Alexander Shire in 2021

20,253 people called Mount Alexander home

5.7% have disability that require daily assistance with self-care, mobility and/or communication

17% of people provided unpaid care to someone with disability or a chronic illness[4]

44% of people with disability left school before completing year 11 compared with 19% of those without disability[5]

3x People with disability are 3x more likely to experience family violence[6]

Image: Kate from Windarring

[1] ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021, Census findings.
[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW, People with disability in Australia 2022 report
[3] Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan 2022-2026, Victorian Government 2022, p.14
[4] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021, Census
[5] Ibid
[6] Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan 2022-2026, Victorian Government 2022, p.14

Council's role

We acknowledge that the work we do, and how we do it (our actions), has a direct impact on how people feel about living in our shire.

This plan outlines the steps that will be taken to contribute to our shire being a place where everyone feels safe, feels that they belong and has the opportunity to fully participate in daily activities. We have the ability and responsibility to ensure our policies, programs and services function in an inclusive way that has considered the needs of all people who move throughout the shire.

This plan focuses on how Council can improve inclusion by removing barriers and increasing awareness, and aims to deliver genuine, meaningful and achievable results. We will look inward at how our organisation operates and behaves, and educate ourselves to improve the way that we work and interact with people. We will also work in partnership with people who experience disability within our community and other organisations to achieve our vision.

> "Outcomes are very important to be realistic, achievable and deliverable but also leading to systemic change and reform"

Feedback from DAIP Working Group member

Relationship between Disability Inclusion Action Plan and the Council Plan

		Vision: Working together for a healthy, connected shire		
Council Plan	**Key Principle**	We are engaging genuinely with the community		
	Key Pillar	A healthy, connected, and inclusive community		
	Key Objectives	Services in our community are accessible and coordinated	Our community is inclusive and connected	
		Our community feels safe, regardless of identity or circumstances	Our community is supported to be physically and mentally healthy	
	Key strategies	Improve accessibility of Council services	Implementing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan	
		Increase access to inclusive and usable spaces for all seasons	Recognise, support and celebrate the diversity within our community	
Related Plans and strategies	**Foundational work**	**Disability Inclusion Action Plan**	Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan	
		Climate Change Declaration	Reconciliation Plan	Gender Equality Action Plan

The legislative environment

Local governments have many legal responsibilities to protect the rights of people with disability. Under Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, people have a right to be protected against discrimination due to their disability and councils have a responsibility to uphold this right.

Councils must act consistently with this charter and comply with a range of federal and state human rights laws that protect people from discrimination.

A list of local, state, national and international legislation, plans and strategies that relate to this plan is provided in Appendix 1.

Victorian Disability Act 2006

The *Victorian Disability Act 2006*[7] requires all councils, as state entities, to develop a disability action plan. The Act sets out four key areas that the disability action plan needs to address:

1. reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;
2. reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;
3. promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability;
4. achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

These four areas form the basis of the first four key areas of this plan, along with a fifth key area focusing on wellbeing and safety.

It became evident through our consultation that a focus is required on people's emotional safety and wellbeing to acknowledge the risks many people with disability face due to vulnerable situations they experience, for example being isolated and reliant on others to complete daily activities.

Artwork: Bear by Tegwen Prest

[7] During the time this plan was being developed the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* was being reviewed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to ensure that legislation is 'contemporary' and 'fit for purpose'. The Department was considering issues to be incorporated into two separate pieces of legislation relating to safeguards and rights *(Disability Act Amendment Bill)* and inclusion for people with disability *(Disability Inclusion Bill)* and establishing an office of Disability Inclusion Commissioner. The proposed new Act would establish different responsibilities councils have in relation to disability action plans. These requirements were not finalised and legislated at the time of the development of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Image: Jason working at Windarring

Our five key areas

The key areas of this plan have been informed by our community and internal consultation. The community survey and key stakeholder interviews asked a variety of questions about how Council could improve its services, programs and facilities to be more inclusive of people with disabilities, as well as questions about how included people feel about living and participating in our shire.

The following tables list our five key areas, their associated objectives and the intended impact we are aiming to achieve in each area. The themes that emerged from our community consultation and subsequently helped to inform each key area are also included in these tables.

Equal, respectful and dignified access

Opportunities and access to employment, volunteering, education and economic participation

Promote inclusion, participation and agency in civic life

Change the attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination of people with disability

Wellbeing and Safety

Key area 1: Equal, respectful and dignified access

What we heard from our community	Many people with disability and their carers do not feel equal to other people in our community. They feel as though infrastructure is designed without an understanding of their diverse needs. Our community told us the difficulties they have travelling on uneven or unsealed paths, navigating around planted up nature strips and traders' items, and the limitations of how far you can travel due to the limited number of accessible paths. Accessible car parking was a significant concern, with the location, size, quantity and safe passage to the footpath highlighted as areas to be assessed.
Objectives	• Our policies, procedures and guidelines support disability inclusion and accessibility. • Our workforce has the knowledge and skills to deliver projects, programs and services that have considered disability inclusion and accessibility. • Our Council is committed to supporting accessible and inclusive projects. • Council buildings, facilities, parks and infrastructure are inclusive of people with disabilities. • Improve access to Council information. • Improve the way we facilitate the Accessible Parking Scheme. • Support clear access to businesses.
Intended impact	Our community has equal access to all areas of Council, including facilities, services and information.

> "Largely, this community is kind and if I do participate, it's ok. Getting there independently is the main issue as the pathways and roads are difficult to use."

Feedback from community survey respondent

Key area 2: Opportunities and access to employment, volunteering, education and economic participation

What we heard from our community	Council needs to lead as an employer of people with disability and take a leading role in supporting and educating businesses and organisations on the value of being inclusive of people with disability. Additional support is often required for those with a disability to succeed in their economic and education endeavours.
Objectives	• Create new opportunities for people with disabilities to join the Mount Alexander Shire Council (MASC) workforce. • MASC will be a leader in disability inclusive employment. • Support businesses to become successful disability employers. • Champion disability enterprise.
Intended impact	Our community understands the value of diversity in the workforce and supports entrepreneurship and personal agency.

> “Employers and the broader community need not just focus on a person’s capability to achieve work or education outcomes, but the whole person and what they contribute to the work or education space over and above their role.”

Feedback from disability service provider

Key area 3: Promote inclusion, participation and agency in civic life

What we heard from our community	Our community provided considerable feedback about what makes a person feel like they belong and how they are able to connect with their community. This feedback also related to people's experiences of feeling respected and seen for who they are, not what their disability says about them. This extended to attitudes as well as physical access to spaces and information. People want to feel a part of something and have a purpose.
Objectives	• Council run events are accessible. • Sports clubs, social clubs and committees are inclusive of people with a disability. • Community events and activities are accessible.
Intended impact	Our community will feel valued, purposeful, connected and included.

> "See me, not just my disability
>
> Having a valued role in the community not just a recipient of service"

Feedback from community survey respondents

Key area 4: Change the attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination of people with disability

What we heard from our community	Diversity of disability and the impact of overlapping of identities (e.g. gender, sexual orientation and age) needs to be understood and celebrated. There is a need for education and training in disability awareness, mental health and other specific disabilities to promote inclusion
Objectives	• Advocate for change. • Our workforce is educated, flexible and respectful. • Our community is educated, inclusive and respectful. • We will recognise and celebrate disability inclusion. • Support businesses, events & tourism operators to be more accessible and inclusive. • Support not for profit organisations to become accessible and inclusive.
Intended impact	Our community is welcoming and celebrates diversity and achievements. Our people are proud of our community.

> People don't understand my disability, so my needs are not met and I can't engage

Feedback from community survey respondents

Key area 5: Wellbeing and safety

What we heard from our community	Council programs and services need to be inclusive of people of all abilities. Our playgrounds need to be welcoming, fun spaces with better fencing and amenities so people feel comfortable and safe. People want more opportunities to connect with services, activities and each other. Older people and people with diverse needs require more consideration regarding their vulnerabilities.
Objectives	• Council run social support programs and youth programs are inclusive of people with neurodiversity. • Parents and carers of children living with disability are informed and connected. • Children of all abilities can play in a safe and welcoming environment. • Accessible and affordable housing. • Improve support for young carers. • Support people with disabilities to plan for emergencies. • Highlight the increased risk of family violence for people with disabilities. • Advocate for older adults with disabilities.
Intended impact	Our community feels equal and safe, and is physically, mentally and socially healthy and resilient.

> Crossing the road between the Botanical Gardens and the Mill is fraught and dangerous

> More awareness and accommodations in place in community spaces, events, and facilities specifically for people with Autism and serious mental illness

Feedback top from Windarring participant

Feedback bottom from community survey respondent

Artwork: Golden Point by Lorraine Le Plastrier

Measuring progress

In accordance with the *Victorian Disability Act (2006)* a progress report will be provided each year in Council's annual report. In addition, Council officers will meet at regular intervals with the Disability Inclusion Advisory Group to discuss implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and a progress report will be provided annually to this group.

This will ensure that progress and outcomes associated with this plan are measured, and that continuous improvement opportunities are sought.

Resourcing this plan

Responsibility for implementing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan rests with all areas of Council.

Funding opportunities will be sought to assist with implementing projects and training and engagement of any consultants.

Artwork: Free Found signs installation by Tobias Richardson

Action Plan

Key Area 1: Equal, respectful and dignified access

Impact - Our community has equal access to all areas of Council, including facilities, services and information.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
1.1 Our policies, procedures and guidelines support disability inclusion and accessibility.	1.1.1 Develop an implementation, governance and reporting structure for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.	Community Partnerships	1	A Disability Inclusion Advisory Group (DIAG) and internal working group convened.
	1.1.2 Conduct an audit of policies, procedures and guidelines creating a priority list of those that directly impact accessibility and inclusion and identify areas of improvement to increase accessibility, inclusion and safety for people with disability.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	1	Policies regularly reviewed and updated.
1.2 Our workforce has the knowledge and skills to deliver projects, programs and services that have considered disability inclusion and accessibility.	1.2.1 Develop Disability Impact Assessment (DIA) toolkits.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	3 & 4	All relevant staff have an understanding of DIAs, Universal Design Principles and DDA requirements, and the confidence to put this into practice.
	1.2.2 Provide training to staff on how to conduct a DIA.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	3 & 4	
	1.2.3 Provide training to staff on Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance, Universal Design principles and the Charter of Human Rights.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	1 - 4	

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
1.3 Our Council is committed to supporting accessible and inclusive projects.	1.3.1 Ensure accessibility is incorporated into capital works project designs.	Engineering	1 - 4	Council has demonstrated significant investment in accessibility improvement.
	1.3.2 Advocate and seek funding for major projects, including an all abilities playground and a Changing Places toilet facility.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	
1.4 Council buildings, facilities, parks and infrastructure are inclusive of people with disabilities.	1.4.1 All designs for new or improved parks, community facilities or streetscapes will include a Disability Design Review.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities & Infrastructure	1 - 4	Disability Design Reviews are embedded into Council practice.
	1.4.2 Council's Project Management Framework to include Disability Design Reviews.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 & 2	
	1.4.3 Using the Building Accessibility Audit, engage the Disability Inclusion Advisory Group to provide input that will guide Council's ongoing capital works delivery.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1	Priorities established and reviewed annually with input from the DIAG.
	1.4.4 All new and upgraded public toilets will include an accessible toilet, and be promoted on the National Public Toilet Map.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities & Economy and Culture	1 - 4	An increase to the number of accessible toilets in the Shire.
	1.4.5 Engage with the DIAG to seek input into the prioritisation of new footpaths and renewal works.	Engineering	1 - 4	Works always consider accessibility.
	1.4.6 All new builds at recreation reserves to include the construction of accessible pathways to all elements of the facility including the playing surface.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	Improved access to community assets.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
	1.4.7 Explore opportunities to upgrade existing high use paths in parks to improve accessibility at the time of renewal.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	
	1.4.8 Undertake parking study of the accessible parking spaces in our townships.	Engineering	3 & 4	Accessible parking options meet the needs of our community.
	1.4.9 Explore ways to improve the safety of road crossing options for pedestrians within renewal and upgrade works on council managed roads.	Engineering	1 - 4	Crossing options have considered safety for people with disabilities.
1.5 Improve access to Council information.	1.5.1 Ensure the Council website aligns with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	Communications and Customer Service	1	New website will include accessible features and use Plain English.
	1.5.2 Provide training to employees to use plain English in public facing communications.	People and Culture & Communications and Customer Service	1,2,3,4	Consistent and clear Council communications.
	1.5.3 Investigate new opportunities to distribute information offline, including electronic notice boards at key locations around the shire.	Communications and Customer Service	1 & 2	More residents know what is going on and have an opportunity to participate.
1.6 Improve the way we facilitate the Accessible Parking Scheme.	1.6.1 Develop a communication tool to raise awareness of the Accessible Parking Scheme.	Development Services & Communications and Customer Service	1 & 2	The community is properly informed.
1.7 Support clear access to businesses	1.7.1 Raise awareness of DDA compliance with businesses, and update Local Laws permit conditions to better reflect DDA compliance.	Development Services & Economy and Culture	1 & 2	Businesses are supported to comply with the law.
	1.7.2 Support Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group to update the 'Disability Access Guide for Mount Alexander Shire and distribute to local businesses.	Community Partnerships	1 & 2	

Image: Conor working at Windarring

Key Area 2: Opportunities and access to employment, volunteering, education and economic participation

Impact - Our community understands the value of diversity in the workforce and supports entrepreneurship and personal agency.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
2.1 Create new opportunities for people with disabilities to join the Mount Alexander Shire Council (MASC) workforce.	2.1.1 Review recruitment and onboarding processes for placements, traineeships, volunteer and employment positions to identify areas for improvement.	People and Culture	1 & 2	Our workplace is attractive and accommodating to people with disabilities.
	2.1.2 Work in partnership with key stakeholders to support pathways to employment at MASC for people with disability.	People and Culture	1 - 4	
2.2 MASC will be a leader in disability inclusive employment.	2.2.1 Use the outcomes of the staff survey to identify opportunities to improve the wellbeing of employees with disability.	People and Culture	2 & 4	The results of the staff survey will demonstrate satisfaction from employees with disabilities.
	2.2.2 Requests for workplace adaptations are considered and implemented where appropriate.	People and Culture	1	More requests for adaptions are fulfilled.
	2.2.3 Coordinate and promote training opportunities to support those that supervise employees with disabilities.	People and Culture	1 - 4	Training sessions included in the yearly training calendar.
2.3 Support businesses to become successful disability employers.	2.3.1 Provide opportunities to increase the capacity of local businesses to be inclusive employers.	Economy and Culture	1 - 4	Businesses are engaged with people with disabilities and continue to make adjustments as required to retain employees.
	2.3.2 Promote external supports and funding opportunities for businesses to be more inclusive.	Economy and Culture	1 - 4	
2.4 Champion disability enterprise.	2.4.1 Explore ways to support people with disabilities to be self-employed or sole traders.	Economy and Culture	1 & 2	Increased exposure of success stories.

Key Area 3: Promote inclusion, participation and agency in civic life

Impact - Our community will feel valued, purposeful, connected and included

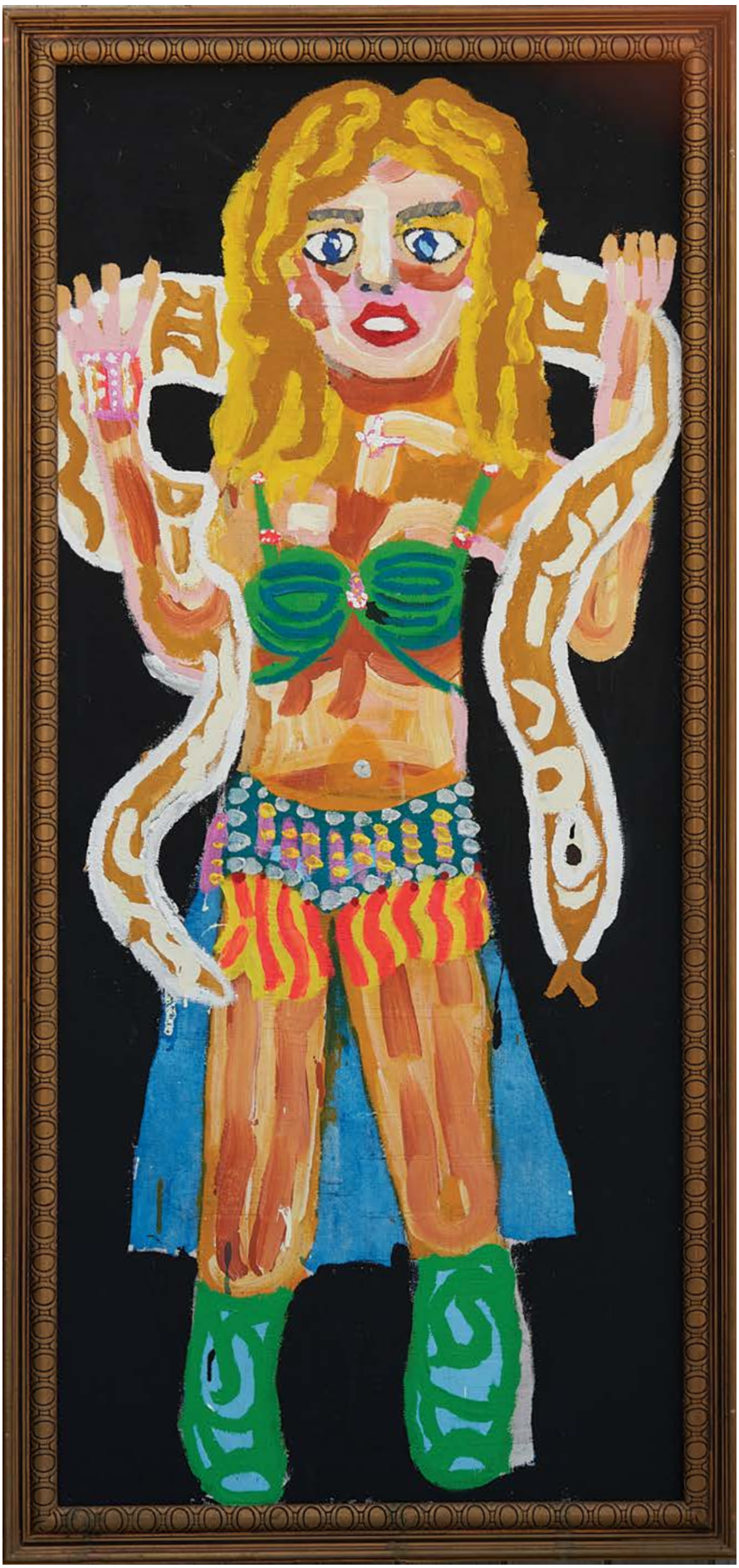
Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
3.1 Council run events are accessible.	3.1.1 Review the Council Events Guidelines to consider how Council run civic events can be more accessible.	Communications and Customer Service	2	Civic events are inclusive of all people.
3.2 Sports clubs, social clubs and committees are inclusive of people with a disability.	3.2.1 Champion all abilities access to sport and recreation activities.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	Increased participation and better health outcomes.
	3.2.2 Explore ways the Community Grants Program can better support accessibility initiatives and projects.	Community Partnerships	3	Community leadership and capacity increased.
3.3 Community events and activities are accessible.	3.3.1 Update the Event Toolkit to include advice on running sensory friendly events.	Communications and Customer Service	1	More venues and events are attended by people with disabilities.
	3.3.2 Explore ways the Events Grants Program can better support accessible and inclusive events.	Communications and Customer Service	1 & 2	Events are inclusive of more people.
	3.3.3 Investigate opportunities to encourage sensory friendly events for children and adults in our shire.	Communications and Customer Service	1 - 4	Our shire is more neurodiverse friendly.
	3.3.4 Promote the benefits of having a “quiet hour” to businesses and service providers.	Community Partnerships	3	

Key Area 4: Change the attitudes and practices that lead to discrimination of people with disability

Impact - Our community is welcoming and celebrates diversity. Our people are proud of their community

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
4.1 Advocate for change.	4.1.1 Advocate for structural and systemic change to other levels of government, including for better transport options, NDIS outcomes and more localised health services.	Executive team	1 - 4	Council uses its influence to amplify the voices of the community.
4.2 Our workforce is educated, flexible and respectful.	4.2.1 Provide staff with disability awareness training.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	1 - 4	Staff are knowledgeable and confident to work with the disability community.
	4.2.2 Provide specialist training to staff, including: Mental Health First Aid training, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) training.	People and Culture with Community Partnerships support	2 - 4	
	4.2.3 Explore opportunities to conduct a 'Realistic Race'. A workshop, which involves participants gaining a first-hand insight into disability	Community Wellbeing	2	Evaluation survey shows an increase in awareness. Changes are reflected in work practices and attitudes.
4.3 Our community is educated, inclusive and respectful.	4.3.1 Increase awareness of neurodiversity and other 'invisible disabilities' within the broader community.	Community Partnerships	1	Deliver two Library Talks sessions.
	4.3.2 In partnership with local media, develop a Community Awareness campaign that will raise awareness and educate the community on the diversity of disability.	Community Partnerships	3	The community is better informed.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
4.4 We will recognise and celebrate disability inclusion.	4.4.1 Work in partnership with community organisations to hold an event for International Day of People with a Disability in the shire.	Community Partnerships	1,2,3,4	People with disability feel personally valued, publicly valued and celebrated.
	4.4.2 Promote the accessibility category of the Mount Alexander Shire Business Awards.	Economy and Culture	1 & 3	An increase in businesses nominated in the category.
4.5 Support businesses, events & tourism operators to be more accessible and inclusive.	4.5.1 Support the distribution of MASDAG's 'Guide to Organising Accessible Events' and the 'Disability Access Guide for the Mount Alexander Shire'.	Economy and Culture & Communications and Customer Service	1 - 4	Businesses have increased awareness of the economic and social benefits of inclusion.
4.6 Support not for profit organisations to become accessible and inclusive.	4.6.1 Provide tailored workshops and training on how to increase awareness of the value of being an inclusive connected organisation.	Community Partnerships	2 & 4	Community leadership and capacity increased.



Artwork: Britney Spears by Ned Middleton

Key Area 5: Wellbeing and safety

Impact - Our community feels equal and safe, and is physically, mentally and socially healthy and resilient.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
5.1 Council run social support programs and youth programs are inclusive of people with neurodiversity.	5.1.1 Programs are designed to consider the needs of people with neurodiversities.	Community Partnerships & Community Wellbeing	1 - 4	More people can participate in activities.
5.2 Parents and carers of children living with disability are informed and connected.	5.2.2 Continue to present and expand the Parent Talk series to include neurodiversity topics, and encourage parent support networks.	Community Partnerships	1 - 4	Parents and Carers know where to turn for help.
5.3 Children of all abilities can play in a safe and welcoming environment.	5.3.1 As part of the playground audit, review the level of accessibility and safety for children with disabilities.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1	Playgrounds are safer and more accessible.
	5.3.2 Explore opportunities to increase the security of existing playgrounds.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	
	5.3.3 Explore opportunities to seek funding for the first all abilities playground in our shire.	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	1 - 4	All funding opportunities have been explored.
5.4 Accessible & affordable housing.	5.4.1 The needs of older residents and people with disability are considered in any Council led housing initiatives and advocacy work.	Housing Solutions Broker & CEO	1 - 4	People with a disability have opportunities to live in homes that are fit for purpose.
5.5 Improve support for young carers.	5.5.1 Investigate ways to support young carers to participate in after school activities, recreation and social events.	Community Partnerships	1 - 4	We better understand the needs of Young carers in our shire.
5.6 Support people with disabilities to plan for emergencies.	5.6.1 Deliver the Emergency Planning for At-risk Populations (EPAP) program.	Community Partnerships	2 & 3	People with a disability and their carers know what to do in an emergency.

Objective	Actions will include:	Who will lead	Year 1,2,3,4	Outcomes and Indicators
5.7 Highlight the increased risk of family violence for people with disabilities.	5.7.1 Develop dedicated material highlighting the increased risk of violence against women with disabilities, during the 16 Days of Activism campaign.	Community Partnerships	1,2,3,4	Increased community understanding of the risk of violence towards women with disabilities.
5.8 Advocate for older adults with disabilities.	5.8.1 Raise awareness of the increased needs for people with dementia from CALD and LGBTIQA+ communities.	Community Wellbeing	1 - 4	Intersectionality with disability is acknowledged and addressed.
	5.8.2 Deliver programs designed to improve digital literacy to increase access to information and services.	Community Wellbeing	1	The digital divide is reduced.

Artwork: Wombat by Tegwen Prest

Artwork: Eucalyptus Leaves by Lorraine Le Plastrier

Appendix 1: Legislation, policies and strategies

A list of the legislation, policies and strategies relevant to the Mount Alexander Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2027

Mount Alexander Plans, Polices and Strategies

Active Transport Strategy 2023-2033

Outdoor Trading Policy 2023

Pathways - Asset Management Plan 2020

Council Plan 2021-2025

Child Safe Policy 2022

Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Open Space Asset Management Plan 2022

Commonwealth and State Legislation and Standards

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Victorian Disability Act 2006

Victorian Charter of the Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Carer Recognition Act 2010

Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Victorian Mental Health Act 2014

Access to Premises Buildings Standards 2010

National Construction Code 2022

International

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006

Appendix 2: Glossary of terms

Ableism

Discrimination or prejudice towards people with disability.

Accessibility

The practice of making information, activities or environments easy to understand and navigate, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible.

Advocacy

Giving active support to an idea or cause.

Changing places

Adult changing facilities specifically designed for people who are unable to use the standard accessible toilets. These facilities include an adult-sized changing table, hoist, peninsula toilet and more circulation space. They provide more comfort and dignity for changing and disposing of incontinence products.

Disability pride

Disability pride can mean being proud of who you are and embracing your disabled identity. It can also mean feeling confident and not hiding your disability.

Discrimination

The unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as ability, race, gender, age or sexual orientation.

Diversity

The differences between people in factors such as age, caring responsibilities, cultural backgrounds, disability, gender, Indigenous background, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background.

Inclusion

When people feel valued and respected, and have the resources, opportunities and capabilities they need to learn, work, have a voice and participate fully in life.

Intersectionality

An approach to understanding how different parts of a person's identity can overlap, exposing them to compounding forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Some of these intersecting identities include gender, ability, Indigenous background, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, faith, socioeconomic status and age.

Participation

When people join in with others and become involved. This may include having some decision making or planning control over an event or activity or joining in an activity that was planned by others.

Personal agency

Personal agency is personal responsibility for who we are, what we experience, what we do about that experience, and how we shape our world to give us more of the experiences we want.

Universal design

Design that's usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Designing and creating programs, services, tools and facilities that are useable, without modification, by the widest range of people possible. It involves considering the situation and the people who will use what is being created to design inclusive solutions. Universal design is not a product; it is the process of good design, which focuses on the needs of people.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release. ABS Website, accessed 7 March 2023.

Australian Government Job Access - Driving disability employment www.jobaccess.gov.au/node/77746

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, AIHW, People with disability in Australia 2022 report aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/about

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft engage.vic.gov.au/disability-act

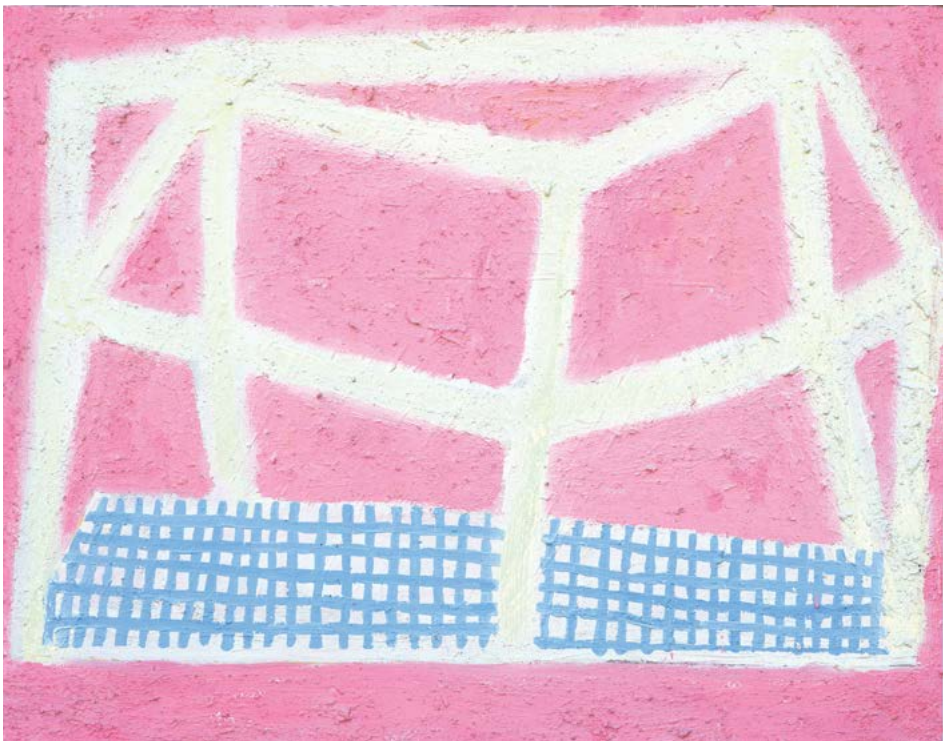
Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022-2026) vic.gov.au/state-disability-plan/our-language/social-model-disability

MASDAG (Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group), Disability Access Guide for the Mount Alexander Shire

PWDA, People with Disability Australia pwd.org.au/

World Health Organization who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health

Youth Affairs Council Victoria yacvic.org.au/ydas/resources-and-training/together-2/values-and-ideas/two-models-of-disability/#TOC-2



Artwork: Memory Cell by Tobias Richardson

About the artists

Ned Middleton

Local Castlemaine artist Ned Middleton was born in central Victoria and after 10 years living in South Australia returned to live in Castlemaine in 2006, completing his primary and secondary schooling in the area. Ned lives with Down syndrome and is very involved in artistic activities in Castlemaine, including dancing at movement zone, local radio content production, and Pub Sing appearances.

Ned's paintings are a result of nearly three years of studio practice at Lot19. Ned's two exhibitions, Lot19 Gallery 2022 and The Taproom, Castlemaine Fringe 2023 have been a huge success, and have spurred Ned on, with plans for exhibitions, commissions and other exciting projects. Working alongside artist Tobias Richardson, Ned paints bright, larger than life paintings of his favourite pop stars. Ned applies a raw, unedited style to his painting, tapping into his inherent feel for colour and line, and his love of music. His works are bold, tough and unique.
May 2023

Tegwen Prest

I was born in 1981. I have lived in Strangways since '82 with my family and animals. I always love animals and began drawing and painting them with mum and dad. I used to ride Gypsy the horse into Newstead and paint with Karyn Pierce. Next I painted at Windarring and now I drive into Lot 19 and paint with Toby.

I have recently had an exhibition in Merchants Campbell's Creek.
May 2023

Tobias Richardson

I have been a visual artist since the mid 80s, first studying and exhibiting in artist-run spaces in Sydney, then California and the Northern Territory and currently Castlemaine.

I have a studio-based arts practice of drawing, painting, sculpture and installation. My subject matter consists of themes of memory, history, abstraction, travel and psychology. Built environments underpin it all.

My practice also includes community arts through my teaching and support for local artist-run spaces.
May 2023

Lorraine Le Plastrier

Lorraine loves the creative development of ideas – ideas that take form in the visual arts, music and poetry. Her deep love of Country inspires much of her work and imagery – the mysteries, wonders, patterns and stories.

Artwork: Olivia Newton John by Ned Middleton

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