

ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN 2022-27

Engagement Report

By: Community Development Team

1. Overview

The Disability Services Act 1993, amended 2004 (the Act) requires all local governments and state government departments to develop, implement and review a Disability Access Inclusion Plan (DAIP) every five years. The Town of Victoria Park's DAIP 2017 - 2022 is now due for review, with a new plan for 2022 – 2027 required this year.

The purpose of a DAIP is to make sure that people living with disability can access all information, services, facilities and programs provided by the Town of Victoria Park. It allows the Town to address the above access and inclusion issues and challenges more effectively, both within the organisation and the community. A Disability Access and Inclusion Plan also benefits everyone in the community by providing more accessible and inclusive places, services, facilities, and programs.

Local governments must focus on achieving seven outcomes according to the Act, and this Engagement Report presents the community feedback according to these outcome areas.

Definitions

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities and can affect a person's capacity to get about independently, to communicate, interact with others and learn. Disability is usually permanent but may be episodic and some disabilities, such as epilepsy are not always visible, while others such as cerebral palsy, may be visible.

Access means the ability of people to get to and move around the built and natural environment. This includes buildings, recreation and leisure facilities, parks, footpaths, community services, events, shops and other services.

Inclusion means actively including and encouraging everyone, including people with diverse abilities, cultural backgrounds, ages, genders or sexual orientation to participate in all aspects of community life and opportunities.

2. Consultation process

The consultation for this review has been designed to occur in two phases.

Phase one

Phase one was an intensive engagement period with the whole community, over a five-week period, from 4 April to 6 May 2022.

This phase featured:

- An online survey
- Online brainstorming and “tell your story” tools
- Invitation to schools for art project and simplified survey, and
- Providing direct feedback by phone or email.

A Background Information Paper and Summary Report were published to support this feedback process. The Information Paper covered information about our community demographic, needs and legislative requirements of a DAIP. The Summary Report presented progress in disability access and inclusion that the Town of Victoria Park has made over recent years. Town of Victoria Park staff were also engaged during this phase through their all of staff meeting on 3 May 2022.

Overall, the Town received a wide range of submissions over this period, which included:

- 41 survey responses
- 15 brainstorm ideas
- 2 stories of lived experience
- 38 submissions from school children
- 63 Town staff

The demographics of responses included:

- 67% female, 28% male, 5% other
- 26.3% aged 35-44, 24% aged 45-54
- 28.3% of respondents work for a service provider supporting people living with disability,
- 26.4% are residents in the Town

Phase two

Phase two of engagement focuses on refining the draft DAIP with key stakeholders, which runs from late May 2022 and continuing through to formal submission period on the draft DAIP in August 2022, concluding once the final plan is endorsed by Council.

3. What we learned

Overall insights

Through this engagement, the big insights gained for the review of the DAIP included:

- Physical access was the most recurring theme in the community feedback, featuring in more than 400 ideas.
- School aged children want the Town to focus on making recreational community spaces and buildings more physically accessible.
- The community want more smaller events which celebrate and consider access and inclusion needs.

- The community want increased employment opportunities for people living with disability, specifically in local businesses, and in frontline and leadership positions in Local Government.
- Feedback calls for the Town to lead and support cultural change, by raising awareness and education particularly for more empathetic and non-judgmental work environments across the Town.
- Overall, 79% of survey responses indicated the level of access and inclusion for people living with disability in the Town was 'very good' or 'reasonable' (Appendix).
- Through a ranking process, the community told us Outcome Areas 7 (Employment), 3 (Access to Information) and 2 (Access to Town Buildings and Facilities) are the greatest priorities for action at this time (Appendix).

By Outcome Area

Community feedback by Outcome Area is shown in the following table.

Outcome area	Descriptor	Insights
Outcome 1 – Services and Events	People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services and events organised by local government.	<p>Feedback ranged across distinct physical needs including transport, playgrounds and ramping, but also featured a theme of Town communication, alternate formats, website accessibility and awareness raising.</p> <p>Most frequent ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accessible events for people with disability (hard surfaces rather than grassed area, Auslan). • Improving physical access. • Inclusion and diversity (LGBTQIA+, all ages, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse/CalD). • Accessible footpaths and regular maintenance (hard surfaces/slippery/barriers). • Focus on non-physical disability.
Outcome 2 – Buildings and Facilities	People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities provided by local government.	<p>This area centred on specific physical improvements for Town facilities as well as requests for better signage, management of ACROD bays and tactile paving.</p> <p>Most frequent ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramping for steps/lifts for multiple stories • No thresholds/steps and accessible doorway and walkways. • Accessible and clean toilets/changing adult facilities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion - aim to go above and beyond, symbolism LGBTQIA+ flag or pronouns and aboriginal artwork. • Accessible and inclusive events - autism, sensory processing disorders quiet hour at library etc. • Ask reference group to prioritise projects; consulted at concept/development phase of new developments.
Outcome 3 - Information	People with disability receive information from local government in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people in the community.	<p>Most ideas in this area centred around the format of information provided, mostly moving toward visual and captioned materials, as well as increased specialised training for staff to deliver on this.</p> <p>Most frequent ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide documents in alternative formats - easy to read including the DAIP • Easy access to information for people with disability • Reduce emails and use more visuals, captioned and people talking and printed rather than social media • Change website AAA - Input from people living with disability on website • Understanding individuals needs/ask people/organisations what they need • Language interpretation and information
Outcome 4 - Quality Customer Services	People with disability receive the same level and quality of customer service from local government as other people in the community.	<p>The big themes in this area were around training and inviting advice or audits from people living with disability for the Town's customer service area. Feedback relating to access to information was also received through this area of the community survey.</p> <p>Most frequent ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and community education and training for front line service • Fostering respect for others • Have one staff member who can sign • More effort for great customer service • Information to be disseminated to disability people quickly
Outcome 5 - Complaints	People with disability have the same opportunities as other people in the community to raise issues and concerns to	This section featured ideas around opening up the options for how customers can engage the Town with their concerns, with the majority of responses suggesting alternate options for submitting complaints.

	local government.	<p>Most frequent ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily make a complaint via different options or types of avenues - braille, Auslan and videos • Training on complaint processes and disability services to handle concerns by people living with disability - complaint handling policy • Have a specific person to deal with complaints of people living with disability and more staff in this advocacy space • Acknowledging feedback and follow up • Complaint treated equally - act accordingly and not judged • Feedback is apparent on website home page • Promote how to make a complaint
Outcome 6 – Public Consultation	People with disability have the same opportunities as other people in the community to participate in local government public consultation and engagement projects.	<p>Feedback in this area calls for alternate promotional channels and reinforces the need and desire for ongoing face to face engagement, alongside other online channels.</p> <p>Most frequent ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy feedback consultation response in alternative formats - audio, through carer, written, braille, Auslan etc • Include people with disability and carers and organisations - regularly - face to face • Group consultation - diversify engagement channels • Communication about what is available - diversify promotional channels • Understanding what individuals needs are - people with disability first • Face to face information sharing
Outcome 7 - Employment	People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment in local government.	<p>Feedback included ideas to help the Town increase its employment of people living with disability, as well as retention of those people. Some suggestions included the Town employing a target to aim for, as well as including diversity as part of this strategy to include LGBTQIA+, seniors, youth and Aboriginal peoples.</p> <p>Most frequent ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create jobs specific for people living with disability • Increase Town services to employ people living with disability - AquaLife, Library, and administration roles

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship and professional development for staff living with disability • Internships for people living with disability to help them gain employment • People living with disability represented in leadership and executive staff roles • Support and programs to remove barriers
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Children’s survey

Of the submissions from school aged children, the most frequent ideas and areas of feedback were:

- More accessible games and play equipment in parks/playground (wheelchair swing, accessible slide)
- Accessible paths and laneways - lack of safety, traffic issues and blocked paths
- Physical Access - move independently, automatic doors- more lifts and ramps, and
- Adjustable equipment/technology to accommodate people with disability- light, noise, vision-voice speaker.

Staff feedback

Engagement with staff has highlighted the passion and commitment to access and inclusion held across the Town. Staff were invited to provide insights at an all staff meeting in early May 2022; centred on Outcome Area 7 – Employment. Staff were asked:

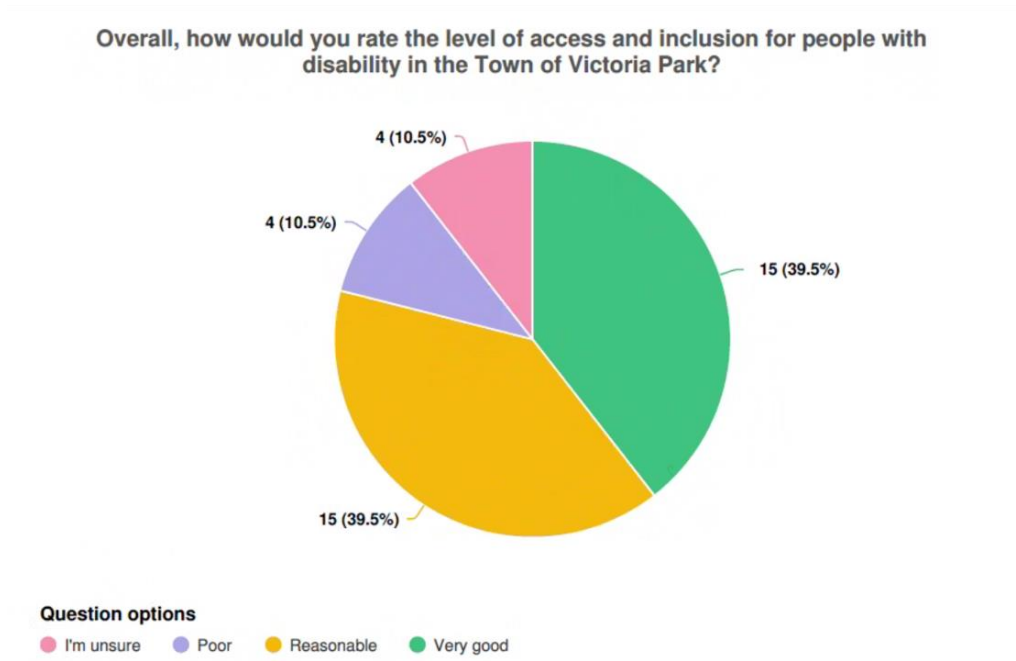
- How can you contribute to building a more inclusive and accessible workplace at the Town?
- What do you think might hinder staff from letting People & Culture or Managers know that they are living with a disability (recently acquired or lived experience), or for staff who have unique requirements to do their job?

Feedback gained through this session centres on organisational culture and values, with a series of ideas for staff training and awareness to foster increased compassion, understanding and bespoke support for customers and colleagues.

Alongside this, 30 key staff were engaged to help develop the draft DAIP at a two-hour online workshop held on Wednesday 25 May 2022. Staff were split into a series of breakout rooms where teams developed short, medium and long-term strategies and actions for the new DAIP.

Appendix

Survey graph:



Importance versus Satisfaction Rankings Table:

	Priority for action	Importance	Score	Satisfaction	Score	Gap
1	Outcome 7: Employment	Very high	87	Medium	19	68
2	Outcome 3: Access to information	Very high	93	Medium	33	60
3	Outcome 2: Access to Town buildings and facilities.	Very high	87	Medium	35	52
4	Outcome 1: Access to Town's services and events	Very high	92	High	43	49
5	Outcome 6: Complaints	Very high	89	High	42	47
6	Outcome 4: Quality of service	Very high	92	High	46	46
7	Outcome 5: Public consultations	Very high	90	High	47	43