



Colac Otway Shire
Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan
2015-2025
(Phase 1: 2015-2017)

Adopted
24 June 2015

Executive Summary

Focus

This Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan is aimed at all residents. However, it is a particularly for groups/individuals who experience some form of disadvantage or isolation. These groups/individuals include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, refugees and asylum seekers, people on low income, people with disabilities and/or mental illness, older adults, people from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (GLTBI) community and people living in isolated and/or poor circumstances.

Vision for access, equity and inclusion

'Colac Otway will be a fair, caring, respectful and inclusive community. The community will embrace and celebrate diversity and all residents will have the same opportunities to participate in the life of the community to the extent they choose.'

Underpinning SHAPED Principles

- Social justice – Council will attempt to remove any barriers which prevent residents from accessing services and participating in community life.
- Human Rights – Council will treat all residents with dignity and respect and encourage the protection of human rights so they can live free from discrimination and prejudice.
- Accountability - Council will be open and accountable and regularly evaluate the fairness and effectiveness of its policies and practices. Council will set an example for the rest of the community by being responsive, fair and inclusive in all its practices.
- Participation – Council will ensure that residents have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives and support activities that foster social and civic interaction.
- Equity – Council will distribute its resources in a fair and equitable manner. Council will

especially target resources at activities that are aimed at reducing disadvantage.

- Diversity – Council will openly embrace and celebrate difference and diversity.

Key Goals

- Council – An organisation that knows its people and demonstrates a deep commitment to social justice, the protection of human rights, equity and fairness.
- Community – A community which embraces diversity, is fair, welcoming and respectful, and where all people have the opportunity to participate in community life.
- Services and buildings – The provision of services and buildings that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and address disadvantage.

Priorities in the first 2 years

Priority 1 – Council demonstrating a deep and genuine commitment to social justice, the protection of human rights, equity and fairness and taking a leadership role in the promotion of social justice, access, equity and inclusion within the broader Colac-Otway Shire community.

Priority 2 – Council engaging and communicating effectively with its community.

Priority 3 – Council developing effective and strong relationships with agencies/community groups that provide services/support to people experiencing disadvantage.

Priority 4 – Council and the community developing an understanding of the nature and level of disadvantage and isolation in the Colac Otway community and responding effectively to this understanding.

Priority 5 – Colac Otway being a welcoming community, and acknowledging and celebrating its cultural diversity.

Priority 6 – Colac Otway Shire having a built environment which is accessible to people of all abilities.

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1. Context and Aim

The Colac Otway Shire Council Plan (2013-2017) outlines the Council's vision for the Shire and the goals it aims to achieve. The Plan is framed around 4 key themes or 'Pillars'. Two Pillars and their associated goals relate directly to access, equity and inclusion. These Pillars and goals are:

- **Pillar 3** - A Place to Live and Grow: The Shire is a place where people feel cared for and supported; where buildings and spaces facilitate creativity, social activity and enrichment of life, and people have access to gain the skills and education needed to reach their potential.

Goal: Improve access to buildings, spaces, services and education to support and enable quality of life.

- **Pillar 4** - A Healthy Community and Environment: The Shire has an inclusive community in which people of all backgrounds feel connected and provides and promotes a healthy, vibrant and safe lifestyle.

Goal: Respect cultural differences, support a diverse range of healthy and creative activities, foster community safety and promote environmental sustainability.

The recently developed Colac Otway Shire Public Health and Well-being Plan outlines Council's priorities and goals with respect to community health and well-being. Three priorities and their supporting goals and actions relate to access, equity and inclusion. These priorities are: promoting healthy eating and food security, increasing community connectedness and improving mental health.

This document outlines the actions that Council will take to achieve the goals and priorities of the Council and Health and Well-being Plans listed above. It includes a definition of the words 'access', 'equity' and 'inclusion'; a discussion about the legislative environment and policy context surrounding access, equity and inclusion; an outline of the achievements and learnings from the Council's previous Access and Equity Plan (2009-2013) and a summary of the findings of the community consultation process. It concludes with a set of

actions which are aimed at making Colac Otway Shire more equal, inclusive and accessible.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this strategy, access, equity and inclusion are defined as follows:

- **Access** is creating the necessary conditions so that individuals or groups desiring to use Council services, facilities, works and/or programs have access to them – regardless of their race, language, age, sex, geographic isolation, financial disadvantage or disability.
- **Equity** is ensuring that all residents and groups are treated fairly by Council and share appropriately in the resources that Council manages on behalf of the community.
- **Inclusion** is ensuring that all residents are treated with respect and dignity and feel part of the community.

3. Methodology

The study methodology involved the following steps:

- Review of the legislative, policy and planning context for access, equity and inclusion.
- Review of access and inclusion plans developed by other local councils.
- Review of the status of the recommendations in the Shire's Access and Inclusion Plan (2009-2013).
- Consultation with key Council staff and service providers about the positive and negative aspects of access, equity and inclusion in the Shire and the key priorities that Council should focus on.
- Preparation of the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan which draws on the findings of the above steps.

4. Legislative environment and policy context

The Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan will be guided by the following national, state and local government legislation and policies.

4.1 Legislative environment

National

- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994
- Racial Hatred Act 1995
- Age Discrimination Act 2004

State

- Building Code of Australia 1996
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Local Government Act 1989
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Disability Act 2006
- Multicultural Act 2004

The Acts listed above make it unlawful for any person or group (including local Councils) to:

- Discriminate against any other group or person on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, sex, marital status, religion, pregnancy or family responsibility
- Incite hatred against or vilify groups or persons on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, religion or sexual preference
- Discriminate against women in the workplace
- Interfere with sexual activity between consenting adults in the privacy of their own homes
- Harass or discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities, physical disfigurement or a communicable disease (e.g. HIV virus)
- Discriminate against the elderly in the areas of accessing goods and services, education,

accommodation, premises, land and requests for information.

- Make it unlawful for any Government Department or agency (including local Councils) to discriminate against any person on the basis of political opinion, age, medical record, criminal record, sexual preference and/or trade union activity.
- Require all new or refurbished public buildings to comply with the access requirements outlined in the Building Code.
- Require local Councils to ensure that their services and facilities are accessible and equitable, foster community cohesion and encourage active participation in civic life.
- Provide a framework for enabling people with a disability to more actively participate in the community.
- Require public sector bodies to prepare Disability Action Plans.
- Enshrine principles which recognise that all Victorians are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their cultural or religious affiliation.
- Set out the specific human rights that the State Government wants to protect - freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; freedom of expression; protection of children; the opportunity to participate in public life without discrimination; and the freedom to celebrate cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds.

4.2 Policies/Strategies

National

- A Stronger Fairer Australia 2009
- Human Rights Framework 2010
- Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society 1998

State

- Growing Victoria Together – A Vision for Victoria to 2010 and Beyond
- A Fairer Victoria 2010
- Disability Plan 2013-2016
- All of Us: Victoria's Multicultural Policy
- Victorian Government Aboriginal Inclusion Framework 2010
- Victorian Local Government Women's Charter
- Strengthening diversity planning and practice – A guide for Victorian Home Care Services 2011

Local

- Australian Local Government Association Statement of Cultural Inclusiveness
- MAV: Creating a more inclusive community for people with a disability
- Colac Otway Council Plan 2013-17
- Colac Otway Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Colac Otway Positive Ageing Strategy 2008-12
- Colac Otway Early Years Plan 2009-12
- Colac Otway Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2007-2011

These policies and strategies:

- Contain the Federal Government's vision and strategies for social inclusion.
- Commit all levels of Government in Australia to meeting the particular needs of people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds so that they can participate fully in economic, social and cultural life.
- Contain the Victorian Government's vision, goals, commitments and priorities with respect to making Victoria more accessible and inclusive.
- Commit the Victorian Government to reducing racial and religious discrimination and promoting the benefits of multiculturalism.
- Outline the approach that the Victorian Government will take to ensuring the successful roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Provide a guide to the resources, tools and program that are available to ensure that people suffering disadvantage can access HACC services.
- Commit the Colac Otway Shire Council to fostering a healthy, vibrant community where residents of all ages and abilities feel connected and included.
- Outlines Council's goals and objectives with respect to the health and well-being of its community and the actions Council will take to achieve these goals.
- Provide a detailed strategy for improving the health and sense of well-being of the Shire's aged population.

4.3 Implications for Colac Otway's Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan

The implications of these documents for the Plan are as follows:

- As an employer, Government authority and community services provider, Colac Otway Shire has a legal and moral responsibility to:
 - protect human rights;
 - promote access, inclusion and equal opportunity;
 - prevent or discourage discrimination in Council workplaces and generally across the Shire,
 - foster community cohesion and encourage active participation in community life; and
 - reduce barriers for people with a disability to accessing services and facilities and obtaining and maintaining employment.

This Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan should reflect, acknowledge and outline what actions it will take and encourage the community and businesses to fulfil these responsibilities.

- The State Government's commitments to multiculturalism that are relevant to local government should be included as commitments in the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan. The relevant commitments are:
 - reducing racial and religious discrimination;
 - promoting the benefits of multiculturalism;
 - celebrating local cultures; and
 - facilitating greater understanding between communities.
- The recommendations contained in the Council Plan, Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Positive Ageing Strategy, Early Years Plan and the Arts and Culture Strategic Plan that relate to improving access to services and facilities for people experiencing disadvantage should be acknowledged in the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan and, where appropriate, included in the Action Plan; e.g.
 - encouraging participation by the elderly in community life;
 - decreasing disadvantage and vulnerability of children;
 - ensuring all residents have access to nutritious, safe food; and

- supporting activities that foster community connectedness and social inclusion.

5. Achievements/learnings from previous plan (Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan 2010-2013)

5.1 Priorities

The priorities outlined in the 2010-2013 Plan were as follows:

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to access, equity and inclusion.
- Raise the awareness of Council staff and the general communities of the levels of disability, language problems, social and geographic isolation in Colac Otway Shire.
- Ensure all Council practices promote access, equity and inclusion.
- Ensure Council has effective processes in place to engage with people with disabilities or experiencing other forms of disadvantage, carers and disability service providers.
- Ensure that Council staff have an appreciation of the cultural diversity of the Colac Otway community and an understanding of the customs, values and religious beliefs of the Shire's ethnic groups.
- Engender strong and respectful relationships with Colac Otway's migrant communities and celebrate the Shire's cultural diversity.
- Expand community transport options in Colac Otway Shire.
- Lead the effort to improve physical access for people with disabilities.
- Develop mechanisms which encourage participation by all residents in community activities.

The consultation undertaken with Council staff, local service providers and the community for the 2010-2013 Plan indicated that these priorities still have currency and importance. These stakeholders indicated that the priorities relating to Council leading by example and ensuring its practices demonstrate a commitment to and promote access and inclusion are particularly important and should be emphasised in the new Plan.

5.2 Status of Actions

The 2010-2013 Plan contained 45 recommendations. An audit of the current status of these recommendations indicated that around 50% have been fully and partly implemented. The recommendations that were acted on mainly relate to priority 2) raising staff and community awareness, 4) engaging with the disability community, 7) expanding transport options, 8) improving disability access and 10) encouraging participation by all residents in community life. The key stakeholders (Council staff, local service providers and the community) indicated that the recommendations **that had not been acted on** were still important, but to varying degrees.

6. Other Local Government Plans/Practice

The plans and practice of 9 Victorian Councils were reviewed and analysed. The Councils included regional cities, metropolitan municipalities and rural shires. The key findings from the review are as follows:

- Some Councils are developing comprehensive access and inclusion plans with visions, principles, key priorities/goals/directions, sets of aims or objectives and detailed actions. Other are producing more concise policies or frameworks that have smaller lists of priorities and objectives. One Plan, Monash, simply outlines a set of principles and refers to actions in other Council strategy plans. The overall trend seems to be towards shorter plans, e.g. Monash's former Access and Inclusion Plan was around 40 pages long, its new plan is less than 10 pages.
- Some access and inclusion plans have a narrow focus and are targeted solely at people with disabilities. Others are targeted at all groups who suffer some form of disadvantage and cover issues relating to employment, involvement in community life, access to services/information and community and Council staff awareness of the levels of local disadvantage.
- Some of the Councils that have narrow disability focussed access and inclusion plans are also developing multicultural policies, e.g. Monash and Moreland (note:

these Councils have large culturally and linguistically diverse populations).

- Most of the multicultural policies contain actions relating to leadership, community awareness, employment, language barriers, celebrating diversity and respecting cultural beliefs.
- The duration of most of the plans is reasonably short – between 3 and 5 years. Only one plan has a long duration of 10 years.
- The structures of the Plans are reasonably similar – introduction, policy context, consultation findings, key priorities/themes, objectives and actions.
- The principles and priorities outlined in the Plans are also similar. The principles relate mainly to human rights, social justice, equity and inclusion. The priorities mainly relate to communication, community support, service delivery, advocacy, leadership, diversity, accessibility and participation.
- All the Plans recognise that Council should lead by example and have a key role in shaping the community's attitude to access and inclusion.
- All the Plans outline formal monitoring reporting requirements. All require some form of annual reports. Others require more frequent reports.

7. Consultation Outcomes

7.1 Councillors and Council Staff

Shire Councillors and Council Staff were asked to respond to the following questions relating to access, equity and inclusion (where relevant):

- Are the principles of SHAPED (social justice, human rights, accountability, participation, equity and diversity) demonstrated in Council's vision, mission, values and commitments?
- Does Council understand and reflect the SHAPED principles?
- How does the community perceive Council's demonstration of these principles?
- Are residents actively involved in planning for the future? What opportunities and supports exist to encourage residents to participate in planning and decision making?

- What is Council doing well in ensuring Access, Equity and Inclusion and what could it do better?

Some key and sometimes opposing responses were as follows:

Councillors

- Council understands and has demonstrated its commitment to SHAPED. For example, the proclamation of the Shire as a refugee friendly zone and Council's support of Foodshare are consistent with the SHAPED principles of social justice, human rights, equity and diversity.
- There is a gulf between Council's rhetoric in relation to social justice, equity etc. and its practice.
- It is always a challenge to get the community involved in planning for the future. The keys to success are to genuinely consult and make sure the community takes ownership of the output from the consultation, in this case, the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan.
- Councillors need to be united in their support of and commitment to access, equity and inclusion and in increasing the community's level of awareness of the disadvantage that exists in the Shire.

Council staff

- The SHAPED principles are mentioned in documentation although there is little application of these in Council's processes and practices.
- The acronym SHAPED may not be recognisable by staff but the principles are adhered to.
- The SHAPED principles are not applied consistently across also Council's operations.
- The community is often confused or unaware of what services and facilities Council is actually responsible for delivering.
- Council has been relatively successful in raising awareness about access and equity issues and making its services accessible to all sectors of the community.
- Council could improve its performance with respect to access, equity and inclusion by making its built infrastructure more accessible, constantly promoting inclusion, making information about services more

accessible and taking actions that demonstrate Council's commitment to the SHAPED principles.

7.2 Community agencies

Community agencies were asked to respond to the following questions relating to access, equity and inclusion:

- What should the Colac Otway community be doing more of to address barriers to access, equity and inclusion?
- What can Council do to improve its services and programs for individuals and groups in the community that experience access, equity and inclusion barriers?
- What do the agencies think are the three key challenges for the target groups that you work with?
- What do you see as three key opportunities to improve Access, Equity and Inclusion locally?
- What initiatives are you or would your organisation be able to work collaboratively with Council to develop?

Some key responses were as follows:

- The Colac community must create an environment where people with disabilities can, if they desire, participate meaningfully in community life.
- Disability access to public and commercial buildings needs to be improved.
- Resources for improving disability access should be more equitably distributed across the Shire.
- There needs to be improved access to further education and training, particularly for girls and people living in the small rural areas.
- Council needs to make an effort to engage with the most isolated members of the community. Council should take more programs out to the rural areas rather than expecting the communities in these areas to come to the larger centres.
- Colac Otway Shire needs to become and should be promoted as a disability friendly shire, particularly for people with mobility problems.
- There needs to be better transport options for the communities located outside of Colac.

- Council have recently improved communication with communities. This improved communication needs to be maintained.
- Business should be supported to improve disability access.

7.3 Residents

Residents were asked in a general survey on well-being to indicate their levels of satisfaction with the adequacy of community engagement and service provision in Colac Otway Shire. There were 82 responses received to questions that have relevance to access, equity and inclusion were as follows:

Service/activity	% indicating their level of satisfaction as 'very unsatisfactory to fair'
Public transport	77
Health services	47
Education	35
Access to buildings	58
Influencing decisions	62
Overall provision of Council services	62

On the positive side, more than 60% of respondents indicated the Colac Otway Community was welcoming of people from different cultures and countries.

8. Plan

8.1 Vision

'Colac Otway will be a fair, caring, respectful and inclusive community. The community will embrace and celebrate diversity and all residents will have the same opportunities to participate in the life of the community to the extent they choose'.

8.2 Principles

The following principles will underpin and guide Council's decision-making and actions with respect to access, equity and inclusion:

- Social justice – Council will attempt to remove any barriers which prevent residents from accessing services and participating in community life.

- Human Rights – Council will treat all residents with dignity and respect and encourage the protection of human rights so they can live free from discrimination and prejudice.
- Accountability - Council will be open and accountable and regularly evaluate the fairness and effectiveness of its policies and practices. Council will set an example for the rest of the community by being responsive, fair and inclusive in all its practices.
- Participation – Council will ensure that residents have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives and support activities that foster social and civic interaction.
- Equity – Council will distribute its resources in a fair and equitable manner. Council will especially target resources at activities that are aimed at reducing disadvantage.
- Diversity – Council will openly embrace and celebrate difference and diversity.

8.3 Special Target Groups

The Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan is aimed at improving conditions for all residents. However, it is particularly targeted at those groups/individual who experience some form of disadvantage or isolation. These groups/individuals include: Aboriginal residents, people from CALD backgrounds, refugees and asylum seekers, people on low income, people with disabilities and/or mental illness, older adults, people from the GLTBI community and people living in isolated and/or poor circumstances.

8.4 Key Goals/Priorities/Objectives

The key goals of the Plan are as follows:

- Council – An organisation that knows its people and demonstrates a deep commitment to social justice, the protection of human rights, equity and fairness.
- Community – A community which embraces diversity is fair, welcoming and respectful, and where all people have the opportunity to participate in community life.

- Services and buildings – The provision of services and buildings that are inclusive, responsive, accessible and address disadvantage.

This Plan has a duration of 10 years. However, the focus of this Phase will be on the first 2 years by developing our understanding of the cultural and other needs of our diverse communities, communicating and engaging effectively with them, and developing a built environment which is all for all people. The key priorities of the Plan in these 2 years will be:

- Priority 1 – Council demonstrating a deep and genuine commitment to social justice, the protection of human rights, equity and fairness and taking a leadership role in the promotion this commitment within the broader Colac-Otway Shire community.
- Priority 2 – Council engaging and communicating effectively with its community.
- Priority 3 – Council developing effective and strong relationships with agencies and community groups that provide services and support to people suffering disadvantage.
- Priority 4 – Council and the community developing an understanding of the nature and level of disadvantage and isolation in the Colac Otway community and responding effectively to this disadvantage.
- Priority 5 – Colac Otway being a welcoming community and acknowledging and celebrating its cultural diversity.
- Priority 6 – Colac Otway Shire having a built environment which is accessible to people of all abilities.

8.5 Action Plan

The actions that Council will take to implement these key priorities are listed in Appendix A – Action Plan. The Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis with status reports presented to the Executive Management Team and Council. An Action Plan for years 3-6 inclusive should be developed during 2017 in conjunction with the development of the next Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Appendix A – Action Plan

Priority 1 – Council demonstrating a deep and genuine commitment to social justice, the protection of human rights, equity and fairness and taking a leadership role in the promotion of social justice, access, equity and inclusion within the broader Colac-Otway Shire community.

Actions	Who	How	When
Formally adopt the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council 	Adopt	June 2015
Assign to a Councillor the responsibility of championing the social justice and human rights principles and the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council 	Assign	June 2015
Assign to a member of the EMT (preferably the CEO) the responsibility for ensuring that the social justice and human rights principles are observed in all Council practice and the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan is implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council 	Assign	June 2015
Assign a staff member to assist Council and EMT with these responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council 	Assign	June 2015
Introduce formal reporting and evaluation mechanisms on the Access, Equity and Inclusion Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Management Team • MH&CS¹ 	Develop a reporting and evaluation framework.	June 2016
Systematically review Council practices to ensure they promote access, equity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAPO² • MH&CS 	Undertake review over a period of time when appropriate occasions occur.	2015 - 2017
Ensure that all Council's major strategy plans, e.g. Health and Wellbeing Plan, Recreation Strategy, Open Space Strategy, are consistent with Council's social justice and human rights principles and contain actions that promote access, equity and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Management Leadership Group 	Have input into the development and review of all strategic planning and projects to ensure access, equity and inclusion principles are considered.	2015 - 2017
Ensure that any proposed major changes to Council policy or service delivery are assessed for their consistency with Council's social justice and human rights principles and the Access Equity and Inclusion plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Management Team • RAPO 	Consider access, equity and inclusion principles.	2015 - 2017
Ensure that the principles of equal opportunity, particularly in relation to disability, gender, age and cultural background, are strictly observed in Council's recruitment and selection processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSD³ 	Undertaken at revision time or when a new process is implemented.	2015 - 2017
Participate in, where feasible, national, state-wide or region-wide events that promote social justice, human rights, access, access, equity and inclusion, e.g. International Day of People with Disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Community Services • Recreation Arts & Culture • RAPO 	Focus on at least one event each year.	2015 - 2017

¹ Manager Health & Community Services

² Council's Rural Access Project Officer

³ Council's Organisational Support and Development Unit

Priority 2 – Council engaging and communicating effectively with its community.

Actions	Who	How	When
Review the community engagement policies and practices of like Councils in Victoria and interstate and identify learnings for Colac Otway Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO 	Research engagement polies that reflect access, equity and inclusion principles.	August 2015
Review Council’s community engagement policy to ensure it is based on the Principles in this Plan and the current Council Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSD • MH&CS • Management Leadership Group 	Use findings from the research of other policies and practices then seek input from the Management Leadership Group in the review of Council’s policy.	September 2015
Identify the resources that Council can dedicate to community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS 	Assess actual and possible internal and external resources.	September 2015
Endorse and implement the policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council 	If required, a revised policy is presented to Council for adoption.	December 2015
Regularly review the effectiveness of the policy and make changes/adjustments if necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • Management Leadership Group 	Review conducted within the designated timeframe or when required.	As determined
Establish reference pathways for the community to contribute to our planning processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • MH&CS • RAPO • Positive Ageing Ambassadors • HADP - CDW⁴ 	This could commence with the Seniors Advisory Committee and be further developed, as required.	August 2015

Priority 3 – Council developing effective and strong relationships/partnerships with agencies/community groups that provide services/support to people suffering disadvantage.

Actions	Who	How	When
Develop a profile of the agencies and clubs that are involved in providing services and support to people experiencing disadvantage. The profile should contain the following (where relevant) – name, location, services/support provided, service goals/development plans, target groups/clients/ users/usage levels, funding sources and any other relevant information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO 	Use existing networks to identify and profile the accessibility, equability and inclusiveness of the community.	June 2016
Consult with these agencies and groups about mechanisms for fostering dialogue and building stronger relationships between the agencies and groups and Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Health & Community Services • Recreation Arts & Culture 	Develop and implement an agreed agenda to facilitate this process of communicating and developing relationships.	2016 - 2017

⁴ Healthy Ageing Demonstration Project – Community Development Worker

Priority 4 – Council and the community developing an understanding of the nature and level of disadvantage and isolation in the Colac Otway community and responding effectively to this understanding.

Actions	Who	How	When
Undertake quantitative and qualitative research into the nature and levels of disadvantage in Colac Otway Shire - language difficulties, disability, social and economic disadvantage and geographic isolation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Relevant Victorian Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research data and profiles • Conduct focus groups • Consult with existing stakeholder networks 	2015 - 2017
Undertake qualitative research into barriers experienced by people from disadvantaged circumstances in accessing services and generally participating in community life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct focus groups • Consult with existing stakeholder networks 	2015 - 2017
Place a special focus in this research on people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, new settlers, people with mental illness and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (GLTBI) community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Relevant Victorian Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct focus groups • Consult with existing stakeholder networks 	2015 - 2017
Provide the findings of this research to Council staff, local service providers and make the general community aware of the findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO 	Produce a findings document	2017
Meet with community leaders, service providers, government agencies etc. to discuss the findings and identify strategies for addressing disadvantage in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO 	Convene a forum to discuss findings and commence development of Phase 2 of the Access Equity and Inclusion Plan (2017 – 2021).	2017

Priority 5 – Colac Otway being a welcoming community and acknowledging and celebrating its cultural diversity.

Actions	Who	How	When
Develop a profile of Colac Otway's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)/migrant communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Recreation Arts & Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research data and profiles • Conduct focus groups • Consult with existing stakeholder networks 	2015 - 2017
Engage with leaders of the migrant communities to identify the types of support new migrants need during the first two years of their residency in Colac Otway Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Recreation Arts & Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct focus groups 	2015 - 2017
Together with other relevant agencies in Colac Otway Shire, develop a program for providing this support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Recreation Arts & Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with existing stakeholder networks 	2017
Provide cultural awareness training for Council staff. Encourage other public organisations to do the same.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAPO • MH&CS • OPASS • F&CSC⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise on a regular basis, as required • Seek funding sources for this work 	Ongoing
Celebrate the Shire's cultural diversity – through multicultural days, sharing personal stories in Council's newsletter or in local media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally diverse communities • Public Relations Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage opportunities to celebrate and inform the community on cultural diversity. 	Ongoing

⁵ Council's Family and Children's Services Coordinator

Priority 6 – Colac Otway Shire having a built environment which is accessible to people of all abilities.

Actions	Who	How	When
Implement training for Infrastructure, Planning and Recreation staff on the need for accessible Council owned/controlled buildings and the public realm in the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO 	Identify and introduce training most suitable for Infrastructure, Planning and Recreation staff.	2015 - 2017
Plan and budget for an accessibility audit of Council owned/controlled buildings and the public realm in the Shire in Phase 2 of this Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Recreation Arts & Culture • RAPO 	Prepare for an audit in partnership with a team of people of all abilities and their carers.	2017
Systematically address accessibility issues as Council upgrades its buildings and enhances the public realm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH&CS • RAPO • Health & Community Services • Recreation Arts & Culture 	Develop and implement an agreed agenda to facilitate this process of communicating and developing relationships.	Ongoing
Develop mobility maps for each township in the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAPO 	Research other local government mobility maps and produce a similar product.	December 2016
Provide a formal mechanism for people of all abilities or their carers to report issues of concern to Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAPO • Executive Management Team 	Develop a mechanism that is understood and agreed to by the Executive Management Team.	December 2015
Empower people of all abilities and their carers to contribute to planning, infrastructure and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • Executive Management Team • RAPO 	Develop and adopt a process to seek input from people of all abilities and their carers.	December 2015
Ensure all Council events activities are accessible and inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Art & Culture • RAPO 	Maintain Council's supply of accessibility and mobility equipment.	Ongoing
Encourage owners/occupiers of commercial and retail outlets to improve the accessibility of their venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAPO • MH&CS • Economic Development 	Provide information that is motivational to owners/occupiers to improve their venues.	Ongoing
Develop a strong relationship with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAPO • OPASS • MH&CS 	Meet regularly with NDIA to address local issues.	Ongoing

Appendix B – Other Council Practice/Plans

Council	Title	Years	Content	Discussion
Darebin City	Equity and Inclusion Policy	2012-2015 (4 years)	19 page document and appendices. Contains background, definitions, guiding principles, goals and elements, planning and audit tool, implementation, monitoring and reporting and review and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The policy lists 6 guiding principles – social justice, human rights, accountability, participation, empowerment and diversity. Describes policy ‘as rights based policy which is informed by human rights and equity and inclusion principles’. The policy commits Council to observing the 6 principles listed above and in particular ‘acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal Culture, values and practice’ and ‘recognising and targeting individuals, groups and communities, who are excluded by discrimination and poverty’. The policy includes 3 goals which specifically relate to Council and its role in building inclusive communities. These goals are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darebin Council being an inclusive organisation which is driven by the 6 principles listed above and where all its practices are based on and reflects these principles Darebin Council delivering services and programs, that are inclusive, responsive accessible and equitable Darebin Council contributing to the building of empowered and inclusive communities where people are heard, respected, connected and encourage to participate in community life Each goal is supported by a set of elements which essentially are actions which enable Council to achieve its goals, e.g. transparent decision-making, Council’s image reflects understanding and commitment to equity and inclusion, all Council services consider and integrate principles of rights based equity and inclusion etc. The policy proposes that Council develop an Equity and Inclusion Planning and Audit Tool which is used by Council to assess how well a new service, facility or other initiative satisfies the 6 guiding principles. The policy proposes a set of monitoring and reporting mechanisms which includes an annual reporting process and an evaluation process at the expiration of the Plan.
Monash City	Access and Equity Framework	2013-2017 (5 years)	10 page document and appendices. Contains introduction, purpose, background, legislative and policy context and action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Framework lists 3 guiding principles – social justice, human rights and access and equity and 4 sub-principles under access and equity – responsiveness, communication, accountability and leadership. The framework does not list its own goals or contain an action plan, instead it makes reference to goals relating to access and equity in other major Council plans such as the Multicultural Action Plan, Disability Action Plan, Early Years Plan, Youth Action Plan and Health and Well-being Partnership.
	Disability Action and Inclusion Framework	2009-2013 (4 years)	37 page document. Contains policy context, review of recent plan, key themes, framework and action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Policy promotes 6 key themes – communication and information, service delivery and community strengthening, physical and natural environment, employment and workforce development, leadership and advocacy and accountability. The priority areas are supported by 50 actions ranging from developing a communications policy to raising the awareness of Council staff to the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

Council/Municipality	Title	Years	Content	Discussion
Monash City (cont.)	Multicultural Action Plan	2013-2017 (5 years)	20 pages and appendices. Contains an introduction, a monitoring and implementation process, the key priority areas and an action plan for each priority area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan lists 5 key priority areas – access, communication and engagement, partnerships and community capacity building, leadership and advocacy, and recognition and celebration and organisational development. The priority areas are supported by 60 wide ranging recommendations which include the establishment of multicultural playgroups, conducting orientation visits to libraries for emerging and small communities, encouraging people from CALD background to be get involved in volunteer work, encouraging diversity on Council’s advisory groups, celebrating the benefits of cultural diversity etc. The Plan requires an annual report be submitted to Council on the progress of the Plan.
Moreland City	Access and Inclusion Policy	2010-2014 (5 years)	11 page document. Contains Council’s values, principles, priorities and objectives, priority areas and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Policy’s main target group is people with disabilities. It lists 5 guiding principles – individual choice and support, individual ability, access for all, individual identity and ongoing awareness and discussion. It lists 4 priority areas – inclusion and participation, employment and training, accessing goods and services and changing attitudes. These priorities are supported by objectives, e.g. work with local clubs/organisations to ensure that programs and services are inclusive of people of all abilities, ensure that Council’s employments practices are accessible and promote universal design principles. The policy has a set of monitoring and reporting mechanisms which includes an annual reporting.
	Multicultural Policy	2011-2015 (5 years)	30 pages and appendices. Contains principles, learnings from previous policy, policy context, key findings from literature review, consultation findings, strategic directions and priorities/commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Policy is aimed at celebrating multiculturalism and ensuring people from CALD can access services and participate fully in community life. It lists 4 guiding principles- participation, accountability, non-discrimination and empowerment. The Policy is framed around the following key directions – a responsive organisation, an empowered community and an inclusive community. It lists 7 key objectives – improving social inclusion, maintaining cultural diversity, supporting community planning and capacity building, maintaining and improving programs and services, working to build hope, enhancing partnerships which strengthen community and advocacy. It commits Council to 13 actions aimed at achieving these objectives.
Warrnambool City	Cultural Diversity Policy	2006-2009 (not updated)	14 pages. Contains an introduction, guiding values, policy framework, policy objectives, monitoring and reporting and action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Policy lists 9 objectives, including: ensuring equitable access to Council services, providing accessible information about Council services, raising the profile of Council with disadvantaged groups, ensuring staff understand the needs of residents and developing Council as a champion of diversity in the workplace. Objectives are supported by 49 recommendations which include establishing and maintaining a database on the cultural profile of the Warrnambool community and inviting leaders from CALD communities to citizenship ceremonies. Policy requires that an annual progress report on the implementation of the policy be produced.

Council	Title	Years	Content	Discussion
Yarra Ranges Shire	Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy	2013-2023 (11 years)	23 page document. Contains a vision, policy and legislative context, set of goals, strategic actions and target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy's main target group is people with disabilities. Its Vision is about creating an inclusive society that enable people with a disability to fulfil their potential. It contains 4 goals – accessible information, accessible buildings, inclusive community and a Council committed to access, equity and inclusion. It lists 9 objectives and 26 strategies. Objectives include improving communication systems, observing universal design principles, Council modelling best practice and enhancing local employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Actions include embedding equity, access and inclusion into the development of all Council strategies and developing employment procedures/practices that support the employment of people with a disability. Progress on the implementation of the strategy is monitored on a quarterly basis. Annual reports are required.
Shepparton City	Universal Access and Inclusion Plan	2013-2017	48 pages and appendices. Contains an introduction, vision, strategic objectives, policy/legislative context, aims and monitoring and reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan lists 5 key objectives – active and engaged community, enhancing the environment, economic prosperity, quality infrastructure and high performing organisation. It contains 53 aims including celebrating international disability and human rights days, using Council's grants program to fund projects which promote access and inclusion and providing safe and equitable footpath and access for community members.
Ballarat City	Disability Action and Inclusion Plan	2011-2013	22 pages. Contains a policy context and framework, key priority areas and strategies and implementation and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan's main target group is people with disabilities. It contains 7 key priority areas – communication, an inclusive community, accessible built environment, community participation and connection, workforce engagement participation and development, services for an inclusive community and positive leadership The implementation of the Plan is to be formally monitored on a six monthly basis and a report on progress included in Council's annual report
Geelong City	Disability Action Plan	2014-2017	34 pages. Contains an introduction, definition, priority areas and action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan's main target group is people with disabilities. It nominates 4 key priority areas – improved access to goods services and facilities, better access to employment, promoting and inclusive and participatory community and improving attitudes and practices. The action plan contains 28 objectives and around 40 objectives. The objectives include: All buildings being audited for accessibility Pedestrian areas being free from unreasonable obstructions Council actively supporting the principles and practice of disability access and inclusion Customer service staff trained in effective communication The Plan requires the development of an annual Disability Action Plan Report.

Council	Title	Years	Content	Discussion
Indigo Shire	Access and Inclusion Plan	2011-2014	38 pages. Contains an introduction, policy context, policy statement, key goals, objectives and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Plan contains 5 key goals – people moving around safely and easily, people having safe access to public spaces, all residents having the opportunity to participate in community life and people having access to information.• The goals are supported by 16 goals and around 45 actions. Most of the actions are infrastructure related.• Monitoring and reporting requirements include quarterly reporting to Council's senior management group and an annual progress report to Council.