



Banyule City Council

Disability Plan 2017 – 2021

DRAFT

Executive Summary

Council's Disability Plan strives not only to reduce physical barriers to access, it will also inform and educate the community at large about disability, and work with organisations to help ensure Banyule's residents with disabilities can play an active part in making Banyule a great place in which to live.

The Disability Plan has used Banyule's Inclusion, Access and Equity Framework (IAEF) which identifies five goals for our diverse communities. The five goals are:

1. Ensure Council facilities, activities and services are accessible, inclusive and equitable.
2. Work in partnership with local services to increase inclusion and address service gaps.
3. Work in partnership to build the capacity of disadvantaged groups to be involved in community life.
4. Education, celebration and awareness raising contributing to building inclusive and equitable communities.
5. Advocate on behalf of and with our community to reduce discrimination and disadvantage.

The Disability Advisory Committee will provide Council with advice and information on inclusion, access and equity, issues facing people with disabilities and monitor the implementation of Council's Disability Plan 2017-2021.

Disability Plan 2017 – 2021

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Introduction

Disability is something that can affect anyone at anytime. It is likely that at some time in life, everyone not born with disability will acquire disability. It may be permanent or temporary, such as through accident or injury, or acquired, through old age, but it is prevalent to the extent that some commentators regard disability as a normal part of the human condition.

Disability is about differences, between the physical, mental, sensory and neurological functioning of every individual in our society. Disability is also about perceptions and expectations; instead of viewing disability as being a common human condition, society often categorises it as being about the dysfunction of a minority group. Such a limiting social perception lowers and demeans the expectations and social values of the people in this “minority” group.

Perceptions of disability have changed considerably. Much of this change has come about as disability has moved into the human rights arena. Previously, disability was regarded as a medical issue. While the medical side of disability remains important, perceptions of disability itself have changed and it is common to think of disability as not only a human rights issue, but also that it can be seen in terms of a social model. This takes the view that what makes disability difficult is not necessarily the condition itself, but the lack of access into buildings and to services, and negative and distorted attitudes about people with disability.

Council’s Disability Plan for 2017-2021 strives not only to reduce physical barriers to access. It will also inform and educate the community at large about disability, and work with organisations to help ensure Banyule’s residents with disabilities can play an active part in making Banyule a great place in which to live.

Purpose of the Banyule Disability Plan

Banyule’s Disability Plan 2017–2021 is part of Council’s commitment to servicing the needs of our increasingly diverse population. Banyule City Council believes in diversity and the rights of all people to be free from discrimination and have opportunities to take part in community life.

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, local government has a role in providing opportunities for all to achieve maximum health and wellbeing. Banyule City Council acknowledges that the wellbeing of certain groups, including our residents with disabilities, are affected more than others and requires a greater level of attention.

The Disability Plan takes steps to ensure that Council’s buildings, services, facilities, programs and events do not present barriers to the participation of its residents with disabilities, and to their families and carers. It seeks to ensure that Council, in partnership with other organisations, will advocate for people with disabilities to promote access and inclusion.

The Disability Plan is one of four plans that are based on Council’s Inclusion, Access and Equity Framework (IAEF). The other plans are our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Plan, Multicultural Plan and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan. The IAEF expresses our commitment to our diverse communities and provides a framework to guide the way that we will work to promote and foster inclusion, access and equity.

Current Status

In 2014, Council adopted its first Disability Plan 2014 – 2017 using the IAEF. This led to the establishment of the Banyule Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee which provides advice to Council on emerging issues and monitors the implementation of the Plan.

Achievements and Outputs from Previous Plan

The Disability Plan 2017 – 2021 builds on the achievements and outputs delivered over the past three years through Council's previous Plan in 2014.

Some of the outputs achieved by the 2014 – 2017 Plan include:

- Hosted an inclusive arts exhibition at the Hatch Contemporary Arts Space, which featured works from local artists with disability
- Held four community consultation forums to understand issues facing people with disabilities and their families in Banyule.
- Held two professional development forums on issues around violence against women with disabilities
- Supported the Jets Creative Arts Crew to take part in activities at YouthFest, including a chill out space, performances on the main stage and volunteering across the event.
- Co-ordinated six events to celebrate International Day of Disability in partnership with local services, organisations and businesses.
- Delivered the first ever Sensory Friendly Festival as part of the Kids Arty Farty Festival featuring clever initiatives to make the festival more inclusive
- Partnered with the National Disability Insurance Agency to deliver three NDIS 101 sessions to help local residents understand the NDIS.
- In partnership with Hoyts Greensborough Cinema, held several sensory friendly film sessions.
- In partnership with VALID and neighbouring Councils, hosted the first NDIS services expo to inform individuals and families about services available in the NDIS.
- Appointed a dedicated Transition Officer to support people with a disability to transition across to the NDIS.

Disability and Inclusion Advisory Committee

The Banyule Disability and Inclusion Advisory Committee is one of Council's formally constituted advisory committees. It considers matters related to disability as they affect Banyule, and where necessary, gives advice to Council.

It is made up of 14 community members, most of whom have lived experience of disability, or who care for family members with disabilities, plus representatives from community and disability organisations. It is supported by Council officers, and meetings are chaired by a Councillor. These members of the second term of the Banyule Disability and Advisory Committee were appointed in January 2017 and will hold their positions for a period of two years.

Aim

The aim of the Banyule Disability and Inclusion Advisory Committee is to provide Council with advice and information on inclusion, access and equity, issues facing people with disabilities, and on the development and implementation of Council's Disability Plan 2017-2021.

Objectives

- Provide feedback and advice to Council on its policies, plans and services that impact local people with disabilities
- Consider and provide advice on key Government initiatives, programs and reviews that affect local people with disabilities
- Advocate on behalf of people with disabilities
- Consider funding and other opportunities as they may arise
- Assist Council to promote the benefits of diversity and enhance understanding about the barriers to equality facing people with disabilities
- Provide advice to Council in relation to its communication, engagement and consultation with people with disabilities

Development of the Plan

The Disability Plan 2017 – 2021 has been informed by a number of research and consultation steps, including:

- Review of relevant National, State and local policy and plans
- Community engagement with stakeholders
- Review of Banyule's demographics
- Evaluation of the Disability Action Plan 2014 – 2017.

Legislative and Policy Context

This policy review is not comprehensive and Council Officers will continue to monitor the Federal and State policy agenda for relevant information.

International Context

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability calls upon member states to work towards protecting and upholding the rights of its citizens with a disability. Australia became a signatory to the Convention in July 2008.

Australian Government Context

Disability Discrimination Act (1992); and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 both make unlawful discrimination on the grounds of disability. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) requires Councils to protect the rights of people with a disability and reduce barriers and discrimination facing people with a disability.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides community access and individualised support for people with permanent and significant disability, their families and carers. It is a collaborative process between the Federal and State/ Territory governments and it is progressively being rolled out around Australia.

Victorian Government Context

The Victorian Disability Act (2006) requires local governments to develop a Disability Action Plan for the purposes of:

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

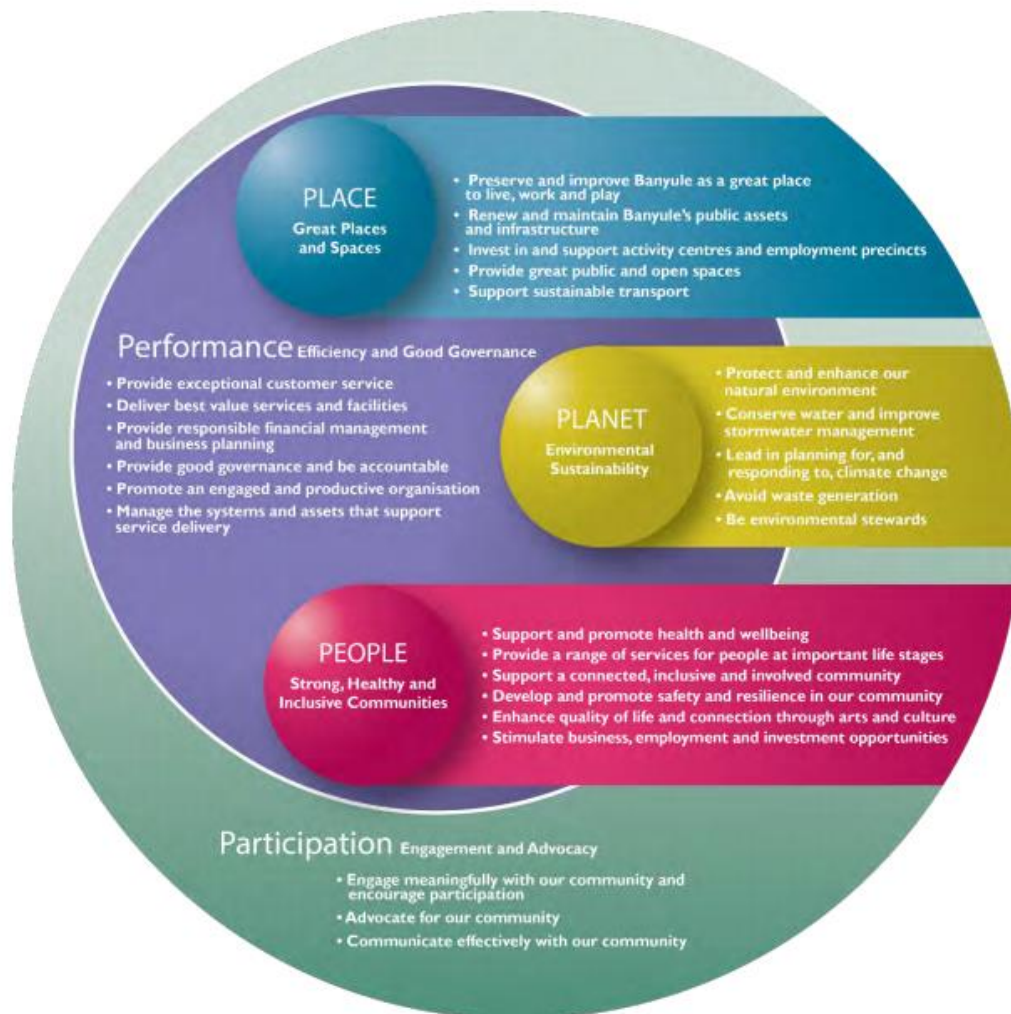
The State Disability Plan sets out the Victorian government's plan for an inclusive Victoria.

Banyule City Council Context – links to Council Plan

The purpose of Council's Plan 2017-2021 is to set the strategic direction for Council responsibilities over this four year period. It establishes the vision, objectives and key directions guiding Council's work under five themes which are People, Planet, Place, Participation and Performance. It outlines priorities and helps guide the services that we provide to the community.

The Disability Plan is in line with the Council Plan 2017-2021, it directly links to the People and Participation objective and key direction.

The following diagram gives an overview of Council's objectives and key directions.

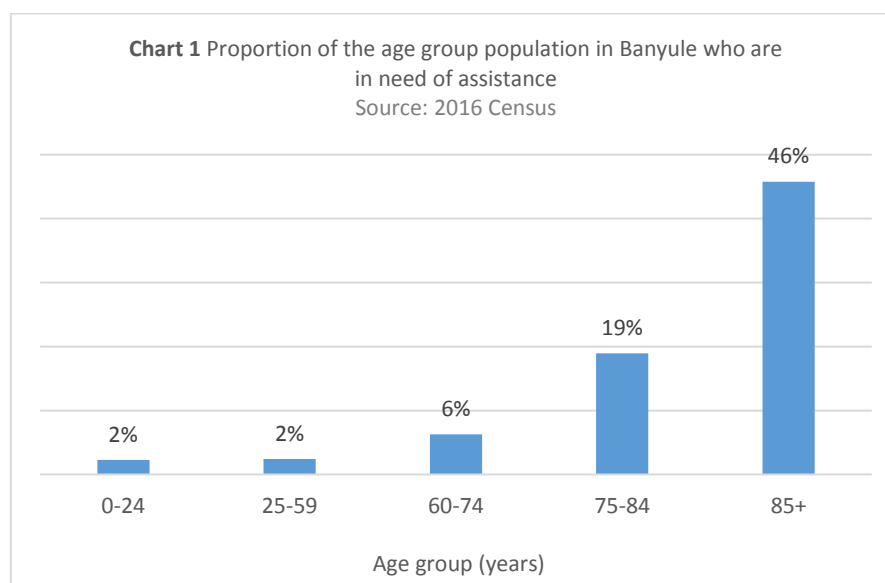


Demographics of Disability in Banyule

Banyule's estimated resident population for 2016 is 127,693, with the population forecast to grow to 148,095 by 2036.

In the 2015 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, almost 1 in 5 people (18.5%) have a disability. Based on this proportion, it is estimated that 23,623 Banyule residents have a disability.

The rate of disability and need of assistance increases significantly with age. The number of residents with a disability is forecast to increase as Banyule has an ageing population.



The number of residents indicating a need for assistance with daily core activities (communication, mobility and personal care), due to a disability, long term illness or old age is 6,077. This represents 5.0% of Banyule's population and is similar compared to Greater Melbourne (4.9%).

There are 12,990 carers providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age. Across the municipality, Heidelberg West/Bellfield has the highest proportion of residents in need of assistance (8.2%), followed by Watsonia (6.9%). The suburb of Eaglemont has the lowest proportion (2.9%).

In the 2014 Banyule Household Survey, the most common disability types reported were physical (9.4%), vision impairment/blindness (6.1%) and hearing impairment/deafness (5.9%).

Community Engagement

The following information has come from community engagement opportunities which took place in 2017 with the Disability and Inclusion Advisory Committee, local services and residents.

Employment

Employment remains as a critical issue, and again borne out by feedback from the consultation. Members of the disability advisory committee have often provided feedback in relation to employment issues, comments have included, “Conduct ‘myth-busting’ exercises with local employers.” and “Organise an expo to bring together people with disabilities and traders”

Access

Issues around disability access appeared time and again in feedback from the consultation. While access into new public buildings is improving, there remain many buildings with poor access. Building codes promote and require accessible features, however these are for public buildings, and private buildings and homes are not subjected to the same standards for disability access. Access also refers to services; to facilities in buildings, such as toilets, light switches, wash basins and so on; to public transport; and to public events. Many of these are subject to access regulations so all people can use them. A local disability services organisation suggested that “Council can use its position of influence to support and encourage disability access among community organisations.”

Information

Accurate and up-to-date information about disability featured prominently in feedback. In particular, information about mental illness and brain injury was considered of vital importance in order to combat stereotypes and negative assumptions. A particular example of information highlighted in the consultation was that small businesses need to recognise that people with disabilities make up a significant portion of the market and it makes good business sense to support their access needs.

Violence against Women with Disabilities

Local service providers identified that women with disabilities are at greater risk of family and sexual violence compared with both men with disabilities and women without disabilities. Violence against women intersects with disability discrimination and creates a higher risk.

The Impact of the NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is one of the most significant social reforms undertaken in Australia. Government block funding to disability service organisations is being phased out in favour of funding to individuals with disabilities who can take their funding and purchase services and the supports they require to help them live an ordinary life.

Presenting Issues

Council acknowledges that some members of our community experience lower levels of health and wellbeing, community participation and economic participation than other members of the community. This is due to a range of factors that are discussed within this Plan. While some of our local residents with disabilities have poorer health and wellbeing, and these need to be addressed, this Plan also builds on the positive contributions made by our residents with disabilities. Council is proud of its diversity and sees it as an asset to be harnessed.

The Disability Action Plan provides the vehicle by which Council will improve wellbeing and participation for members of our community.

Health and Wellbeing: Good health is the state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease. Health and wellbeing can be supported at any age through individual and public policy measures. Wellbeing is fundamental to quality of life, quality of human relationships and the capacity to participate in education, work, recreation and the community. Banyule City Council is committed to improving the health of our community and identifying and minimising threats to public health.

Community Participation: The opportunity to participate in community life is a fundamental right of a democracy. Some groups within the Banyule community experience barriers in being involved fully in community life due to a range of factors including the negative and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes of others. Banyule City Council strives to be a city that values diversity and actively promotes and enables the inclusion of all residents in the life of the community.

Economic Participation: Accessing economic opportunities and having the capacity to participate in the economy are important contributors to people's overall wellbeing. Fulfilling economic potential can increase resilience to change and provide a strong foundation for increasing the robustness of other wellbeing factors, such as mental and physical health. Banyule City Council is committed to supporting people to achieve their economic potential.

Inclusion Access and Equity Framework

The Disability Plan has used Banyule's Inclusion, Access and Equity Framework (IAEF) which identifies five goals for our diverse communities. These goals describe what we aim to achieve and the broad outcomes we are looking to support for our diverse communities.

1. Ensure Council facilities, activities and services are accessible, inclusive and equitable.

This strategy focuses on how we work with our own staff and organisation, and on our own services to respond to the needs of diverse communities. It is Council's desire that the services we provide, and the way we work as an organisation, recognises and responds to the diverse needs of our community.

Intended Outcomes: People do not face barriers in using Council services, facilities and activities.

2. Work in partnership with local services to increase inclusion and address service gaps.

This strategy focuses on how we work with other key service providers to try and make sure our diverse community has good access to relevant services that are inclusive.

Intended Outcomes: People do not face barriers to accessing local services and opportunities.

3. Work in partnership to build the capacity of disadvantaged groups to be involved community life.

This strategy focuses on building the capacity of individual community members and communities to assist them to lead local solutions.

Intended Outcomes: Diverse communities are resilient and engaged in community life.

4. Education, celebration and awareness raising contributing to building inclusive and equitable communities.

This strategy focuses on how we work to increase support and develop wider community understanding, appreciation and pride regarding our diversity.

Intended Outcomes: The community values diversity and there is reduced prejudice.

5. Advocate on behalf of and with our community to reduce discrimination and disadvantage.

Many of the issues facing our community are outside of the direct control of Council. This strategy is about how we advocate on issues that impact on our local community, for issues beyond Council or the local community's direct control.

Intended Outcomes: Peoples rights are protected and promoted.

These goals will be progressed through the development of an Action Plan.

Implementation and Action Plan

The Implementation Plan outlines the strategies to be implemented over a four year period to achieve each of the goals. The Action Plan will be considered on a regular basis as part of the Council's annual budget process. It will identify new and innovative actions happening across Council Departments. It will not list all actions Council does to support residents with disabilities.

| Goal | Strategies implemented over four years |
|---|--|
| <p>Ensure Council facilities, activities and services are accessible, inclusive and equitable.</p> <p>Intended Outcome: People do not face barriers in using Council services, facilities and activities.</p> | Implement staff education and awareness training |
| | Promote and improve access to public meeting places that support our diverse communities |
| | Offer services, facilities and opportunities that enable equal access and participation and reduce potential for isolation and exclusion. This includes supporting equal access to civic participation |
| | Develop and promote inclusive employment practice |
| | Improve communication and access to information through the use of a broad range of communication mediums |
| | Review Council forms, publications and website to be inclusive and reduce potential for isolation and exclusion |
| <p>Work in partnership with local services to increase inclusion and address services gaps.</p> | Improve Council's communication processes by using inclusive language, content and imagery that represents our diverse communities |
| | Support local services and groups to engage with our diverse communities and increase community harmony |

| Goal | Strategies implemented over four years |
|--|---|
| Intended Outcome: People do not face barriers to accessing local services and opportunities | Work in partnership with community groups, sporting clubs and organisations to ensure equal access for our diverse communities |
| | Promote the provision of health services and practices that cater for our diverse communities |
| | Support and promote initiatives that showcase the positive contribution that our diverse communities make to economic participation through employment and businesses |
| | Work with local services to encourage equitable employment opportunities |
| Work in partnership to build the capacity of disadvantaged groups to be involved community life Intended Outcome: Diverse communities are resilient and engaged in community life. | Support and recognise businesses that show initiative and good practice in including our diverse communities |
| | Support local services and groups to engage with and provide welcoming environments for our diverse communities to increase community harmony |
| | Support our diverse communities to access funding and other opportunities as they may arise. |
| Education, celebration and awareness raising contributing to building inclusive and equitable communities. Intended Outcome: The community values diversity and there is reduced prejudice. | Ensure Banyule's events calendar celebrates our diverse communities and considers the diversity in their planning and delivery |
| | Acknowledge and promote the contributions from our diverse communities |
| | Support and promote events and activities that celebrate cultural events and diversity, for example Disability Awareness Week |
| | Develop communication initiatives and projects that promote the contribution of our diverse community, target discrimination and promote anti-racism messages |

| Goal | Strategies implemented over four years |
|---|--|
| Advocate on behalf on and with our community to reduce discrimination and disadvantage. | Extend and enhance partnerships, projects and advocacy efforts that address the needs of our diverse communities |
| Intended Outcome: People's rights are protected and promoted. | Develop partnerships, projects and advocacy efforts that address the needs of our diverse communities |

Evaluation and Review

The Disability Plan includes a range of strategies that are organised under the five IAEF goals. The goals and strategies are relevant for the four years of the Disability Plan. Each year there will be a set of actions developed that respond to the strategies.

Within Council, the implementation of the Disability Plan is the primary responsibility of the Community and Social Planning Department. The Banyule Disability and Inclusion Advisory Committee will assist by providing advice regarding the implementation of the Plan.

In 2018 further work will be undertaken to refine the evaluation approach and measures for the Plan.

Conclusion

The Disability Plan takes steps to ensure that Council's buildings, services, facilities, programs and events do not present barriers to the participation of its residents with disabilities, and to their families and carers. It seeks to ensure that Council, in partnership with other organisations, will advocate for people with disabilities to promote access and inclusion.

Banyule City Council has a commitment to its diverse communities which is guided by the IAEF. The Disability Plan 2017 – 2021 provides the vehicle by which Council will improve wellbeing and participation for members of our community.

Further Information

For further information regarding Banyule's Disability Plan or any of the other plans under the Inclusion, Access and Equity Framework go to

<https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Services/Diverse-Communities-and-Social-Inclusion>

Community and Social Planning Unit

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Appendix

1. Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 defines disability:

- a. total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions, or
- b. total or partial loss of a part of the body, or
- c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness, or
- d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness, or
- e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body, or
- f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction, or
- g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour, and includes a disability that:
 1. presently exists, or
 2. previously existed but no longer exists, or
 3. may exist in the future, or
 4. is imputed to a person.

The definition of "disability" in the Disability Discrimination Act includes:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Psychiatric
- Sensory
- Neurological, and
- Learning disabilities, as well as
- Physical disfigurement, and
- The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.