

## Inclusive and Accessible Communities (Disabled Access)

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<b>Responsible officer:</b>	Director Community and Planning
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### Scope

Towong Shire developed a Community Access and Inclusion Plan for the 2014-2017 to the 2018-2021 period. The Plan was prepared in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Victorian Disability Act 2006.

Council plays a vital role in the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. All local government functions directly or indirectly impact on the quality of life of people with disability in the Shire who live, work, visit or socialise within its boundaries.

### Background

Disability access planning enables Towong Shire to plan and ensure existing and future services are accessible and inclusive for people with disability, their families and carers. The planning utilises five key principles to reflect inclusive practice and accessibility for community members and visitors:

The key guiding principles are:

- People with a disability are **connected** and have the information they need to make decisions and choices;
- People with a disability have the **skills and confidence** to participate and contribute to the community and protect their rights;

- People with a disability use and **benefit** from the same mainstream services as everyone else;
- People with disability **participate** in and benefit from the same community activities as everyone else; and
- People with disability **actively contribute** to leading, shaping and influencing their community.

The guiding principles and actions are listed in the Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021 (still in draft) for implementation. Council will work proactively with key agencies, the Towong Health Alliance and communities to promote inclusive and accessible practices across the municipality.

Council's primary responsibility under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 is to ensure that there is no discrimination in any of its own functions, services and programs or by any of the organisations it supports via facilities or use of funding.

## Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- To ensure Council's facilities and services are accessible and inclusive.
- To ensure Council complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1992.
- To develop and promote the Towong Shire as being an inclusive community for all who live and visit the municipality.
- To ensure people with a disability are connected to mainstream services, while having the opportunity to participate and contribute like everyone else.

## Approach

We aim to achieve the objectives of this Policy by:

- Implementing Council's Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021 (still in draft)
- Ensuring that our functions, programs and services do not discriminate against any person on the basis of disability in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.
- Adoption of universal design principles in all infrastructure programs of work.
- Taking action to identify areas which need improvement and prioritise them as the basis of action.
- Raising awareness that people with disabilities have the right to equality within our community.
- Facilitating appropriate links between groups and individuals within the community.
- Improving the knowledge, understanding and confidence of Council personnel so that all areas of planning, coordination and service provision are responsive to the needs of people with disability.
- Including Community Access awareness in Community Services activities where practical.
- Supporting the any federal or state government initiatives for people with disability, their families and carers, inclusive of the National Disability Insurance Scheme initiatives.

## Deployment

Management and staff are to be familiar with, and are accountable for, the delivery of this policy within their areas of responsibility. This will be measured via regular Workplan Reviews. In specific terms the responsibility for this policy can be described as follows:

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for managing this policy across the Council.

- The Director Community and Planning is responsible for overseeing the implementation of both our Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021 and the Disability Access Policy.
- Managers, at all levels, are required to create an accessible and inclusive environment.
- All staff are actively involved in ensuring all disability access issues are dealt with appropriately.

## Resources

The following resources are committed by Council to assist with the implementation of this policy:

- Director Community and Planning to co-ordinate implementation;
- Family Services Coordinator to implement the Community Access and Inclusion Plan and Disability Services Community Building Plan;
- Director of Infrastructure and Environment to implement universal design principles in all infrastructure programs of work;
- Annual Budget allocation;
- Training for all Councillors and Staff; and
- Other resources as deemed necessary by the Chief Executive Officer.

## Relevant legislation

- Disability Discrimination Act, 1992
- Victorian Disability Act 2006
- The Local Government (General) Amendment (community and Social Plans) regulation 1998
- Building Code of Australia

## Results

The deployment of this policy together with the results achieved will be reviewed at least annually.



**Authorised by:**

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**Juliana Phelps**  
Chief Executive Officer