

Evaluation Report

Strategy Name: Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025

Strategy Department: Community Strengthening and Inclusion

Background

Wyndham's Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2023-2025 is now on its final year of implementation, a new plan will be developed to continue to build on the progress of the current plan and to meet Council's legislative requirements. The Plan responds to the Wyndham 2040 Community Vision, a place for people, by upholding the vision for a safe, connected and inclusive community. The Plan continued Council commitment to improve access and inclusion for people living with disability in Wyndham and their carers.

A primary objective of the Plan was to continue to build confidence by facilitating equitable engagement and participation for people with disability in our community and to provide the same level of access that people without disability enjoy and to ensure people are not discriminated against based on their disability.

Under the Victorian Local Government Act 2020, (S.106) Councils must plan and deliver services to the municipal community in accordance with the service performance principles:

- a) services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community;
- b) services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended
- c) quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community
- d) a Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring
- e) service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision

The Disability Act 2006 (Vic), s.38, states that public sector bodies must ensure that a Disability Action Plan is prepared for the purpose of:

- a) reducing barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services and facilities
- b) reducing barriers to people with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment
- c) promoting inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community

- d) achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.

The Disability Royal Commission's Final Report was delivered to the Australian Government on 28 September 2023. Recommendations included changes to policies and practices to prevent violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of people with disabilities, ensuring they can fully enjoy their human rights. The Final Report is based on extensive research, public hearings, and contributions from individuals with disabilities, families, and service providers, emphasising the need for a more inclusive and just society.

Key findings relevant to local government include:

- Review and update disability strategies and plans
- Ensure inclusive access across services and facilities
- Address 'ableism' by promoting positive attitudes towards people with a disability
- Promote inclusive environments by collaborating with local business and organisations about making places are accessible
- Support inclusive education and employment

Local councils have a key role to play in implementing the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission. By focusing on accessibility, inclusion, and addressing ableism, local councils can create more inclusive and equitable communities for people with disabilities.

Outcomes and Results

Pillar	Priorities	Outcomes	Reporting
Thriving	Community attitudes	1. People with disability feel included and enjoy greater social connection	<p><i>Playground Chat Board</i> installed at Hoppers Junction, creating a small network of accessible experiences with sign icons unique to the area (train station + local shops), to encourage communication beyond the Playground. This is first of its kind in Wyndham. Completed in collaboration with Noahs Ark Inc and local traders improving accessibility.</p> <p><i>Hidden Disability Sunflower</i> initiative, April 2024 at Wyndham libraries and Events and Visitor Information Centre. Over 600 merchandise items distributed to residents and carers of people with a hidden disability (i.e. deafness)</p> <p><i>Story Boards</i> introduced at most Council facilitated events, providing a visual representation of the event for those that need it. It assists event holders to better understand in providing more pleasant/less anxiety prone activity for those participants.</p>
	Accessible services	2. People with disability can readily access the services they need	<p><i>Three Local Disability Expos</i> in 2024 to give people with a disability an opportunity to learn about services available in the region</p> <p><i>Wyndham Disability Services Network (WDSN)</i> working group established in 20204 and delivered a Wyndham Disability Connection Expo May 2025. Just under 300</p>

			<p>people attended the expo and had the opportunity to engage and connect with 60 stallholders of services and/or organisations that have a shared commitment to empowering people with a lived experience of disability and their carers. Sixty-seven people participate on the smaller workshops throughout the day which included Brotherhood of St Lawrence, Whole Body Nutrition, Carer's Victoria, Australian Human Right Commission and Paralympic Swimmer Matthew Haanappel. All workshops on the day were accompanied by AUSLAN interpreting, the expo also had a sensory room and a quiet room to ensure flexibility of spaces for all attendees on the day.</p> <p>In 2023, Western Leisure Services presented at the WDSN and introduced Cérge Companion App into their customer service. The App gives service staff confidence for empathetic customer service. It also allows App users to discreetly message the venue directly, in turn alerting customer service staff to additional needs for inclusion.</p> <p><i>Wyndham Libraries</i> Q&A with Speech Pathologist, assisting parents with child's language development. Monthly sessions offered across different libraries.</p>
	Accessible information	3. People with a disability have access to information that meets the user needs	<p><i>Access English</i> ran an Insights on Literacy for Communications Professionals workshops for departments within council to assist them to</p>

			develop better messaging to our community. (About 44% of Australian adults have low literacy.)
	Education	4. Children with a disability are provided with the supports required to begin school	The Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) program delivers professional support to build capacity in early childhood education for inclusion and participation of all children in funded kindergarten programs. From October 2023 to June 2024, the PSFO team supported about 442 early childhood educators for children aged 3-4 years.
		5. People with a disability have access to formal and informal learning opportunities regardless of their ability	In Term 2 2024, the Library Children's Team, in collaboration with Hey Dee Ho, presented Sing and Sign Rhyme Time sessions at the Williams Landing Library Lounge and Hoppers Crossing Library, to 212 community members. The weekly sessions over 4 weeks engaged children from ages 1-5 in learning basic AUSLAN signs, including simple greetings, actions, colours and animals.
	Employment and economic participation	6. People with disability can get and maintain jobs that meet their needs and improve their lives	WDSN ran an employment session to assist service providers to better understand client needs to maintain and gain employment, including lived experience speakers and hearing from the carer of a young person.
Healthy	Health	7. People with disability enjoy greater wellbeing including access to healthy food options	An update to the <i>Foodbank</i> list internally with Community connectors team to include accessibility friendly venues. Council advocates for more local supermarkets to introduce quiet hours. Currently four supermarkets have quiet hours in weekly trading.
	Mental health	8. People with disability report improved mental wellbeing	<i>Skilled Access' Sport4All</i> disability inclusion program since March 2023.

			<p>The program now has 28 clubs, fitness organisations and 14 schools involved in the program.</p> <p>In 2023-24, two <i>Inclusive Multi Sport Afternoons</i> at Tarneit P-9 and Eagle Stadium. 91 people with disability and over 100 family and friends attended. The events allow participants to try multiple sports in one place where they feel safe and supported to connect with organisations they can join. 16 organisations provided activities in a second afternoon.</p>
	Accessible housing	9. People with disability can access affordable housing built to universal design standards	<p><i>Tenants Rights Victoria</i> presented to the WDSN in October 2024 to inform service providers on advocacy for their clients on housing modification requirements in rented property.</p> <p>Social Policy collaborated with the Advocacy team to clarify social and affordable housing needs moving forward, including the needs of people living with disability.</p>
	Accessible built and natural environments	10. People with disability can navigate urban and natural environments regardless of their age, ability, gender, identity, culture, language or any other social characteristic	<p>Traveller's Aid presented at the WDN on "Try before you ride day", encouraging members to discover accessible public transport, and support people to take the first step towards confident and independent travel on public transport.</p> <p>Council's footpath trading guidelines are under review with an additional disability lens to better accommodate those living with a disability to feel welcome in the city centre.</p>
Safe	Emergency preparedness	11. People with disability can access emergency communications e.g. fire, flood, etc.	<p>Conducted a review of Emergency information to provide easier materials - presented in 2024 at the WDSN.</p>

			Emergency session planned for delivery in June 2025 to assist people with a lived experience of a disability and support services on accessible emergency information.
	Preventing abuse and neglect	12. People with disability are protected against abuse and neglect	<p>Online training session 2024, to build awareness of FV in women with disability.</p> <p>In 2025, joint training session with the Wyndham Family Violence Network and WDSN to raise awareness FV prevention for women with lived experience of a disability.</p>
Opportunity	Voice and leadership	13. People with disability can exercise their civic rights/ responsibilities regardless of their intersectionality e.g. First Nations, multicultural and LGBTIQ+)	The <i>Future Wyndham</i> project community consultation included a workshop for people with lived experience of disability.
	Pride and recognition	14. People with disability are recognised and celebrated	<p>The <i>LearnWest Project</i> celebrated the joy of learning throughout life, fostering social connections, bridging generations, boosting health, and unlocking economic opportunities. A guest speaker shared his story to inspire others.</p> <p><i>International Day of Person with a Disability</i> delivered at the Civic Centre. Guest speaker Eliza Hull (award-winning musician, writer and disability advocate) shared her lived experience of disability to reduce stigma. Around 100 people attended, including six stallholders sharing crafts created by people with disability and their carers.</p>

Stakeholders and Partners

WDSN partners want to see the Accessibility and Inclusion Plan continue as a standalone policy to continue the work with key partners of raising awareness of the needs of people living with a disability to able to access and be included in the same things as more able residents. WDSN partners want the issues and concerns of people with a lived experience to continue to be raised by Council to state and federal governments.

WDSN partners are keen to take more of a lead role in working in partnership with local providers to provide the right tools and information for those with lived experience of disability and their carers. A firm step in that direction was the first Disability Connection Expo (2025) run collaboratively.

The Local Area Co-ordinator, Brotherhood of St Lawrence (BSL), has been a key partner and supporter of the Wyndham Accessibility and Inclusion plan 2023-2024. They have chaired the WDSN since 2023, facilitating greater clarity and communication between service providers and the Local Area Co-Ordinator.

Feedback has been received from residents for the Disability Committee to be reinstated so that the voices of people with a lived experience of a disability in Wyndham can exercise their rights and have their voices heard within the structures of local government.

The International Day of Persons with a Disability event was well received by the community in 2024. However, tickets sold out meaning many in the community missed out on the opportunity to participate. Attendees said they would like to see more events that celebrate people with a lived experience of a disability.

Alignment to Council Plan and Priorities

Wyndham's Accessibility and Inclusion Plan aligns closely to both the State and Federal Government Strategies. The close alignment assists us in working together, all levels of government, for collective impact, reflecting our joint priorities.

The pillars of this Plan aligned with the themes of the Wyndham 2040 Community Vision, Wyndham City's Council Plan, and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Recommendations/ Next Steps

It is the recommendation that a new Accessibility and Inclusion Plan be developed. The Disability Act 2006 requires Councils to have a Disability Action Plan for the purpose of reducing

barriers to people with a lived experience of a disability in 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; and achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

Communication of Outcomes to Community

[Year 1 report](#) was uploaded into the Wyndham City Website and this final report into the Loop page.