

Accessibility and Disability Inclusion

Introduction

The City of Port Phillip is committed to improve the equitable participation and inclusion of people with disability within our community. 2019 saw the endorsement and introduction of Council's new Access and Inclusion Plan 2019-21. With the introduction of this Plan, we aim to move beyond a compliance focus to an organisational culture where access and inclusion is routinely considered as part of 'the way we do things around here'.

The framework for the Access and Inclusion Plan was designed according to four themes with corresponding outcomes. The outcomes for the four themes are supported through the implementation of the actions listed in the Plan. Below table provides an overview of the themes and outcomes:

Table 1: Access and Inclusion Plan themes and outcomes

Access and Inclusion Plan themes	1. We Are Inclusive	2. We Are Thriving	3. We Are Fair	4. We Are Disability Confident
Outcomes	Fostering a community where people with disability belong	Fostering a liveable community	Fostering a respectful and equitable community	Fostering organisational capability and culture

The actions contained within City of Port Phillip's Access and Inclusion Plan take into consideration a range of legislative requirements and guidelines, such as the Victorian Disability Act 2006 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Plan progress

Most actions scheduled to be delivered in 2019 were completed. Multiple actions in the Plan span over several years for implementation, with progress tracked to ensure we continue to advance accessibility and disability inclusion. Actions with a status of delayed and/or partial progress made are monitored in an implementation plan to enable progression to completion status.

One action spanning the delivery timeframe of 2019 to 2021 was incomplete for 2019, which is action 5.2.4: to host an annual forum for community members to review progress of our

Access and Inclusion Plan. An interim status report was created in lieu of a forum in 2019. This report was published early 2020. The forum for 2020 was held late February, with an opportunity for anyone to discuss the Plan and/or the interim status report. Overall, most actions are progressing, although it should be noted that delivery timeframes for some actions may continue to be impacted.

Updates on accessibility and inclusion initiatives 2019/21

Below follows a selection of updates on accessibility and inclusion initiatives for the financial year 2019/20. Examples are listed in themed categories, with items both within and outside the scope of the Access and Inclusion Plan included.

1. We are Inclusive

- Council celebrated and acknowledged International Day of People with Disability early December 2019 by organising a number of community events to raise awareness of this important day on the calendar. Highlights were library events held, with inclusive story time and an author talk about mental health.
- Support was provided for an inclusive swimming program for people with disability. This program runs throughout the school terms but has been placed on hold because of the Covid-19 situation. Council also assisted with promotion of Boxing for Parkinson, an initiative facilitated by St Kilda Police and the Citizens Youth Club, through the Sport Phillip webpage. Beach access matting was also made available at the St Kilda Life Saving Club and Port Melbourne Life Saving Club during patrol season (November to April).
- This year's St Kilda Festival again facilitated a viewing platform as well as providing additional accessible vehicle parking allocation.
- 2019/20 saw the continuation of several Access Arts initiatives, such as Fog Theatre, SPARC Theatre and mentoring activities with artists with disability. Initiatives undertaken:
 - Fog Theatre is inclusive of adults with intellectual disability and on a schedule of 40 weekly workshops. Due to the COVID-19 situation, term two of 2020 (April), saw Fog Theatre moving to virtual online delivery with 100% engagement reached. The development of the Fog Theatre production (set for July 2020 at Theatre Works) has been cancelled due to COVID-19.
 - COVID-19 has also impacted SPARC Theatre, a program inclusive of adults who live in unstable housing and with lived experience of acquired brain impairment/disability/mental illness, with the number of weekly workshops down from 40 to 28 sessions.

- Mentoring activities for artists with disability took place at several times in the last financial year. Daniel Coulson, local artist, held his first solo exhibition in July 2019: 'Aesthetic Distortions'. Daniel was supported to apply and curate the exhibition. Daniel received significant coverage in local media and sold more than 34 of the works on display. In October 2019, the Deviser Provider Project supported 7 artists with disability to workshop new work with professional mentors. One artist with disability was also mentored to produce the event. The event was held in an accessible venue. Lastly, in January 2020, Chris Fenton, a visual artist, was supported to make an application to Toot Art Space for a solo show of his paintings. The application was successful and Chris sold three works.
- The Cultural Development Fund supported an interactive and inclusive art installation (Serene Lau – Port Phillip Dragon, March and April 2020) in collaboration with participants through local community organisations, that explored affordable housing and homelessness in our community using sustainable/recycled materials. In addition, an inclusive outdoor performative exploration of how the worlds of art and sport collide, 'Fanaticus', was held by Rawcus in February 2020. Fanaticus engaged young people of culturally diverse backgrounds and people with and without disability in fun, creative development workshops and a public presentation at the St Kilda Peanut Farm. Lastly, 'Paint Out' was held at Gasworks Arts in November 2019. Paint Out consisted of two accessible painting days at Gasworks Arts Park, where artists, community participants and spectators were invited to create artworks on site collaboratively in one day, followed by a pop-up exhibition and celebration.
- Early 2020 (January) saw the offering of THRIVE Grants through a partnership with Arts Access Victoria. 21 artists were supported to apply for funding for projects in Port Phillip. \$10,000 was available per project with an additional (up to) \$1,000 for access considerations. This resulted in 4 successful projects which highlight disability culture and aesthetics, to be presented in Winter 2020 (restrictions permitting). A number of aspects were put in place to ensure inclusive processes for THRIVE, such as opportunity for one on one support from Arts Access Victoria to apply, the availability of Easy and Plain English guidelines, Plain English Application Form and Budget template on council's website, live streaming of a THRIVE Information session via council's Facebook, including Auslan (Australian sign language) provision. It is worth noting that the application process included the option of video response to questions (one applicant did this and was one of the successful applicants).
- In 2020, three streams of small quick response grants were developed by the City of Port Phillip to support local artists, cultural organisations, and creative groups dealing

with the ongoing impact of COVID-19. This included a THRIVE Local stream: grants for disability and deaf arts groups or for individual artists who live or work in Port Phillip (developed between March and May 2020. Opened to applicants in May 2020. Decisions advised July 2020 for projects between August 2020 and December 2021).

2. We are Thriving

- The review and updating of key City Strategy documentation continues, with accessible and inclusive design to be addressed in the planning scheme review through the:
 - Municipal Planning Framework – in the Urban Design Strategic Directions.
 - Planning Policy Framework – in the Urban Design Clause 15.01-1L.
 - While the translation and drafting is ongoing, accessibility may also be addressed in a broader range of Planning Policy Framework clauses.
- Council's ongoing review work in the area of accessible parking spaces saw 8 parking spaces upgraded in the period 2019/2020.
- Some great examples of improved design features and accessibility were implemented as part of action 2.5.1: identify and implement accessibility improvements for public space and parks. Below are some examples:
 - Accessibility improvements at Alma Park East (part of the construction of the Alma Park Stormwater harvesting system). Works implemented between July 2019 - June 2020.
 - Accessible play equipment, accessible paths, an accessible drinking fountain and an accessible picnic table were introduced at Chipton Park in November 2019. This park aims to provide opportunities for recreational activity for a diverse range of people, given its function as the only park in its catchment area.
 - A similar position of being the only park in its catchment area is Pakington Street Reserve in St Kilda. This reserve opened in June 2020 with improvements such as the installation of an accessible drinking fountain, modifying gravel paths into asphalt hard surface paths and elevated planter beds within the community garden.
 - Significant improvements were made at Newton Court Reserve (next to the St Kilda Adventure playground). Works undertaken included the implementation of accessible paths, installation of an accessible drinking fountain and new lighting. As an added bonus, the adventure playground next to the reserve has benefitted from the access improvements, given entry can be gained via the reserve. The improved reserve opened in September 2019.
 - Accessibility improvement for access to the lawn at O'Donnell Gardens.

- A delay is experienced in relation to the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area. The Fishermans Bend Taskforce (Victorian State Government) is continuing detailed precinct planning and other projects to further implement the Fishermans Bend Framework. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with Council, and community engagement will be undertaken in due course. This work will provide the foundation for service planning to commence for community infrastructure and asset planning projects within this area.
- Progress was made for a range of community infrastructure and asset planning projects, with accessibility improvements made at Kiosk 7 (Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park); South Melbourne Town Hall; Elwood Beach Restaurant; Elwood Life Saving Club/foreshore public toilets; and 222 Bank St (Arthub).

3. We are Fair

- The front service counter at the South Melbourne Town Hall was awarded with the SCOPE Communication Access qualification in December 2019.
- Partial progress has been made to develop access and inclusion guidelines for suppliers and partners. Delivery was scheduled for 2019. However, work continues to bring this action to completion: 2019 saw the establishment of a Social Procurement Reference Group and further work has continued in 2020 with the drafting of content for a Social and Sustainable Procurement Framework.
- The Middle Years & Youth Services team undertook various activities to promote good mental health, accessibility and inclusion for school-aged children, such as:
 - Providing ongoing support on mental health and promotion of a healthy lifestyle through Case Management, Youth Events and Social Media.
 - Collaboration occurs with the wider team to run (online) parent information sessions to promote good health and wellbeing for children.
 - A small event on RU Okay Day was run at Elwood College (September 2019).
 - Accessing and promoting services for young people at Head Space – Youth Mental Health Service.
 - Resilience survey with over 2,500 young people (term 4 in 2019).
 - Production of advocacy report and infographics on young people’s resilience outlining key themes including mental health (May/June 2020).
 - Youth network series for professionals on supporting young people through COVID-19 restrictions. Series included a focus on mental health and online safety (March – June 2020).

- Over 100 young people are participating in the Student Leadership Program. They have developed a self-care plan in response to challenges faced by COVID-19 restrictions (March 2020).

4. We are Disability Confident

- 2020 saw the introduction of an Accessibility and Disability Inclusion toolkit for staff, featuring resources to help staff create an equitable workplace and inclusive community.
- A variety of employee awareness sessions were hosted during 2019/20 with the aim of increasing employees' disability confidence in various topics. Topics covered included digital accessibility; Auslan (Australian sign language) awareness; workshop on the principles of universal design; and general disability confidence sessions.
- The City of Port Phillip participated in 'AccessAbility Day' (an Australian Government initiative) in November 2019. This day saw council staff hosting job shadow opportunities for jobseekers with disability. Opportunities were offered for a wide range of council roles and jobseekers were sourced through an external organisation.

Council maintains a comprehensive implementation plan for the Access and Inclusion Plan. Whilst this is an internal document, community members are welcome to contact City of Port Phillip's Access Planner at any time to enquire about the actions in the plan. A copy of the [Access and Inclusion Plan](#) can be downloaded from our website. More information on Council's activities in relation to accessibility and inclusion can also be found on our webpage [Accessibility and Disability Inclusion](#).