

Accessible and Inclusive Surf Coast Shire

Strategic Plan 2014-24



Surf Coast Shire Council is committed to access and inclusion for all to build healthy, well-connected communities where everyone can participate.

As Surf Coast Shire Councillors and long-running advocates for access and inclusion, we are pleased to introduce Council's Strategic Plan for 2014-2024.

Under the *Victorian Disability Act (2006)*, councils are required to have an Access and Inclusion Plan. Council welcomes people of all abilities from all backgrounds to the Surf Coast community. Council is keen to ensure this plan influences the way Council operates so that it works towards the goal of a community that is accessible and inclusive for all. This means looking at issues like providing services and infrastructure as well as social and economic opportunities for people of all abilities.

Many of us on the Surf Coast have loved ones or know people who experience accessibility challenges every day. This issue is not just a priority for people with a disability and their families - access and inclusion issues can affect everyone. Issues can arise in how we or our loved ones get around, how we use public facilities, how we communicate with others, how we work, live and play. They also impact on how organisations like Councils and other service providers work in the community. Further, everyone benefits from building a community where everyone can participate.

This strategy is intended to guide decisions Council make to ensure we are focussed on the broader goal of an accessible and inclusive community for anyone who lives, visits or works in Surf Coast Shire. It has been developed with extensive input from the community, people with a disability, Council staff and Council's All Abilities Advisory Committee including its Chair, John Olsen. We commend the efforts of everyone who has taken the time to provide their insights and expertise.

We want to be a community that is accessible and inclusive for all – local residents and visitors alike. We will continue to work towards this goal, and Council's Accessible and Inclusive Strategic Plan 2014-24 will guide this process over the next ten years.

Cr. Margot Smith (Mayor)

Cr Rose Hodge and Cr Heather Wellington
Councillor representatives, All Abilities Advisory Committee.

About this plan

We recognise that access and inclusion issues can affect any of us at different times in our lives. Many people with a disability and their carers often find it hard to access buildings and community facilities but the same can also apply to parents with prams. Enjoying our beautiful coast, forests and other natural areas is often even more difficult.

Accessing services, transport or affordable housing can be equally challenging for people with physical or intellectual disability, language or cultural differences, mental illness, chronic disease or other reasons. All impact on many people's capacity to achieve positive social and economic outcomes for themselves and their families.

This plan focuses on addressing our community's access and inclusion needs and aspirations. It sets a direction for Council to follow over the next 10 years to improve access and inclusion outcomes for our residents, employees, visitors and others.

As such, the plan provides a basis for developing and implementing three-year action plans. These describe the various initiatives Council will undertake each year to achieve the plan's stated long-term outcomes.

This approach will support Council in delivering at the local community level while continuing to advocate for universal access and inclusion at regional, state and federal levels.

What this plan aims to achieve

To make Surf Coast Shire more accessible and inclusive for all by planning and working to achieve five key outcomes:



1. **Built and natural environments are well designed and accessible** for people of all abilities, and planned to adapt to our community's future accessibility needs



2. **Accessible, flexible, people-centric services and information**, responsive to the needs of people with a disability, their families and carers



3. **People of all abilities actively participate, socialise and have fun** in the community and contribute to local decision making



4. **Council actively promotes the importance of inclusion for all**, addressing discriminatory attitudes and supporting inclusive practices



5. **A workforce that embraces diversity** and is responsive to the needs and aspirations of people with a disability

How this plan will achieve these outcomes over the next 10 years

The following goals describe the directions Council will pursue over the next 10 years to achieve the plan's five key outcomes.

These goals provide the foundation for developing three-year action plans, which describe what Council will do to progress each goal, including how we will measure our performance.

The three-year action plan will be reviewed and updated each year as a separate document to guide our work.

OUTCOME 1

Built and natural environments are well designed and accessible for people of all abilities, and planned to adapt to our community's future accessibility needs.

Goals:

- 1.1 Ensure all new council buildings are compliant with the Building Codes Australian Standard
- 1.2 Continue to improve the accessibility of existing council buildings and infrastructure where feasible
- 1.3 Improve the accessibility of the outdoor environment including sporting facilities, open space, playgrounds, walking tracks and cycling trails
- 1.4 Increase the ability of staff to understand and apply current access standards and universal design principles to Council's infrastructure planning
- 1.5 Increase the capacity of planning applicants to incorporate universal design and improved accessibility in their design

OUTCOME 2

Accessible, flexible, people-centric services and information, responsive to the needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.

Goals:

- 2.1 Improve the ability of staff to respond to current and emerging needs of people with a disability, their families and carers as well as people with other access and inclusion needs
- 2.2 Apply best practice accessible communication and information approaches to enable easy access to information by people with a disability
- 2.3 Plan and deliver council events and activities that are inclusive and celebrate community diversity
- 2.4 Support service providers to develop and deliver services to meet local accessibility needs



OUTCOME 3

People of all abilities actively participate, socialise and have fun in the community and contribute to local decision making.

Goals:

- 3.1 Involve people of all abilities in Council's decision-making
- 3.2 Support community organisations to attract and cater for people with a disability as participants and volunteers
- 3.3 Support community arts, festivals and events to be inclusive of all abilities and reflective of community diversity

OUTCOME 4

Council actively promotes the importance of inclusion for all, addressing discriminatory attitudes, and supporting inclusive practices.

Goals:

- 4.1 Build and recognise community and business knowledge, skills and initiative around local access and inclusion needs
- 4.2 Work in partnership with government, business and the community to improve access and inclusion for people with a disability
- 4.3 Advocate to create systemic change and choice for people with a disability
- 4.4 Convene and support a committee to advise Council on the provision of accessible and inclusive services, programs and infrastructure

OUTCOME 5

A workforce that embraces diversity and is responsive to the needs and aspirations of people with a disability.

Goals:

- 5.1 Provide staff with the knowledge, support and systems to enable Council to provide equitable and accessible services, programs and activities
- 5.2 Continue to build workforce diversity regarding employment of people with a disability
- 5.3 Evaluate Council's Access and Inclusion Plan annually

Who this plan is for

Council will use this plan to guide the decisions we make and the actions we take to improve access and inclusion for anyone who lives, works, visits or plays in the Surf Coast Shire.

The plan is for Councillors and Council staff to assist others, including:

- people with a disability
- their family members and carers
- those affected by temporary or permanent mobility issues, from people who use wheelchairs or other aids to help them get around through to parents with prams
- people from different language and cultural backgrounds
- those impacted by chronic disease
- people experiencing mental illness
- public and private organisations involved in delivering services to support people affected by disability
- our partners who work with Council to advocate for universal access and inclusion at the local and regional level, and beyond
- People of all abilities and backgrounds will benefit!

If you would like to receive this publication in another format, please phone ☎ 5261 0600 or email customer services on info@surfcoast.vic.gov.au or contact the National Relay Service ☎ 13 36 77 if required.

This document is also available on the Internet at www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au