

## Engagement summary – Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

### Background

The Inclusive Ballarat consultation engagement process was open from early April until early May 2022. This engagement process was designed to inform the Inclusion Framework and five other plans including the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

### Engagement

The engagement process sought input from Ballarat residents through a range of engagement tools including a survey, community conversations, mapping tool, community poll and interactive activities. It specifically attempted to both engage the general community and to target specific groups, including people with disability, their families and carers. For this reason, it is important to note that people with disability are overrepresented in the survey data at more than 1 in 4 respondents, compared with an expected representation of approximately 1 in 6 people with disability across Ballarat.

Engagement findings were analysed using a combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative thematic analysis, grouping responses into overarching themes that shaped priorities.

### Demographics

Overall, 886 people provided input to the Inclusive Ballarat engagement process. Demographic information was only collected for those who responded to the survey and some of those who recorded these details for community conversations. This is a trade-off between gathering full demographic data and the provision of a range of methods requiring different levels of input to encourage the broadest possible engagement across the community.

### Community survey

The Community Survey included a number of sections related to inclusion for different groups. These sections included:

- General inclusion questions
- Promotion of reconciliation and better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Inclusion for LGBTIQ+ people
- Inclusion for older people
- Inclusion for people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds
- Inclusion for people with disability

People were able to choose which sections they wanted to respond to and which questions within those sections they were interested in.

Community survey respondents with disability:

- 60 community survey respondents identified as having a disability. Other characteristics of this group included:

Type of disability	Chronic health condition 47% Physical/ mobility 43% Psychosocial 37% Deaf or hard of hearing 22% Sight 6% Intellectual 6%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity	10 per cent identified as Aboriginal
LGBTIQ+ identity	20 per cent identified as non-binary 37 per cent identified as LGBTIQ+
Family	31 per cent also had a family member with disability

Community survey respondents with a link to a person with a disability:

- 145 community survey respondents identified a link with people with disability
    - 99 strong family connections or carer roles were reported including being a family member (n=67), carer (n=25) or partner (n=7) of a person with disability
    - 118 other relationships with people with disability were listed including friendships (n=79) and work roles (n=39)
- \* Please note that more than one connection could be selected by individuals

Disability inclusion section of survey

Overall, 87 people completed the disability inclusion section of the community survey. Forty-seven per cent of those respondents identified as having a disability.

### Community Conversations

- 34 community conversation participants were involved in disability specific conversations.

*“Inclusion means not needing to hide in any way; not needing to pretend to be someone else; not needing to spend effort and energy [trying to look] like other people.”*

Community Survey response

### Key Findings

Key findings from the community survey from **respondents with disability**:

- Just over 2 in 3 (67%) have experienced discrimination in Ballarat
- 42 per cent agree or somewhat agree that Council services are inclusive
- 45 per cent agree or somewhat agree that Council information is accessible and inclusive
- 37 per cent agree that it is easy or very easy to access Council information
- 44 per cent agree or somewhat agree that Council buildings are inclusive
- 37 per cent agree that Council buildings are easy to access
- 26 per cent agree that they can access car parks that meet their needs
- 25 per cent agree that it is easy to attend and participate in public events

Key findings from broader consultation, including the community survey:

- Disability is not a catch-all category: People with disability are diverse and their needs are varied. While many people may consider accessibility in relation to mobility (such as wheelchair use), respondents encourage consideration of other requirements beyond this including recognising that for some people their disability is hidden/ invisible.

*“Understand there is a multitude of disabilities, and one size does not fit many.”*

Community Survey response

- Places identified as providing some good accessible features include the library, art gallery, Victoria Park Inclusive Play Space, Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre along with some events (e.g., the inclusion of Auslan translation at the Begonia Festival).
- Some key barriers for people with disability are beyond the remit of City of Ballarat, including public transport and private business venues. There is an important role in advocacy for Council.

*“I can’t use public transport, it’s shocking, too hard to get to, no seat at bus stop. Buses hard to get on and off.”*

Community Survey response

- Suggested improvements Council could make to facilities and services include having sensory friendly environments, accessible information, additional seating, signage, accessible toilets and assistance dog relief areas
- Footpaths and parking are two areas of public space that currently present significant barriers for people with disability, with need for the consideration of the accessibility of the whole journey.

*“Look at safe pathways to venues from accessible parking or public transport hubs. Wide, flat paths for pedestrians and users of mobility aids need to be part of the planning.”*

Community Survey response

- People with disability want to attend events but fear that accessibility hasn't been considered, or don't know what accessibility features have been included.
- The Council website is particularly problematic for people with disability, and there is an expressed need to have information in various formats, and not only online.

*“Make things easier to find out about. Currently get lost on your website trying to find things.”*

Community Survey response

- Engagement with people with disability needs to be ongoing, accessible and provide opportunities for collaboration
- Inclusivity training for staff is needed to reduce barriers for people with disability

*“I honestly think that inclusion and diversity training and education for staff and the wider community are fundamental to creating longer term change.”*

Community Survey response

- Most people are unsure whether there are good employment and volunteering options at the City of Ballarat