Yarra Ranges Council

Disability Action Plan 2025–2029

Yarra Ranges Council

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Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways. We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region. We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

Message from the Mayor and CEO

Yarra Ranges Council has prepared this Disability Action Plan in partnership with our Disability Advisory Committee and through broader community and key stakeholder consultations. Through the development of this action plan, Council has reflected upon our last action plan and the previous 10 years of work to advance disability inclusion across the municipality. We have re-affirmed our commitment and vision towards achieving an accessible, fair, and inclusive society where people with disability, and unpaid carers, can participate in community life as equal citizens.

Our Disability Action Plan 2025-2029 identifies opportunities to improve access to Council information, services, facilities and to eliminate barriers that may prevent access and inclusion across all aspects of our business. This Action Plan not only meets our legislative responsibilities, but ensures we work together through planning, broaden our understanding of disability across our workforce and work to the social model of disability. What's new in this Action Plan is a focus on access and inclusion for people with invisible disabilities and an intersectional approach ensuring we are working with all people regardless of background, identity or age.

We acknowledge the growing rates of self-reported disability within our community (26.7%) when compared to the rest of Victoria (19.5%) and are committed to continually striving for positive health and wellbeing outcomes for all people within our community. Our work is never done.

We extend our gratitude to everyone who helped to inform this Action Plan which will assist us to continually improve and provide information, services and facilities that are accessible to all people who live, work, play and visit Yarra Ranges.

Cr Jim Child
Mayor
Yarra Ranges Council

Tammi Rose
Chief Executive Officer
Yarra Ranges Council

Our Vision

Yarra Ranges is an accessible, fair, and inclusive society where people with disability and unpaid carers can participate in community life as equal citizens.

Our Aim

Yarra Ranges Council leads the way, offering accessible information, infrastructure, services, and experiences to all people who live, work, visit and play in the region.

Legislation and Policy

The importance of access, fairness and inclusion is recognised throughout legislation and policy at all levels of Australian government.

For over a decade, Yarra Ranges Council has been successful in advancing disability inclusion through the implementation of the Yarra Ranges Access, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023. This refreshed Disability Action Plan meets all legislative responsibilities and requirements for local government. The Plan ensures we work towards a common goal, advancing disability inclusion across all aspects of Council. In developing this Disability Action Plan consideration has been given to the following key documents:

Table 1: Legislation and Policy across all levels of Australian government.

International	Federal Government	State Government	Local Government
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities *(UNCRPD)*	*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 National Carer Strategy 2024-2034 *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Vic)* *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*	*Disability Act 2006 (Vic)* *Disability Inclusion Bill Exposure Draft 2022 (Vic)* *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* *Carers Recognition Act 2010 (Vic)* *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*	Council Plan 2025-2029 (due for adoption Jun 2025) Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 (due for adoption Oct 2025) Other key strategies, plans and policy for Yarra Ranges Council are referenced in the action plan below.

Working together through planning

In addition to broad legislative and policy frameworks, the Disability Action Plan enables localised approach to address community needs. Council is also working to align planning to further strengthen our commitment and ability to embed inclusion in every aspect of business. This includes working together and leveraging off other Council plans such as the overarching Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and other key plans and policies for Council.

It is worth noting, Council's Healthy and Active Ageing Plan sets the strategic direction for 'age-friendly' communities that are designed to value the contribution of older people and ensure their access to all aspects of community life. It outlines priority areas and helps guide the programs and services that Council provides to the community. Both the Disability Action Plan, Healthy and Active Ageing Plan, as part of the Key Life Stages Plan (in development) reinforce the benefits of ageing well across all life stages and keeping active, healthy, and involved in the broader community.

Council has many endorsed plans, policy and strategies that include specific actions or criteria to advance disability inclusion across the municipality. Where there are existing commitments residing in other plans for Council, these have not been included in the scope of the Disability Action Plan.

Understanding disability

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provides a comprehensive definition of disability. According to the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. These impairments when interacting with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis with others. Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible, or invisible, acquired, or congenital, fluctuating, or episodic.[3]

Throughout this document, the term 'carer' and 'unpaid carer' are used as defined in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* as an umbrella term for those who provide unpaid care, support and assistance for someone with disability, a medical condition, a mental illness or is frail due to age[4]. Carers who receive financial support such as a Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance are included in this definition.

Formal carers and paid support workers are those who provide care, support and assistance as a paid service, as part of a volunteer arrangement or as part of training or education for paid care services. Such formal care arrangements are out of scope for this Disability Action Plan.

Carers and unpaid carers are often hidden, working in the background to navigate complex systems and to provide continuous care without being recognised or renumerated. They often make significant personal sacrifices regarding their careers, social lives, education and financial security to care for others, this often impacts the carer's mental and physical wellbeing.

The importance of carers can not be overstated. They deserve recognition, respect, and support for their contributions to their families, friends, and broader community.

[3] State Government of Victoria. Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2021). *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021 – 2025*
[4] Parliament of Australia. (2010). *Chapter 2 – The Carer Recognition Act.*

Invisible disability

'Invisible disabilities' (also known as hidden disabilities) is a broad term which can include any disability that may not be immediately apparent to others. Some examples of invisible disabilities include physical conditions (e.g. chronic pain, diabetes), mental health conditions (e.g. PTSD, depression, anxiety), neurological conditions (e.g. epilepsy), and neurodiversity (e.g. autism, ADHD, dyslexia).[5]

Social model of disability

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by people with disability. The social model of disability says that people are disabled by barriers in society, such as buildings not having a ramp or accessible toilets, or people's attitudes, like assuming people with disability can't do certain things.

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences and looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs. The medical model of disability creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice, and control in their lives.

The social model helps to recognise barriers that make life harder for people with disability. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers people with disability more independence, choice, and control.[6]

Intersectional experience

Individual characteristics such as Aboriginality, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and cultural upbringing can shape the experiences, perspectives, needs, and challenges of individuals. The intersectional nature of a person's circumstance can result in compounding layers of barrier and discrimination, or power and privilege.[7]

This Plan demonstrates Council's commitment to doing everything we can to understand disability, to recgonise and eliminate barriers and to promote genuine inclusion across the municipality.

[5] Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. (2022). *Public statement: Invisible disabilities.*
[6] Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. (2024). *Social model of disability.*
[7] State Government of Victoria. Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector. (2022). *Applying intersectionality.*

Our goals

Inclusion is fundamental to all aspects of Council

Yarra Ranges Council recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference, and that unpaid carers are integral for both the person they care for and as part of the broader health system. We are committed to doing everything we can to eliminate these barriers and to promote genuine inclusion across the municipality.

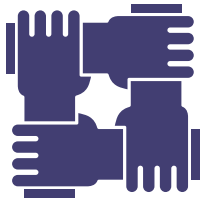
The Disability Action Plan identifies the actions Council will take to advance disability inclusion over the next four years while setting four longer term goals. The Plan is broken down to specific action plans under each long-term goal that will ensure incremental change can be monitored and achieved while working towards aspirational goals. They are:

Inclusive Information:

Information and communication from Council is accessible to everyone in our community and supports fair participation and inclusion in community life.

Inclusive Places:

Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.



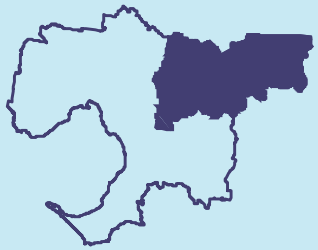
Inclusive Community:

Yarra Ranges is an inclusive community where everyone can participate equally.

Inclusive Council:

Council's commitment to access, fairness, and inclusion is demonstrated in all aspects of the business.

Our community



Yarra Ranges Council is a local government area in outer eastern metropolitan Melbourne.

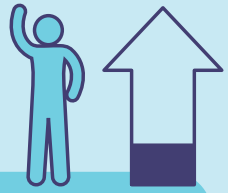
It is 2,468 square kilometres in area

Only 3% of this area is urban

In 2021, Yarra Ranges had an estimated 156,840 residents[6]

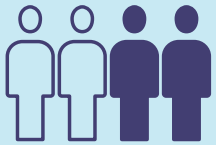
50.3% female
49.7% male

In 2021 **17.2%** of the Yarra Ranges population were aged **65 years and over,** compared with 16.4% for Victoria.[7]



This level is forecast to rise to 19.8% by 2034.

The prevalence of disability increases with age



50%

of Australians people aged 65 years and over experience some form of disability, meaning that the prevalence of disability in our community is going to increase across the life of this Disability Action Plan, as the population ages.

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[8] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). *Regional population by age and sex, 2021*: **https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population-age-and-sex/latest-release#victoria**

[9] idcommunity. (2024) *Population and age structure | Yarra Ranges Council | Population forecast*

[10] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *People with Disability in Australia 2019: in Brief.*

The 2021 Census found that:

Just over

5% of residents

(5.6% of females and 5.2% of males) need daily support with core activities due to severe or profound disability, chronic illness, or age.

This is 1 in 20 people

15% of residents

(17.6% of females and 11.7% of males) provide unpaid care for someone due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

This is nearly 1 in 7 people

26.7% of adults

self-reported disability in the 2023 Victorian Population Health Survey, compared to 19.9% across Victoria. This includes people with invisible disability. *Gender disaggregated data is not yet available at local level.*

[9] State Government of Victoria. Department of Health. (2023). *Victorian population health survey data*.

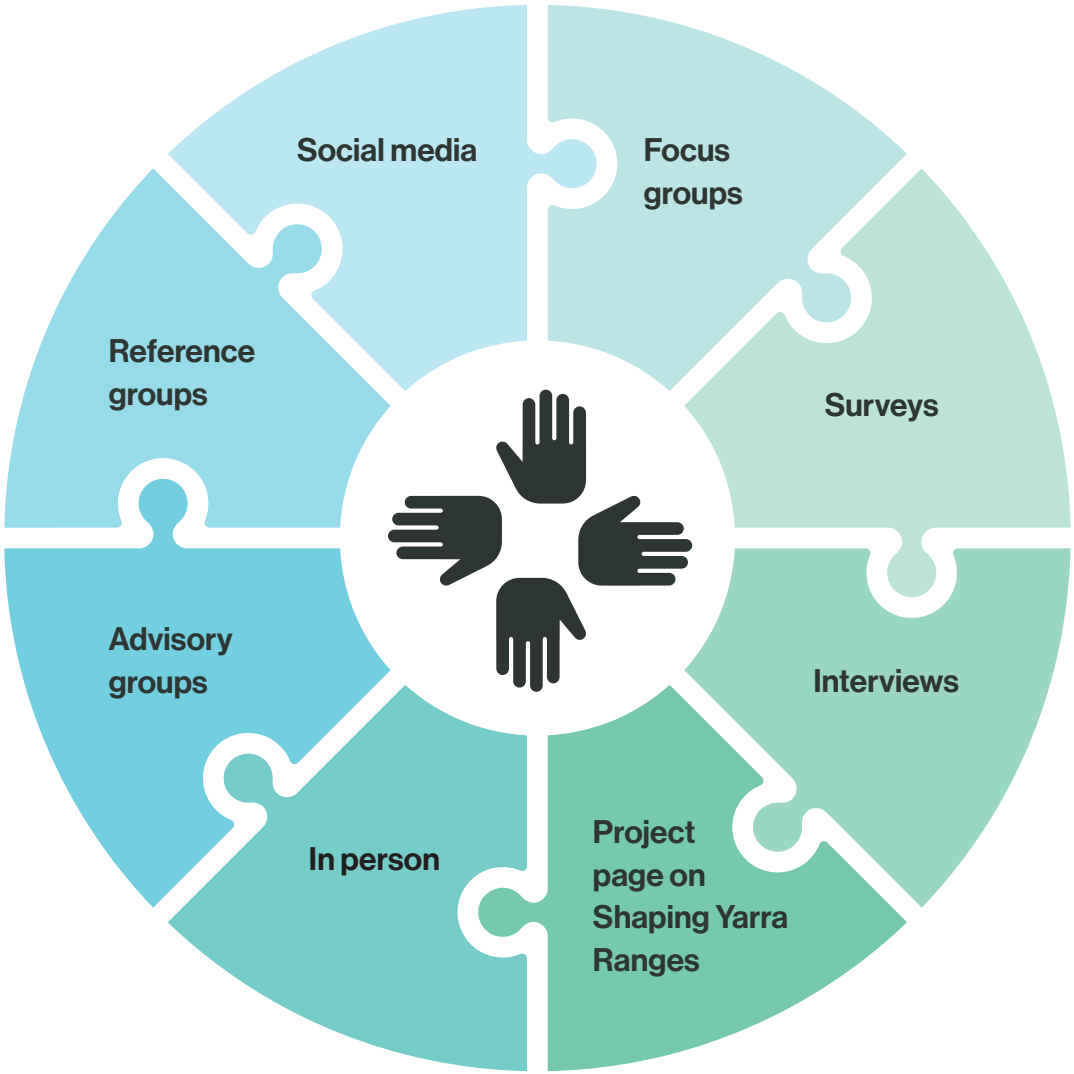
Who we consulted

Over two rounds of consultations we asked community to help us develop a Disability Action Plan that addresses the issues important to them. We heard from people with disability, carers and unpaid carers, people with chronic illness, service providers and interested community members willing to share their feedback and ideas.

Our approach focussed on the four long term goals identified in the Disability Action Plan.

Engagement opportunities were promoted, and feedback was collected via multiple platforms to ensure that all community members had an opportunity to contribute. The full Disability Action Plan Community Engagement Report can be accessed by visiting our website: **https://shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/disability-action-plan**

Figure 1. Engagement and Feedback methods to develop the Disability Action Plan



The feedback received highlighted several key themes and desired outcomes for community that warrant consideration by Council. These themes listed alphabetically provide valuable insights and opportunities for Council to improve disability inclusion as a lead, partner or advocate to achieve these outcomes.

This section also outlines Council's role in these initiatives which may include:

- **Provider:** Responsible for delivery of services, programs, infrastructure and support to individuals and groups
- **Educator:** Share information, raise awareness, develop knowledge and skills to empower individuals and groups
- **Partner:** Build relationships and partner with others to enable things to happen and work towards common coals
- **Advocate:** Raise awareness and show leadership for the interests of local communities, to other decision makers e.g. State and Federal Government
- **Planner:** Use evidence, including community views to plan for current and future community needs and priorities
- **Regulator:** Prioritise safety and regulate compliance of activities through local laws and legislation

Key Themes	Desired Outcome	Council's Role
Accessible tourism	Yarra Ranges is a welcoming destination for all visitors.	Partner
Customer Experience	Communication aids and training are available to provide an improved customer experience for community members.	Provider
Emergency Management	People with disabilities and unpaid carers are included at all stages of Emergency Management planning and delivery.	Planner / Provider / Partner
Festivals and Events / Local Businesses	Community events and local businesses have access to information and capacity building opportunities.	Educator

Key Themes	Desired Outcome	Council's Role
Housing	Advocate for accessible housing affordability, availability, and suitability for people with disability.	Advocate
Information	Information is in an accessible format and readily available.	Provider
Infrastructure	Increased accessibility in relation to: • Changing Places toilets • Footpaths • Trails • Seating • Shade • Safe pedestrian crossings • Accessible parking • Community facilities	Provider
Public Transport	• Accessible public transport • Adequate infrastructure leading to public transport. • Increased public transport options across Yarra Ranges.	Advocate
Safety	Lighting near recreation equipment and around shopping precincts is improved.	Advocate / Provider
Social connection and wellbeing	People with disabilities and unpaid carers have access to local programs to enhance social connection and wellbeing.	Provider / Partner / Advocate
Youth Employment	Pathways for young people with disabilities to support workforce entry.	Partner

Action Plan

Council is committed to the following actions of the duration of this Disability Action Plan. The action plan is divided into four key goals/focus areas and identifies the following:

Action	What we are going to do.
Responsibility	Which business units within Council are responsible for leading the delivery of the action.
Timeframe	When the implementation of the action will commence: Short term = Year 1, Medium term = Year 2-3, Long term = Year 4+
Frequency	How often we will complete this action.
Performance Indicator	How will we know we have achieved this action.

Inclusive Information:

Information and communication from Council is accessible to everyone and supports equitable participation and inclusion in community life.

Image description: Image of a group of six people on a stage with a blue curtain behind them. Two women are standing to the left, two women are seated (with one in a wheelchair), followed by another women standing and a male standing to the far right.

Inclusive Information: Information and communication from Council is accessible to everyone and supports fair participation and inclusion in community life.

Aim: Council aims to ensure that all information and communication provided by Council is accessible to everyone. This includes making sure that information is available in a variety of formats that accommodate the diverse needs of our community.

Outcome: Council's websites and online content are accessible. Council continually improves customer experience and community engagement opportunities for community. Council's imagery and social media campaigns are inclusive.

Budget:

Disability awareness campaigns	**$100,000**
Workshops and training	**$200,000**
Communication tools and accessible documents	**$200,000**
Sub-Total	**$500,000**

Disclaimer: The costs included in this Disability Action Plan are indicative delivery costs calculated at the time of the development of this plan. These costs are subject to the formal budget process of Council.

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.1 Disability Awareness training is provided to all Council staff as mandatory training.	Organisational Development	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Percentage of staff and Councillors who have completed the training; target of 100% completion rate

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.2 Council documents online are available in accessible word format.	Communications	Long term - Year 4+	Ongoing	Provide critical staff with training on accessible documents. Website guidelines include a requirement that all Council documents be available in accessible format upon request.
1.3 Provide Council documents produced in a variety of accessible formats	Communications	Long term - Year 4+	Annual	Key Council documents will be published in a variety of evidence based accessible formats
1.4 Deliver accessible communication training and tools for staff	Diversity and Inclusion Committee / Health and Wellbeing / Communications	Medium term - Year 2-3	Ongoing	Deliver at least one accessible communication training to staff Develop accessible communication tip sheet for staff Develop tools and templates for staff to ensure accessibility standards are met.

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.5 Council's websites include information about the accessible features of all Council owned and managed public facilities with a priority focus on: • Playspaces, walking trails and other recreation facilities • Cultural venues and public facilities • Public toilets and accessible toilets	Creative Communities / Design and Place / Sport and Recreation / Facilities	Long term - Year 4+	Ongoing	Information is listed on website and is reviewed and updated by relevant department areas as required.
1.6 Improve access to information for people with disabilties and their unpaid carers that enables them to make informed decisions about their lives.	Early and Middle Years / Youth / Healthy Ageing	Medium term - Year 2-3	Ongoing	Information shared is in an accessible format; brochures, website, newsletters. Accessible communication training is delivered to staff. Deliver Quarterly Vitality Newsletter.

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.7 Establish a Yarra Ranges Accessibility Map for inclusion on Council's website.	Health and Wellbeing	Long term - Year 4+	Annual	Establish Yarra Ranges Accessibility Map.
1.8 Increase accessibility of Self-service Digital Planning Enquiry Portal	Building and Planning	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Delivery of Self-Service Digital enquiry Portals, guiding enquiries for development proposal online. Review and consider customer insights to improve accessibility and user access.
1.9 Include intersectional imagery in all Council publications or campaigns including people with disabilities and/or unpaid carers.	Communications	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Council publications and campaigns include intersectional images Council has a Library of images featuring local people with disabilities and unpaid carers.

Action	Responsible Department	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
1.10 A variety of communication tools are available at Community Links and online to support an improved customer experience for people with disability and unpaid carers.	Customer Experience Information Technology	Long term - Year 4+	On-going	A variety of communication tools are available in person and online. Customer experience staff receive training in how to use tools effectively. Positive customer experience recorded.
1.11 People with disabilities and unpaid carers are included at all stages of Emergency Management planning and delivery.	Emergency Management	Medium term - Year 2-3	Ongoing	Workshops are held to include people with disabilities and unpaid carers in emergency planning and preparedness Emergency Relief Centres are inclusive and accessible Information shared is in an accessible word format

Inclusive Places:

Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.

Image description: Image of a man in a wheelchair and a young woman assisting him on a playground merry-go-round. Both individuals are smiling, showing companionship and shared enjoyment. The image focuses on the interaction between the two using a disability accessible merry-go-round.

Inclusive Places: Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.

Aim: Council aims to ensure our buildings and infrastructure are designed, maintained, and operated in a way that ensures accessibility for everyone in our community.

Outcome: Councils buildings and infrastructure are accessible. Council considers accessibility and connectivity across all design phases of projects.

Budget:

Infrastructure Upgrades: Buildings, Major Projects, Pavillions	**$1,000,000**
Carparks	**$100,000**
Parks, Open Spaces and Trails	**$800,000**
Footpaths and Cycleways	**$200,000**
Asset Management and Maintenance	**$400,000**
Sub-Total	**$2,500,000**

Disclaimer: The costs included in this Disability Action Plan are indicative delivery costs calculated at the time of the development of this plan. These costs are subject to the formal budget process of Council.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.1 Assess/audit building functionality to determine accessibility and inform prioritisation.	Capital Works Steering Committee (PMO and Capital Investment)	Short term - Year 1	Annual	Improvement actions are incorporated into Council's Buildings Asset Management Plan. % of capital expenditure funding dedicated towards accessibility improvements.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.2 Use prioritisation to inform asset management projects to ensure DDA compliance.	Major Projects / Strategic Asset Management / PMO and Capital Investment / Design and Delivery	Short term - Year 1	On-going	Prioritise design for dignity reviews Feasibility and scoping of building adjustments which are practicable Where no practicable adjustments available, review for alternative buildings/service access, appropriateness of building stock for use Scheduling of access improvement projects Issue of Occupancy Permits by a Building Surveyor confirming the facility has been built to comply
2.3 Council community links and facilities accessible through review and update of: • Customer experience and service • Quiet and sensory spaces • Signage and messaging	Customer Experience / Facilities / Creative Communities / Community Support	Medium term - Year 2-3	On-going	Cultural facilities and community links have quiet and/or sensory spaces available to public. Signage at community links and cultural facilities includes neurodivergent and inclusive friendly messaging. Customer service teams are trained in disability inclusion.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.4 Continue to make playspaces and parks more accessible and inclusive.	Design and Place / Recreation and Sport	Long term - Year 4+	On-going	Each region has play spaces and features that are accessible and inclusive.
2.5 Council continues to make paths, trails and footpaths more accessible through: • Signage – Lighting – Mobility Aid access (width of design is considered)	Design and Place / Recreation and Sport / Traffic and Transport / Parks, Trees, and Trails	Medium term - Year 2-3	On-going	Paths and Trails Plan considers signage, safety and communication of accessibility features. Required maintenance is undertaken to remove barriers for people with disability to ensure safety and accessibility is a priority. Safety and accessibility of existing shared use paths is improved.
2.6 Improve the accessibility of townships through enabling the community to walk or ride to local shops, public transport and/or other key services.	Design and Place / Infrastructure Services / Traffic and Transport	Long term - Year 4+	Ongoing	Identify barriers to accessibility, and prioritise key pedestrian crossings and movement routes in township frameworks, township master plans, and streetscape master plans.
2.7 Continue the footpath building program through the delivery of the Integrated Transport Strategy	Infrastructure Services / Traffic and Transport	Long term - Year 4+	Ongoing	Footpath connectivity is installed, supporting accessible spaces.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
2.8 Proactively identify Council projects with greater opportunities for access and inclusion.	Major Projects / All Service Owners	Medium term - Year 2-3	Ongoing	Number of projects where consideration of access and inclusion are brought into scope. # of Project Plans reviewed by Councils Disability Advisory Committee or other consultation with community.
2.9 Identify opportunities for renovations and/or opportunities to construct new Changing Places facilities. Information on public and accessible toilets are on Council's website eg; National Toilet Map	Facilities / Major Projects	Long term - Year 4+	On-going	New builds and/or renovations include an ambulant toilet, and a single occupant gender neutral toilet. # of Changing Places facilities that are accredited and registered.
2.10 Progressively review open space strategies and master plans, to consider and implement an accessibility lens.	Desing and Place / Recreation and Sport	Long term - Year 4+	Ongoing	New open space strategies and master plans will consider the intersectional needs of people with disability, including but not limited to cognitive, neurological, physical, and psychosocial disabilities.

Inclusive Community:

Yarra Ranges is an inclusive community where everyone can participate equally.

Image description: Image of a group of people posing in front of a vibrant mural. The mural is large and features abstract shapes and colours, including stylised images of trees and someone playing the saxophone. The group consist of at least 15 people of various ages and ethnicities, and are positioned in a relaxed manner.

Inclusive Community: Yarra Ranges is an inclusive community where everyone can participate equally.

Aim: Council will lead by example in implementing best practices for accessibility and inclusiveness across its services, programs, and events. Council will work to influence individuals and community organisations to increase access and promote inclusiveness, ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable opportunities to participate.

Outcome: Council services, programs and events have improved accessibility. Council owned facilities promote inclusion for all people. Council works with community to build capacity, skills and leadership to advance disability inclusion.

Budget:

Grants Programs	**$800,000**
Enhanced Support Services	**$100,000**
Projects and Programs	**$250,000**
Sub-Total	**$1,150,000**

Disclaimer: The costs included in this Disability Action Plan are indicative delivery costs calculated at the time of the development of this plan. These costs are subject to the formal budget process of Council.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.1 Council grants programs create the platform for increased opportunities for intersectional access and inclusion.	Community Building and Partnerships / Health and Wellbeing	Short term - Year 1	Annually	Criteria for all grant programs require access and inclusion to be considered. Number of applications received that identify methods and actions to increase inclusion. Number of projects with a specific focus on inclusion that are funded by Council.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.2 Ensure Council's School Holiday Programming continues to be inclusive.	Family, Children and Youth	Short term - Year 1	Annually	Accessible and inclusive school holiday programs are offered across the region. Where possible, co-design sessions with families.
3.3 Ensure Council's Maternal and Child Health Services continue to be inclusive.	Maternal and Child Health Services	Short term - Year 1	Annually	Information and referral to services and supports for families. Advocate for improved health services and accessibility of health services.
3.4 Partner with young people to create social stories for Council's website	Youth Development / Community Support	Long term - Year 4+	Annually	Social stories are created and added to website. Stage 1: Community links Stage 2: Arts centres Stage 3: Libraries Stage 4: Play spaces Stage 5: Community houses

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.5 Deliver Community Change Makers program	Community Building and Partnerships / Health and Wellbeing	Medium term - Year 2-3	Bi-yearly	Deliver program in 2025 and review outcomes to inform decisions about future programs. Promotion, design and delivery of program is inclusive of people with disability and unpaid carers.
3.6 Deliver local Over 50's Festival and Events in line with Victorian Seniors Festival	Healthy and Active Ageing Team	Short term - Year 1	Annually	Deliver annual program in conjunction with Victorian Seniors Festival Promotion, design and deliver of program inclusive of people with disability and unpaid carers.
3.7 Support township groups, networks and grant seekers through capability building to ensure inclusion of people with disability and unpaid carers.	Community Building and Partnerships	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Promote training opportunities through newsletters. Invite township and other network leaders to Council's celebration events ie; International Day of People with Disabilities event. Highlight "how to do" inclusion at the annual grants celebration event.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.8 Distribute Disability Inclusion Newsletter promoting information and activities relating to disability inclusion.	Health and Wellbeing	Short term - Year 1	Monthly	Monitor number of subscribers to the newsletter. Monitor correlation to attendance at events and programs.
3.9 Promote inclusive sporting opportunities with local clubs, such as All Abilities Expo or Come and Try days.	Recreation and Sport / Health and Wellbeing	Medium term - Year 2-3	Ongoing	Delivery of an All Abilities Expo Attendance at expo Number of Come and Try days held by sporting clubs Attendance at events Access and inclusion training/programs are promoted to local clubs.
3.10 Continue Pathways for Carers program in Healesville and Mount Evelyn.	Health and Wellbeing	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Participants feel socially connected and have increased knowledge of service and supports available. # of walks held per year

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.11 Deliver inclusive performances and experiences at Council owned venues.	Creative Communities	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Open Captions sessions are delivered. Sensory Friendly sessions are delivered. Hearing Loops are available at The Memo Healesville. Performances that showcase people with lived experience of disability are delivered and promoted. Performances with Auslan interpretation are prioritised. Relaxed performances are delivered.
3.12 Promote the benefits for businesses and owners of diverse recruitment practices through the Region of Choice program.	Economic development	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Disability Inclusion Toolkit is promoted to local businesses. Region of Choice program is delivered with inclusive recruitment practices a key focus.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
3.13 Raise awareness of, support and promote Accessible Tourism opportunities.	Economic Development	Medium term - Year 2-3	On-going	Spotlight and promote local businesses advancing inclusion and equity. Advocate to advance accessible tourism through awareness raising campaigns, grant criteria and collaborative partnerships.
3.14 Deliver capacity building sessions for staff and social media campaigns to promote invisible disability.	Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Medium term - Year 2-3	Annually	Raise awareness of Invisible Disabilities Awareness Week (20th to 26th October) At least one capacity building session for staff delivered At least one social media campaign delivered Develop tools for staff Review reach and impact

Inclusive Council:

Council's commitment to equity, access and inclusion is demonstrated in all aspects of business.

Image description: Outdoor photo of a group of women walking along a gravel trail in a bush area in Mount Evelyn. The women are various ages and are dressed in casual clothing suitable for walking. This walk is part of the program for Pathway for Carers.

Inclusive Council: Council's commitment to equity, access and inclusion is demonstrated in all aspects of business.

Aim: Council will embed a commitment to equity, access, and inclusion throughout all its operations. This means developing the capacity of all Council officers to systematically address barriers faced by people with disabilities, use statutory and regulatory roles to advocate for improved inclusion and accessibility, enhance local employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and ensuring sufficient funding is allocated to support access and inclusion initiatives across the municipality.

Outcome: Councils recruitment practices are inclusive and accessible. Council includes access and inclusion across all advocacy priorities. Councils considers people with disabilities and unpaid carers across all aspects of business.

Budget:

Disability Inclusion Operations	**$150,000**
Employment Programs	**$100,000**
Events	**$50,000**
Sub-Total	**$300,000**
Total:	**$4,450,000**

Disclaimer: The costs included in this Disability Action Plan are indicative delivery costs calculated at the time of the development of this plan. These costs are subject to the formal budget process of Council.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
4.1 Promote flexible working arrangements and support to recruit and retain people with disability in the workforce and include inclusive recruiter messaging in all job advertisements.	People and Culture	Medium term - Year 2-3	Ongoing	Recruitment advertisements include inclusive statement and are up to date, including Council's website. Recruitment training and materials are updated to ensure Hiring Managers promote flexibility and inclusivity during recruitment.
4.2 Deliver Disability Awareness Training as part of Councillor induction.	Health and Wellbeing	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Training delivered to Councillors at the start of each 4-year term.
4.3 Build awareness of the Disability Advisory Committee.	Health and Wellbeing	Short term - Year 1	Annually	Annual report to Council on progress of Disability Action Plan and achievements of the Disability Advisory Committee.

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
4.4 Promote industry specific training opportunities to teams to ensure intersectional access and inclusion is considered across all aspects of business.	People and Culture	Medium term - Year 2-3	Annually	Emergency preparedness resources are promoted and delivered. Site visits are conducted as appropriate. Staff professional development opportunities are identified and delivered as part of the Performance Development Plan process; Embrace Diversity. Continue to offer access to and promote JobAccess training and webinar sessions to promote disability and inclusive recruitment.
4.5 Better understand the intersectional needs of our staff with disability and/ or provide unpaid care to inform improvements.	Organisational Development	Medium term - Year 2-3	Bi-yearly	Review results from Staff People Matter Survey, including women with disabilities, women and men who are unpaid carers, and older women.
4.6 Diversity and Inclusion Committee is available to all staff and supports internal capacity building opportunities.	Organisational Development	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	# of meeting per year # of activities delivered by the committee Breakdown of gender dis-aggregated data and participation across business units

Action	Responsible	Timeframe	Frequency	Performance Indicator
4.7 Access & Equity Reference Group meets quarterly to consult on all major projects, master plans and identifies areas for continuous improvement across Council.	Health and Wellbeing Executive Leadership Team	Short term - Year 1	Quarterly, Ongoing	Terms of Reference Updated # of meetings per year # of projects delivered
4.8 Continue the delivery of the Disability Advisory Committee to ensure that access and inclusion of people with disability is considered.	Health and Wellbeing Governance	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Terms of Reference updated Annual Report to Council # of projects/activities consulted on
4.9 Delivery of annual event to celebrate International Day of People with Disability	Health and Wellbeing	Short term - Year 1	Annually, Ongoing	Delivery of annual event
4.10 Council includes intersectional accessibility lens across all advocacy priorities.	Advocacy and Government Relations Health and Wellbeing	Short term - Year 1	Ongoing	Councils Advocacy Agenda Number of successful advocacy submissions

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Throughout the life of the Disability Action Plan, Council will monitor and evaluate our progress and implementation of actions via an annual report to Council. Included in the annual update to Council will be the achievements of the Disability Advisory Committee, showcasing their input and influence on advancing disability inclusion across all aspects of Council business. They are also involved in the annual review of the Disability Action Plan.

In the final year of the Disability Action Plan, consultation with community and key stakeholders to review and update the Disability Action Plan will occur. This is vital to ensure Council planning is aligning with the changing needs of the community.

Council's Access and Equity Reference Group

The Access and Equity Reference Group (A&E Reference Group) is a group of Council staff that meet quarterly. They are responsible for helping to implement and evaluate the Disability Action Plan. They will support the annual reporting to Council.

Disability Advisory Committee

Council is dedicated to advancing access, equity, and inclusion of people with disability and unpaid carers. This includes a dedicated Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), established in 2012. The DAC provides advice to Council, bringing their lived experience to inform policy, planning and programs delivered by Council. DAC members serve a four year term and meet every six weeks with a nominated Councillor delegate.

Disability Inclusion Officer

Council has a full-time Disability Inclusion Officer. This role drives community development, engagement and advises on all work across Council. It acts as a conduit between community and Council. It convenes the Disability Advisory Committee and the Access and Equity Reference Group. It builds Council's capacity in all areas.

Healthy and Active Ageing Team

If you would like advice or assistance on Healthy and Active Ageing, or making your business or club more dementia friendly, please contact Council on 1300 368 33 and speak to an officer from our Healthy and Active Ageing Team.

Follow our progress

To find out more about the range of disability support services, programs and resources available, visit our website: **https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Community/Disability-Support/Disability-support-services**

Please contact us if you would like further information or an accessible format.

Health and Wellbeing Team

1300 368 333

healthandwellbeingteam@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

Yarra Ranges Council

PO Box 105, Lilydale VIC 3140

1300 368 333 | mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

yarraranges.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service

133 677 – for callers who have a hearing, speech or communication impairment and for Text Telephone or modem callers

1300 555 727 – for callers using Speech to Speech relay

9658 9461 – Teletypewriter (TTY)

Translating and Interpreting Service

131 450 – Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) National. An interpreting service is available if required.

Services and Supports

In addition to contacting Council, there are free services and supports available to help you.

Carer Gateway

Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm for support and services

Telephone **1800 422 737**

Website **www.carergateway.gov.au**

Beyond Blue Support Service

24 hours, 7 days a week or chat online 3pm to 12am AEST.

Telephone **1300 224 636**

Website **www.beyondblue.org.au**

Lifeline Crisis Support

Provides support if you are feeling overwhelmed, having difficulty coping or thinking about suicide.

Available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Telephone **13 11 14**

Text **0477 13 11 14**

Website **www.lifeline.org.au**

1800RESPECT

For support if you are affected by sexual assault or domestic and family violence or abuse.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, chat online 24 hours a day,

Telephone **1800 737 732**

Website **www.1800respect.org.au**

13YARN

First Nations service providing culturally safe crisis support.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Telephone **13 92 76**

Website **www.13yarn.org.au**

QLife

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTQIA+ peer support and referral for people in Australia.

3pm to midnight, every day or visit QLife - Support and Referrals.

Telephone **1800 184 527**

Website **https://qlife.org.au**

Open Arms Veterans and Family Counselling

As a carer of a veteran, or a veteran who is a carer, you can contact Open Arms to find out what support and services are available for you or your loved ones.

Telephone **1800 011 046**

Website **www.openarms.gov.au**

eheadspace

eheadspace is a national online and phone support service for young people between 12 and 25.

Available 9am – 1am AEST every day.

Telephone **1800 650 890**

Website **https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support**

Mental Health and Wellbeing Local

18 Clarke Street, Lilydale 3140

Telephone **1300 000 252**

Website: **www.wellways.org.au**

Glossary

Language is important. It shapes how we see the world around us. Council understands that language changes over time and that words can mean different things to different people. Disability isn't the same for everyone and can be understood in different ways depending on a person's culture. Similarly, there is no universal preference for terminology use. People with disability have different preferences regarding how they describe their disability.

In this plan, Council have chosen to align with the Victorian Disability Action Plan and use person-first language. Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, 'person with disability'. This language puts the person before their disability, showing respect for who they are beyond their disability.

Whilst this is the approach we have chosen; we acknowledge that some people prefer what's called "identity-first" language, like "disabled person." They see their disability as an important part of who they are and use this language to show pride in their identity and to point out that it's society that creates barriers for them, not their disability itself.

Different people have different preferences about how they want to talk about their disability because it reflects how they see themselves, their experiences, and what their community thinks. We commit to continuing to explore and understand the evolving community preferences for preferred language use. We acknowledge people's personal preferences and individual right to choose how their identity and experiences are described.[30]

[10] State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026.*

Term	What it means in the plan
Accessible communication	Accessible communication ensures everyone has the same access and opportunity to read publications, use websites, attend events, respond in emergency situations, and find out about Council's policies and programs.[11]
Accessibility	Accessibility is the ability to access and benefit from a process, system, service or product. If something is accessible, then anyone can directly access or use it, regardless of their ability, location, language, culture, time and resources, or any other differentiating factor that contributes to the diversity of our communities.[12]
Advocacy	Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and to help you stand up for your rights. Someone who helps you in this way is called an advocate. An advocate can be a family member, friend, or a carer. You can also access a professional advocacy service through an organisation. When Council advocates, it typically does so to other tiers of government, to improve the lives of Yarra Ranges residents. Individuals can also advocate for their own rights.[13]
Carer and Un-paid Carer	The terms 'carer' and 'unpaid carer' are used as defined in the *Carer Recognition Act 2010* as an umbrella term for those who provide unpaid care, support and assistance for someone with disability, a medical condition, a mental illness or is frail due to age[14]. Carers who receive financial support such as a Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance are included in this definition.
Changing Places	Public toilets with adult sized change tables and hoists in major public spaces that meet the needs of people with disability.[15]

[11] State Government of Victoria. (2023). *Accessibility guidelines for government communications*.
[12] State Government of Victoria. (2021). *Key definitions for common terms used in the Public Engagement Framework 2021-2025.*
[13] State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2024). *List of Advocacy Organisations in Victoria*.
[14] Parliament of Australia. (2010). *Chapter 2 – The Carer Recognition Act*.
[15] State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026.*

Term	What it means in the plan
Disability	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) defines people with disability as encompassing individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments. These impairments, when interacting with inaccessible communities and environments, may hinder their full and equal participation in society. Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible, or invisible. acquired or congenital, fluctuating, or episodic.[16]
Disability discrimination	The Disability Discrimination Act states that discrimination based on disability occurs when a person with disability is either: 1. treated less favourably than a person without disability (direct discrimination), or 2. made to comply with a general requirement or condition that the person is unable to comply with because of their disability, and that leads to the person being disadvantaged (indirect discrimination).[17]
Discrimination	When we talk about a person being discriminated against, it means they're being treated badly or unfairly because of a personal characteristic that is protected by the law. The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 describes it as being treated "unfavourably".[18]
Diversity	Diversity is about what makes each of us unique and includes our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs. It is a combination of our differences that shape our view of the world, our perspective, and our approach. Diversity is also about recognising, respecting and valuing differences based on ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. It also includes an infinite range of individual unique characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, career path, life experience, educational background, geographic location, income level, marital status, parental status, and other variables that influence personal perspectives.[19]

[16] Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2021). *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025*.
[17] Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2021). *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025*.
[18] Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. (2024). *Discrimination*.
[19] State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*

Term	What it means in the plan
Equal opportunity	Equal opportunity means that every person can participate freely and equally in areas of public life such as in the workplace, in education, or in accessing goods and services without disadvantage or less favourable treatment due to their unique attributes.[20]
Equality / Equity	Equality means treating everyone the same regardless of their needs. Equity is about treating people differently based on their needs. It recognises each person has different circumstances and allocates opportunities and resources needed to reach equal outcomes.[21]
Formal Carer	Formal carers and paid support workers are those who provide care, support and assistance as a paid service, as part of a volunteer arrangement or as part of training or education for paid care services. Such formal care arrangements are out of scope for this Disability Action Plan.
Gender-equity	Gender equity: is an approach that leads to gender equality. To ensure fairness, strategies must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent everyone from operating on a level playing field.[22]

[20] State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*
[21] Australian Government, Department of Social Services (2024) *National Carer Strategy 2024-2034. Online: National Carer Strategy 2024-2034 | Department of Social Services*

[22] Women's Health East. (2021). *Together For Equality & Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2021-2025.*

Term	What it means in the plan
Inclusion	Inclusion occurs when people feel, and are, valued and respected, and where they: • have the opportunity to fulfil their potential • have access to opportunities and resources • can contribute their personal best in every encounter • can contribute their perspectives and talents • have a sense of belonging.[23]
Intersectionality / intersectional approaches	Coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, the term 'intersectionality' refers to a way of seeing people's experiences as shaped by (but not limited to) their race, socio-economic background, sex, gender, ability, and sexuality all at the same time. This overlap or combination of differences makes up a person's unique identity. Identities within an individual may come, go, or converge, depending on time or place (for example life stages). The point of understanding intersectionality is to also understand the variety of privileges and/or forms of discrimination or exclusion that one may experience simultaneously at any given time (for example gender, race, and disability together).[24]
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning, and asexual.[25]
Person-first language	Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, 'person with disability'. Person-first language is used to emphasise a person's right to an identity beyond their disability.[26]

[23] State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*
[24] State Government of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet. (2019). *What do we mean by diversity and inclusion?*
[25] State Government of Victoria, Department of Education. (2024). *Inclusive Workplaces.*
[26] State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026*.

Term	What it means in the plan
Social Model of Disability	The social model of disability sees 'disability' as the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It therefore carries the implication that the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others. In the social model of disability, it is society that places limits on a person, not their disability.[27]
Wellbeing	Wellbeing includes physical, mental and social health. Wellbeing can be described as how you feel about yourself and your life.[28]

[27] People With Disability Australia. (2022). *Social Model of Disability*.
[28] State Government of Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. (2022). *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026.*

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Appendix 1 – Additional local data

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability

Among the Aboriginal population

9.55%

need daily support with core activities

due to severe or profound disability, chronic illness, or age.

(9.7% among females; 11% among males)

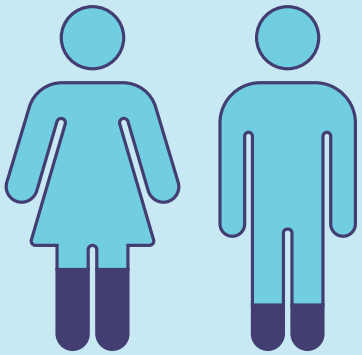
This is nearly double the rate observed in the general population.

Over 18%

provide unpaid care

for someone with disability, chronic illness, or age.

(23.3% of females; 12.9% of males)



23.3% **12.9%**

[29] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). *Census of Population and Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile. Yarra Ranges (LGA27450) 2468.2 sq Kms. Tab I09. Core Activity Need*

[30] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). *Census of Population and Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Profile. Yarra Ranges (LGA27450) 2468.2 sq Kms. Tab 110. Unpaid Assistance*

Culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability

Almost 17% of Yarra Ranges residents were born overseas.

Assumptions for the Yarra Ranges Culturally and Linguistically Diverse residents based on general population data suggest:

Over
5,000
people have a disability

Over
1,400
need daily support with core activities due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

Almost
3,800
people provide unpaid care to a person due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

[3] .idcommunity Demographic Resources. (2021). *Yarra Ranges Council, Birthplace*.
[4] .idcommunity Demographic Resources. (2021). *Yarra Ranges Council, Languages used at home*.

LGBTIQ+ people with disability

Currently, National population-based data collections, such as the Census, and the State based Population Health Survey lack of inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status. Despite this, the Department of Health (2019) estimates that approximately 11% of the Australian population identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Intersex (LGBTI).[31]

Based on the Department of Health estimates, some assumptions for the Yarra Ranges community are:

Over 17,000

Yarra Ranges residents identify as LGBTIQ+

(11% of the population)

Of this 17,000 people:

Almost 3,500

have a disability

Over 900

need daily support with core activities due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

Over 2,500

provide unpaid care to a person due to disability, chronic illness, or age.

[31] End of Life Directions for Aged Care (2022). *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Australia's ageing LGBTI population*.

Image description: Image of a person who is blind, standing outdoors near a sign in a park-like setting. The person is positioned to the left of the sign and they are holding a black shoulder bag. Their posture is relaxed and their expression is neutral. The sign is an interpretive audio-sign using Woiwurrung language. It features a green background with descriptive text and graphics about a “Stringybark Tree”.

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Yarra Ranges Council