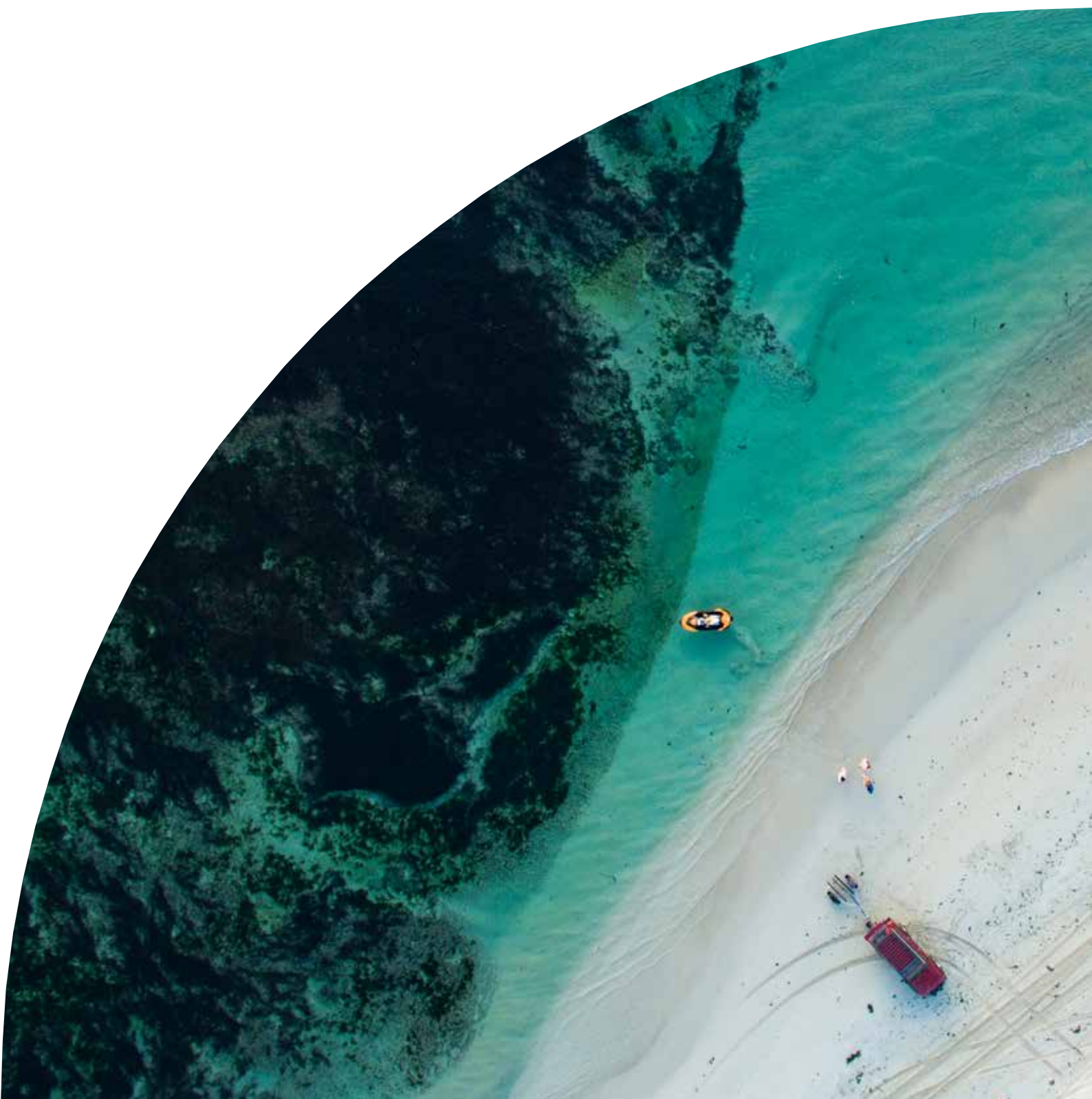




Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024







ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the development of all peoples in this country we live in and share together - Australia.





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OUR DISTRICT

The District Council of Grant is the most southern local government area in South Australia.

Situated on the south east coast corner of the Limestone Coast, it is bounded to the south and southwest by the Southern Ocean, the Victorian Border to the east and the Wattle Range Council to the north and northwest. The Council encircles the local government area of the City of Mount Gambier. The Council is predominantly rural with a number of small townships, serving an estimated population of 8,511 (as at 30 June 2018). Our population was 8,203 (as at 2016 census) and covers an area of 1,898 square kilometres.

The area contains some of the richest and most productive agricultural land in South Australia. Dairying, beef and sheep production, horticulture, wool, seed and grain production are the predominant agricultural activities. The fishing industry, in particular the southern rock lobster industry is a significant factor in the economy of the area. Port MacDonnell is acknowledged as the “Southern Rock Lobster Capital of Australia”. Forestry production and related secondary industries of logging and milling are major economic and employment generating activities.

The District Council of Grant is home to the Mount Gambier Wine Region which is Australia’s newest official wine appellation, producing quality cool climate wines and featuring a multiple vineyards and cellar door outlets.

Features such as the spectacular coastline and the natural and built heritage, including Mount Schank State Heritage area, Canunda National Park, Lake Bonney, and Piccaninnie Ponds and Ewens Ponds, and exceptional cave diving opportunities, make the area a popular and growing tourist destination and a recreational playground for local, national and international visitors.

Features such as the spectacular coastline and the natural and built heritage, make the area a popular and growing tourist destination and a recreational playground for local, national and international visitors.

The District Council of Grant is a diverse collection of townships and communities and we value the different approaches, opinions, and expectations from our communities. The Council provides a range of support and development services as well as administrative and regulatory functions to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, do business, enjoy leisure and visit the community and its environs.

OUR VISION

A fully inclusive society
that values and respects
all people as equal and
contributing members of
the community.

FROM THE MAYOR

The District Council of Grant is committed to people within our community who have a lived experience of disability whether it be physical, intellectual or mental health issues, to ensure they can access services to participate in all aspects of life.

Council want to ensure that the services we provide gives people with a lived experience of disability the same rights to participate in community life that is meaningful and diverse. We need to guarantee our built environment has good access to facilities, services, and functions that are inclusive for everyone.

Through positive and appropriate interactions with people who have a lived experience of disability, we can help break down the barriers that they face in the community and the physical environment. It is important to recognise people with a lived experience of disability for what they can bring to the community, rather than focussing or assuming their limitations.

As a community we also need to acknowledge the vital work of all the disability service organisations and agencies, families and caregivers who provide 24/7 care and support to these vulnerable people.

Connected and happy communities are healthy communities and this Plan reaffirms the District Council of Grant's commitment to delivering better outcomes so everyone has an opportunity to take part in community life, work and play.

Local Government has a major role in advocating both State and Federal Governments for better opportunities and services for those with a lived experience of disability in our communities. However, we need to ensure we celebrate what can be achieved by those with a lived experience of disability and recognise their achievements.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. I hope over the next four years we can all reflect on what has been achieved and make adjustments and improve along the way during this period.



MAYOR
Richard Sage

DISABILITY AT A GLANCE

Disability sits on a continuum whereby an individual can have no impairment or experience any limitations at one end of the continuum; or at the other end they may experience complete loss of function or ability to complete a task.

Disability can be the result of genetic disorders, illnesses, accidents, ageing, or a combination of all these factors and has a profound effect on how people undertake daily life, experience social interactions, contribute to the workforce and navigate the physical environment.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers revealed that 4.4 Million people or 18% of people in Australia live with a disability. In South Australia, the 2016 census revealed that 100,651 people (or 6.0% of the population) reported needing assistance in their day-to-day lives due to disability. In the District Council of Grant this 2016 figure was similar with 4% (324) people identified as needing assistance.

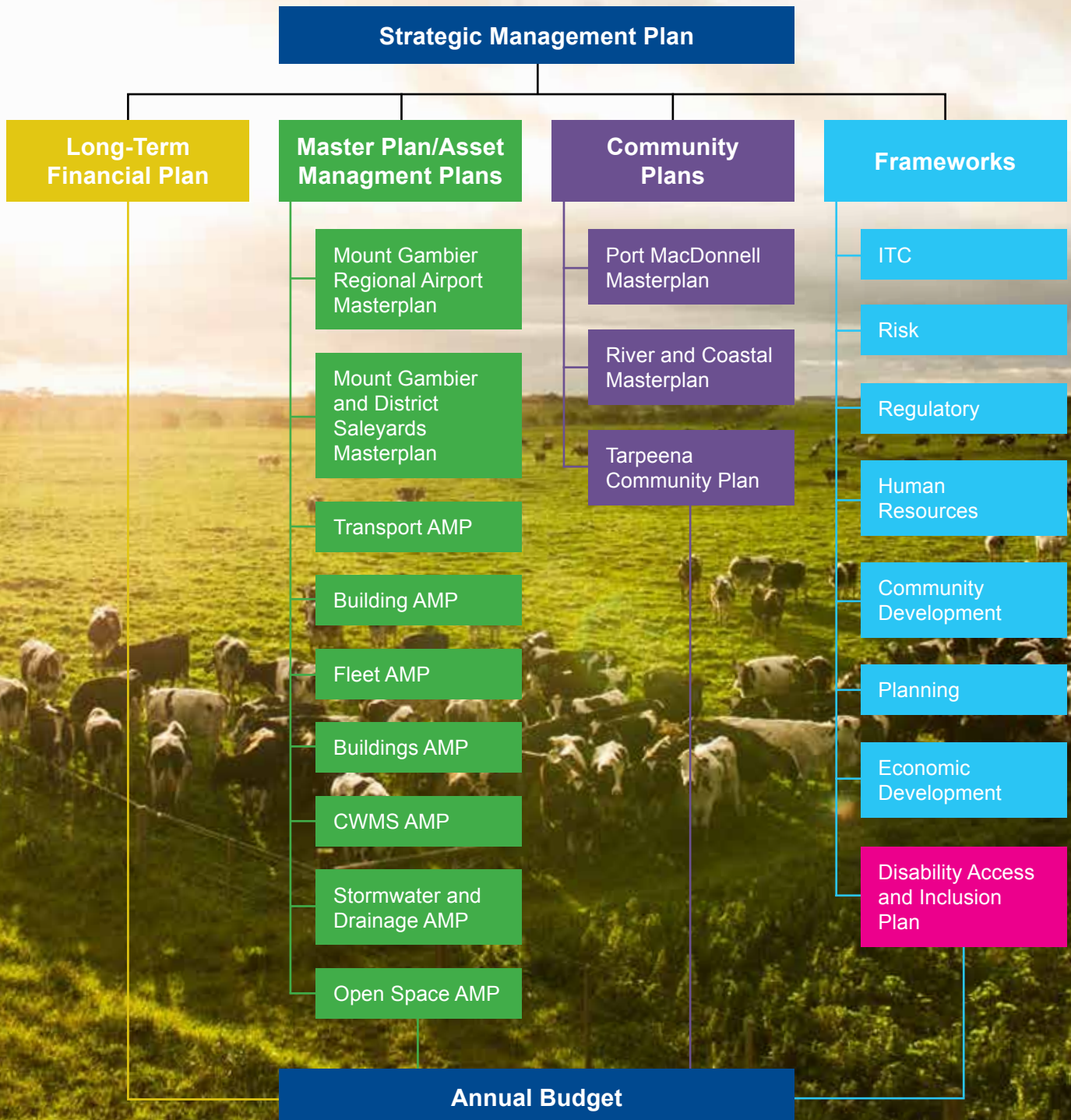
Surveys and census conducted by the ABS identify that disability is more prevalent in older Australians, driven by three main factors; the risk of disability is greater; the population is ageing; and survival into old age is now a reality for many people who have a lifelong disability. In our community people aged 65-69 requiring assistance is 6.3%, however for people aged 85+ that number is six times more at 39.6%.

In the latest report *People with disability in Australia*, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare state that people with a disability face challenges routinely and actively participating in everyday life areas (such as employment) and are more likely to experience poor health, discrimination, homelessness and violence.

Increased opportunities for access and inclusion benefits all of the community not just people engaged in the disability sector. Through our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) the District Council of Grant can set up a framework to show leadership in this sector while improving the outcomes and quality of life for people living with a disability. While this document sets the focus of the Council for the next four years, it is a working document that will have critical review at set points in time, allowing a shift in the priorities as required to reflect any social, political and environmental changes. A revised plan will be published in 2025.

OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The DAIP sits within a Strategic Framework of other Strategies and Plans, underpinned by Council's annual budget and led by Council's 10 year Strategic Management Plan.



THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Engaging people with a lived experience of disability in disability planning, development, implementation and review is at the very heart of the social model of disability inclusion. To develop this plan, council adopted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP 2) principles of public participation which is a values based, decision orientated and goal driven approach to engaging with our community. The DAIP is an important legislative document that has the potential for a high level of impact for the public and requires community consultation and participation to develop.

TIMELINE	MEDIUM	ACTION
April 2020	Your Say DCG	Establish a project page
May 2020	Survey	Design survey for staff (internal) Elected Members and the public (external)
May 2020	Focus Group/s	Connect with local Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group in consultation with Mission Australia & Limestone Coast Leadership Program and their Community Action Project
18 May 2020	Council Report	Outlining DAIP Process
May 2020	Media Release	Announce opening of public consultation
May 2020	Social Media	Announce opening of public consultation
May 2020	Website	Establish a dedicated DAIP Page on Councils Website
11 May 2020	Internal Staff Survey Period Opens	
	Survey	Online and Hardcopy for staff to complete
25 May 2020	Internal Staff Survey Period Closes	
	Focus Group	Work with Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group in consultation with Mission Australia
	Zoom	Ability to have face to face conversations and meetings with the public
	Hard Copy Survey	Available to be mailed out on request
	Online Survey	Your Say DCG
	Email Survey	Community Development Database, Business Database, Staff and Elected Members
3 July 2020	Public Consultation Period on Survey Closes	
August 2020	Council Report	Draft DAIP
August 2020	Media Release	Draft DAIP available for public comment
August 2020	Social Media	Announce opening of public comment on draft DAIP

THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

TIMELINE	MEDIUM	ACTION
24 August 2020	Public Consultation Period on Draft DAIP Opens	
	Focus Group/s	Feedback from local Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group in consultation with Mission Australia & Limestone Coast Leadership Program and their Community Action Project
	PowerPoint	For presentations as required
	Zoom	Ability to have face to face conversations and meetings with the public
	Your Say DCG	Online feedback form
	Hard Copy Form	Hard copy feedback form available to be mailed out on request
	Email Draft Document	Community Development Database, Business Database, Staff and Elected Members
9 October 2020	Public Consultation Period on Draft DAIP Closes	
October 2020	Document	Final Amendments and DAIP Completed
	Council Report	Final DAIP presented
	Media Release	Announce Final DAIP has been adopted
	Social Media	Announce Final DAIP has been adopted
31 October 2020	Final Document	Legislative requirement DAIP sent to Department of Human Services

1. Staff Survey

The staff survey asked questions regarding some of the complexities around access and inclusion in day to day operations, as well as areas such as communication and information sharing across the organisation and was opened prior to the public survey. Surveys were available electronically via Your Say DCG along with hard copies available at worksites and the feedback will help tailor internal actions that will drive the DAIP forward over the next four years. The survey had a 16% response rate, however this was due to the fact some departments submitted a collective survey rather than individual responses.

- 83.3% agreed that access and inclusion was either relevant or very relevant to their work
- Key areas of importance to help improve access and inclusion were identified as:
 - Increase knowledge, awareness and training for all staff
 - Include access and inclusion in all project work
 - Include access and inclusion in all facility upgrades and major infrastructure works
 - Increase accessibility for footpaths, doors, carparks and toilets

THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

- Email was the most popular form of communication with 30% identifying this as the preferred option for sharing information and staying informed
- Qualitative comments revealed that staff did not feel that obligations and expectations across teams in regard to access and inclusion were clearly defined within the organisation and acknowledged that the DAIP would go some way towards helping with this
- Staff felt that Council policies and procedures needed a review as a result of the new DAIP being implemented, particularly in the areas of Human Resources
- Overall staff who responded to the survey were pleased to see a DAIP being developed and as a result it would progress some change across the organisation when approaching operational tasks.

2. Community Survey

An initial Community Survey was open for six weeks and was available electronically via Your Say DCG, in hard copy or was mailed out upon request. Community groups were also emailed a link to the survey. Council had a very low response rate with four responses being received. It should also be noted that COVID-19 did affect Council's ability to do face to face consultation and other more targeted measures of engagement.

The following information was received from the survey responses:

- Improvement of facilities such as toilets, footpaths and stairs were raised as well as the use of visual signage to compliment other signs
- It was perceived that Council needed to spend more considering access when installing toilets and other infrastructure for community use
- In regards to inclusion, general comments were made around the difficulties of day to day life that others take for granted and this should be front of mind when thinking about programs and services at Council
- All respondents were positive about the efforts Council go to in order to maintain parks and recreational opportunities for people
- The toilets at Donovans Landing were raised as a potential upgrade project as they are used by all members of the community as well as tourists to the area.

3. Other consultation responses

During various consultation and engagement processes Council has received insightful and constructive feedback outlining worthwhile projects and understandings such as:

- Use of Universal Design principles to inform the design of building and facilities
- Installation of Braille signage in new and existing Council buildings
- Disability etiquette and communications is important, as discriminatory language is seen as a barrier
- The DAIP must ensure that people with a lived experience of disability need to be **empowered** and that a DAIP must encourage **independence**.

THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

4. Focus Groups

Two successful focus groups were conducted with representatives of the disability services community (NDIS, Mission Australia, Employment Services and Home Support Services) and the 2020 Limestone Coast Regional Leadership Program participants who are undertaking a Community Action Project on the Disability Sector.

The focus groups were based around four pillars:

- Information and Communication
- Built environment and facilities
- Employment
- Programs and Services

Outside of these pillars, other areas such as advocacy, community stigma and transport were discussed as key drivers of change across the community and within Council. Some of these ideas have become actions for Council to deliver over life of this document. A large volume of critical and qualitative information was obtained from these facilitated conversations along with ideas and innovations to include in the actions for this plan.

THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

Information and Communication

Bridge communication gap between disability providers / carers / clients.

Communication does not always flow freely and not all information is getting to where it needs to be.

Advertising and promotion of any Council information, projects, events, employment opportunities to be directed to providers to reach a targeted audience.

Shift to online with COVID-19 has helped many feel included, especially those who struggle to get out due to physical constraints or lack of transport options.

Check all documentation leaving Council via Accessibility Checker in Word to make communications available to those using text to speech programs.

Discriminatory language is a barrier to inclusiveness, therefore disability etiquette and considered communications must be in place.



THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

Built Environment and Facilities

People with a lived experience of disability often have more waste than regular residents so there is a real need for extra bins/waste collection.

People with lived experience of disability need to have input in the development of future project plans.

There is disparity between National Construction Code/Australian Standard and Best Practice in infrastructure developments.

Council should try and work toward Best Practice with future developments.

Actively chase funding to help with any upgrades.

Road testing current environment by people with a lived experience of disability is crucial to ensuring best practice.



THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

Employment	<p>Many people with people with a lived experience of disability feel employment is out of their reach.</p> <p>Recruitment processes need to consider people with a people with a lived experience of disability as the process can be quite inhibitive.</p> <p>Consider establishment of a Social Enterprise which is an entity with a defined purpose and public benefit such as increasing employment opportunities for people with a lived experience of disability through trade or involvement in council operations in new and unique ways.</p> <p>Promote and make employers and businesses aware of any wage subsidies and other support to employ a person with a disability.</p> <p>Support Work Placement opportunities for youth to gain experience and showcase skills/abilities.</p> <p>Is insurance a preventative factor and can this be addressed?</p> <p>Through traineeship programs can Council consider this as an employment pathway?</p>
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THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

Programs and Services	<p>There is a gap in programs & services available, people when they leave school are no longer classed as Youth (25+).</p> <p>Boredom and people are looking for something to do, particularly free or low cost as there is limited money in NDIS plan for fun.</p> <p>Difficulties with physical activity/sports inclusion. Missing out on sporting has follow on effect of social disadvantage.</p> <p>Lacking 'Meet and Greet' opportunities for people with a lived experience of disability to make friendships and form bonds.</p> <p>Council can support with providing venues for activities/programs.</p> <p>Consider Carer fatigue in planning and delivery.</p>
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THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

5. Ongoing Consultation and Learning

Council has sought to engage on various levels to attain a high level understanding of disability and inclusion matters. Consultation and learning has occurred through Staff Development/ Training and through a wide ranging engagement strategy.

Staff Development

Early in 2020 Council joined forces with fifteen (15) other local government authorities, under the leadership of the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA) and with assistance from Department of Health Services (DHS), to produce training, development and resources to assist local government in the planning, development and implementation of DAIP's throughout the state.

This project titled Disability Inclusion: Practice and Plans - Project Reference Group (DIPP PRG) has provided Council with great resources, such as:

- Staff skills development
- A database of shared resources
- A Community of Practice – leading to a collaborative DAIP development process.

Throughout the COVID-19 period the DIPP PRG has meet online, every month and have also developed a wide range of shared resources, including two workshop events designed to provide:

- Learn from member Councils who have been through the process and discover resources to improve the quality of a DAIP
- Connect with other attendees to share information and build networks
- Understand the key priorities and importance of community consultation and find out how to make your plan realistic and achievable

Engagement Strategies

Council has been fortunate to have the opportunity to engage with wide variety of individuals and groups, who have the lived experience in disabled access and inclusion, enabling them to provide critical inputs into the DAIP development. Council has engaged with focus groups such as Limestone Coast Inclusion Reference Group (LCIRG), a group formed by NDIS partner in the community, Mission Australia and has members with a wide variety of disability. Two members from LCIRG have been attending Councils DAIP committee meetings via Zoom on a regular basis and Councils Team Leader of Development Services has been attending the LCIRG skype meetings. This collaboration has led to a strong understanding of the disability and inclusive access needs of those who have a lived experience of disability.

It is encouraging to see the level of passion that individuals and consultative groups have shown during the engagement and consultation period. All participants have shown a willingness to work collaboratively to develop a DAIP that fully encompasses the four pillars of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

THE COMMUNITY'S PLAN

5. Ongoing Consultation and Learning *cont.*

Through the development of this first DAIP and through subsequent reviews of the plan, Council is committed to the removal and/or reduction of the physical and attitudinal barriers that exist for people with a lived experience of disability. This is imperative to ensure people with disabilities can participate in the community activities, employment and have equitable access to information, services, buildings and facilities.

OUR PILLARS

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

People with a lived experience of disability receive information from the District Council of Grant in a format that will enable them to access information as readily as other members of the community.

BUILT ENVIRONMENTS AND FACILITIES

People with a lived experience of disability have the same opportunity as other members of the community to access buildings and other facilities and infrastructure within the District Council of Grant.

EMPLOYMENT

People with a lived experience of disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment in the Council area.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

People with a lived experience of disability are included and considered in the development and running of activities, programs, events and services by the District Council of Grant.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

WE WILL:		TIMELINE	LEAD
1.1	Identify and engage a trainer with a lived experience of disability to deliver disability and mental health awareness training to staff and Elected Members	2021	Manager Organisational Development
1.2	Include images of local people with a lived experience of disability in Council publications	Ongoing	CEO
1.3	Ensure that access and inclusion is considered in all Frameworks and Documents	Ongoing	CEO
1.4	Establish a Disability Access & Inclusion Advisory Group ('Advisory Group') to advise, monitor, evaluate and review Council's DAIP and make recommendations to as appropriate	2021	Director Environmental Services
1.5	Make available hardcopies of the DAIP in legible font in all office locations	2021	CEO
1.6	Place the DAIP on Council's website	2021	CEO
1.8	Encourage people with a disability to attend meetings and other events at Council	Ongoing	CEO
1.9	Establish a targeted database of services providers	2021	CEO & Deputy CEO
1.10	Promote the DAIP to Community	2021	CEO
1.11	Ensure documents comply with disability accessible standards and are always readily available at Council offices	Ongoing	CEO
1.12	Investigate hearing loop technology for the Port MacDonnell Community Complex	2022	Deputy CEO
1.13	Review progress on the DAIP through a community survey	Ongoing	Director Environmental Services

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

WE WILL:		TIMELINE	LEAD
1.14	Nominate a staff person or Elected Member to sit on an advisory board or community organisation within the disability sector	2021	CEO
1.15	Ensure policies and procedures relating to access and inclusion are integrated within the practices of the organisation	Ongoing	CEO
1.16	Provide any necessary training so that customer service and other key staff are aware of how to provide information in accessible formats	2022	All Managers
1.17	Ensure access for people with a lived experience of disability is considered in all of the consultative processes of the Council	Ongoing	CEO
1.18	Senior Management will ensure appropriate people are responsible for actions and report on performance annually	Ongoing	CEO

BUILT ENVIRONMENTS AND FACILITIES

WE WILL:		TIMELINE	LEAD
2.1	Investigate and respond to access issues identified by the community	Ongoing	CEO
2.2	Review street furniture and other access points for improvements to consider people with mobility aids and wheelchairs	Ongoing	Works Manager
2.3	Undertake regular audits and progressively upgrade recreation and community facilities to meet accessibility standards	Ongoing	Works Manager
2.4	Prioritise any outstanding issues that need to meet legislative requirement and other standards	Ongoing	Director Environmental Services
2.5	Review evacuation plans to ensure people with a lived experience of disability are considered	2021	CEO
2.6	Incorporate access and inclusion needs that meet legislative requirements for any new facilities, infrastructure and initiatives	Ongoing	Director Environmental Services
2.7	Identify opportunities to upgrade footpaths and ramps	Ongoing	Works Manager
2.8	Consider the installation of additional refuge islands or pedestrian crossings where possible	Ongoing	Works Manager
2.9	Investigate areas where lighting can be improved	Ongoing	Works Manager
2.10	Identify opportunities to improve access to public open spaces	Ongoing	Works Manager & Director Environmental Services
2.11	Identify opportunities to improve signage throughout the Council area	Ongoing	Works Manager & Director Environmental Services
2.12	Investigate the possibility of providing a waste subsidy for people with a lived experience of disability	2022	Director Environmental Services

BUILT ENVIRONMENTS AND FACILITIES

WE WILL:		TIMELINE	LEAD
2.13	Install new street furniture in open spaces that provides adequate access	Ongoing	Works Manager
2.14	Consider accessible equipment and inclusive spaces in new playgrounds and open space developments	Ongoing	Works Manager
2.15	Review design parameters for counter and service heights for all Council offices	2023	CEO
2.16	Advocate for the disability sector where appropriate and necessary	Ongoing	All Managers
2.17	Actively work to remove the stigma attached to persons with lived experience of disability	Ongoing	All Managers
2.18	Investigate the implementation of any innovative inclusion and access products and services	Ongoing	All Managers
2.19	Maintain an awareness of any changes to legislation and related Standards, Regulations and Codes, as well as best practice in universal access, and amend the DAIP accordingly	Ongoing	Director Environmental Services
2.20	Continue to improve accessible parking for people with a lived experience of disability	Ongoing	Works Manager

EMPLOYMENT

WE WILL:		TIMELINE	LEAD
3.1	Review our recruitment policies and procedures to be more inclusive for people with a lived experience of disability	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.2	Ensure Council's recruitment procedure encourages merit selection of applicants and to ensure interview panels are aware of their Disability Discrimination Act 1992 obligations	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.3	Ensure that physical access and communication assistance for interview processes, are available if required	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.4	Ensure employment advertising is distributed in inclusive formats and locations	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.5	Consider including in Council's recruitment procedure the investigation of grant funding opportunities for inclusive employment	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.6	Review Council's recruitment/induction process to ensure worksites are fit for purpose, and that suitable worksite modifications are considered.	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.7	Develop a staff wellbeing procedure which considers mental health.	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.8	Include the DAIP in volunteer and staff inductions	2021	Manager Organisational Development
3.9	Consider inclusion of opportunity to create new volunteer opportunities for people with a disability within the Volunteer Policy.	2022	Manager Organisational Development and Deputy CEO
3.10	Encourage local businesses to increase accessibility to their services	2021	Economic Development Advisor

OUR FOUR YEAR PLAN
OUTCOME AREAS & ACTIONS

EMPLOYMENT

WE WILL:		TIMELINE	LEAD
3.11	Investigate the opportunity to develop a social enterprise auspiced by Council	2023	Economic Development Advisor and Deputy CEO
3.12	Advocate for better public transport for the community	Ongoing	Economic Development Advisor & CEO
3.13	Facilitate stronger relationships with Disability Employment Service providers	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
3.14	Continue the Youth on Wheels Program	Ongoing	Deputy CEO

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

WE WILL:		TIMELINE	LEAD
4.1	Develop, resource and promote inclusive and accessible Youth Week, Volunteers Week, Seniors Week and other relevant activities and events	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.2	Develop, resource and promote inclusive and accessible activities at the Port MacDonnell Community Complex	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.3	Identify and engage a partner to deliver free disability training and mental health awareness to Community Groups	2021	Deputy CEO
4.4	Establish partnerships with agencies in the disability sector to increase access and inclusion opportunities	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.5	Identify relevant community initiatives and an appropriate role for Council involvement or advocacy	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.6	Develop or promote a variety of events opportunities for people over the age of 25 to meet and mingle that are inclusive	2022	Deputy CEO
4.7	Continue to work with local community groups to create events that are inclusive	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.8	Explore opportunities to implement new events and programs for families of children with a disability	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.9	Provide and promote library activities and services aimed at inclusion and preventing social isolation	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.10	Continue to provide technology classes and/or workshops for seniors at the Port MacDonnell Community Complex	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.11	Investigate and apply for grant fund opportunities appropriate to disability access	Ongoing	Deputy CEO
4.12	Investigate and promote existing Council disability accessible tourism opportunities	2022	Deputy CEO





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