

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.2

Annual progress update on the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–24 and Inclusive Melbourne Strategy Implementation Plan 2022–24

1 August 2023

Presenter: Elliot Anderson, Acting Director Community Development

Purpose and background

1. The Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022–32 (IMS) is a 10-year whole of organisation strategy and Major Initiative 48 of the Council Plan 2021–25. Endorsed at the Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) in February 2022, the IMS aims to realise Council’s vision of a truly inclusive Melbourne over the next 10 years. To progress delivery of the IMS, a two-year implementation plan (2022–24) was developed and published on the City of Melbourne website.
2. The IMS acts as an overarching framework for other key plans that deliver on Council’s priorities for an inclusive city, including the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2020–24 (Major Initiative 39) and the Women’s Safety and Empowerment Action Plan (WSEAP) 2021–24 (Major Initiative 49).
3. The Inclusive Melbourne Strategy Implementation Plan 2022–24 (IMSIP), WSEAP and DAIP all end in June 2024. This provides an opportunity to consider the structure, content and cohesion of these plans moving forward, noting that there are currently specific plans focusing on disability and gender equity, and actions for other priority groups are incorporated into the IMSIP.
4. This report provides an update on key achievements and actions undertaken in 2022–23 for the IMSIP and DAIP, as well as an overview of the process to consider a new approach to the inclusion plans. A report on WSEAP achievements in year two and planned actions for year three was presented to FMC on 13 June 2023.

Key issues

5. Actions undertaken in year one of the IMSIP focused on increasing the inclusivity of recreation facilities and programs, building an inclusive workforce, support for diverse entrepreneurship, and strengthening community connection and activation at the local level.
6. There are 33 actions in the IMSIP. Twenty-five commenced in year one, and the remainder will commence in year two. Key achievements are detailed in Attachment 2.
7. Actions undertaken in year three of the DAIP focused on addressing barriers in the built environment, inclusive and targeted services and programs particularly events, localised DAIPs, staff and community capability building, and celebrating and promoting the voice and achievements of people with disability.
8. The majority of year three actions have been implemented, with progress on 27 of the 30 actions within the DAIP. Key achievements and an update on actions not progressed are detailed in Attachment 3.
9. The key achievements across both the IMSIP and DAIP were underpinned by co-design and collaboration with community members, and internal mechanisms including the Disability Advisory Committee, the staff working group ‘Inclusion Avengers’, and focused inclusion ‘deep dives’ with the Executive Leadership Team. These mechanisms ensure a continued focus and whole of organisation approach to inclusion.
10. A review is underway to determine the future approach to development and delivery of the DAIP, WSEAP, and future implementation plans of the IMS. The purpose of this review is to strengthen the approach to inclusion planning by applying a cohesive, intersectional focus that acknowledges the unique needs and experiences within different communities. The approach being taken includes consultation with staff and community sector organisations, focus groups with people with lived experience, and desktop research. Recommendations from the review will be shared with Councillors in October 2023.

Recommendation from management

11. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 11.1. Notes the key achievements and actions undertaken in 2022–23 to deliver on the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy Implementation Plan 2022–24 and the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–24.
 - 11.2. Requests management to report back to Councillors in October 2023 with a recommendation on the future approach to the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy Implementation Plan, the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and the Women’s Safety and Empowerment Action Plan.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 3 of 21)
2. Inclusive Melbourne Strategy Implementation Plan 2022–24 Year One Key Achievements (Page 4 of 21)
3. Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–24 Year Three Key Achievements (Page 15 of 21)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. The DAIP assists the organisation to meet its obligations under the *Disability Act 2006* (Vic) and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth).

Finance

2. Both the IMS and DAIP are Major Initiatives within the Council Plan and have associated budgets to support the actions delivered.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. Delivery of actions within the IMSIP and DAIP address and improve the physical, mental and psychological health and safety of diverse people across the municipality.

Stakeholder consultation

5. Development and delivery of the IMSIP and DAIP has been undertaken in partnership with various communities, organisations and branches across the organisation. Details can be found in Attachments 2 and 3.

Relation to Council policy

6. This report provides an update on the delivery, key achievements and actions undertaken in 2022–23 for the IMSIP (Major Initiative 48) and DAIP 2020–24 (Major Initiative 39).
7. The report also responds to a number of priority areas and actions in the Council Plan 2021–25, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Economic Development Strategy 2021–31, Community Engagement Policy and Child Safe Framework.

Environmental sustainability

8. In developing this report, no environmental sustainability issues were identified.

Inclusive Melbourne Strategy Implementation Plan 2022–24
Year One Key Achievements: July 2022 – June 2023

The key achievements outlined below were supported by internal mechanisms to embed inclusion across the organisation. These include the staff group the 'Inclusion Avengers', who work together to share best practice and promote inclusion activities, and focused inclusion 'deep dives' with the Executive Leadership Team. The Executive Leadership Team participated in two 'Inclusion Deep Dives', with the first focused on gender equality and Gender Impact Assessments. The second was focused on inclusive community engagement and how the organisation can improve engagement processes to ensure that diverse voices are heard and represented in decision making.

Priority One: Organisation, services, programs and places for all – a diverse and inclusive workforce underpins our delivery of services, programs and places that are accessible and meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Inclusive recreation facilities and programs

Communities that participate in sport and recreation are generally healthier, happier and safer than those that don't. Community sport and recreation also builds social cohesion, respect and trust between different community groups. Some people find it harder to participate or feel excluded from activities on the basis of their age, gender, faith, cultural background, sexual orientation, level of ability, income, or postcode.

There is an ongoing commitment to improve accessibility and inclusivity of recreation facilities to enable the participation of all people. Targeted efforts in this space include a range of tailored programs and activities for different underrepresented community groups.

- **64 social inclusion programs** were delivered across City of Melbourne recreation facilities in the 22–23 financial year.
- **Development of an inclusion action plan commenced**, which will include implementing new initiatives across the Active Melbourne recreation sites. The action plan aims to create an inclusive environment that welcomes individuals from all backgrounds, abilities, and cultures, fosters community cohesion, and promotes healthy and active lifestyles for community members. The plan is informed by consultation activities, neighbourhood priorities, and community feedback.
- **A women's only gym program** was implemented at North Melbourne Community Centre after it was identified that there was a lack of suitable physical activity programs, in particular for local Muslim women and girls. This weekly program was co-designed with culturally diverse women and has seen increasing attendance since it was introduced.
- **Swimm(h)er, a women's only swimming program** was developed at Melbourne City Baths. This program was co-designed with women and girls from culturally diverse communities and will include water safety education and swimming lessons.
- **Pride Party** was held at Carlton Baths, with over 100 people in attendance. This annual event celebrates the importance of safe, welcoming and accessible recreational spaces for the LGBTIQ+ community.
- **Y Streetball, a weekly basketball program for people of all abilities** and backgrounds was run weekly at the North Melbourne Community Centre, Carlton Baths and Docklands Sports Courts. The program specifically engages people living with mental health conditions or disability, and people experiencing socio-economic exclusion or disadvantage. The program is supported by community volunteers with an average of 10 participants attending per week.
- **Womens Progression Session, a skateboarding program for young women and girls** was run weekly at Riverslide Skate Park to increase women's participation in the sport. The program provides

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| | <p>social and supportive skateboarding lessons for girls aged 14 and over, with 100 women and girls participating in the last year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A buddy-up skate program for people with disabilities was run in partnership with Footscray City College, David House, and Rosamond special school. The weekly sessions brought together high school students and special needs groups to skate and socialise, promoting connection, understanding and inclusion. • Big Issue mixed and women's only weekly soccer programs were run at the North Melbourne Community Centre that target people experiencing mental health issues, people with disabilities and socio-economically disadvantaged communities. • Supported by City of Melbourne, the Huddle, YMCA and the Australian Muslim Special Services Agency held a Ramadan soccer tournament for young people in the local community at the North Melbourne Recreation Centre. The Huddle also delivered an average of 40 sessions per month for young people from diverse backgrounds, including sports and soccer programs and school programs. • An accessible online booking system was implemented at Royal Park Golf course, which has enabled 50% of bookings to be made online. |
| <p>Our workforce</p> <p><i>Creating a safe and inclusive workforce where all staff can participate equitably is foundational to Council's vision of a truly inclusive Melbourne.</i></p> <p><i>The feedback from community is that there is more that can be done to make City of Melbourne's workforce representative of the community it serves. Increasing diverse representation in the workforce is an organisation-wide priority, and one that must be implemented at all levels of the organisation.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-25 was drafted and approved by the Commissioner for Gender Equality in October 2022. Delivery of the plan has commenced, with the completion of the People Matter Survey in June 2023 representing its first key milestone. This work is supported by the recently established Gender Equality Staff Group, an open group for supporters of gender equality to learn, take action, and provide peer support on matters of gender equality. • Inclusive employment program Game Changers, supported eight young people to gain employment at City of Melbourne Recreation Facilities. This program, delivered in partnership by The Huddle and YMCA, provides free support to young people seeking employment, including resume writing, interview practice, and career planning and goal setting. The program has helped improve diversity in the recreation facilities' workforce with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 26% residing within the City of Melbourne ○ 25% born overseas ○ 15% identifying as being a part of the LGBTQI+ community ○ 9% with a disability. • Representation and inclusion of LGBTQI+ staff members was supported through Melbourne Pride, a staff-led LGBTQI+ network established in 2017 that has the endorsement of and ongoing support from the Executive Leadership Team. In addition, the Melbourne Pride Executive Committee continued, made up of volunteers across the organisation who delivered initiatives that support City of Melbourne to embrace diversity, take action to improve staff wellbeing, and identify and address |

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| | <p>barriers that preclude LGBTIQ+ community and staff members from participating. Face to face and online training was also delivered to staff to raise awareness and increase equity, representation and inclusion. Training included Trans and Gender Diverse Awareness sessions, Pronouns and Inclusive Language, Strategies for Tackling Unconscious Bias, Walking in Rainbow Shoes, and Empowering Allies. There were more than 200 staff and their families at Pride March in 2023, demonstrating commitment and support for LGBTIQ+ staff and community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bigger and better family room has been created in Council House 1. This staff-led initiative aims to enable staff returning from parental leave to feel safe and supported to express milk for their babies at work. The family room will be a place where users can access information and connect with peers who are also navigating their return to work. |
| <p>Accessible information</p> <p><i>Accessible communication is about ensuring that all people have equitable access to information, regardless of their level of education, literacy, spoken language, or ability. All people should have the same opportunity to interact with Council publications, websites, news, policies and programs.</i></p> <p><i>With over 140 cultures and over 260 languages and dialects represented, Melbourne is one of the most multicultural cities in the world. Providing information in different community languages is therefore fundamental to the effective delivery of Council services.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Editorial Style Guide was updated and includes advice on inclusive language, providing staff with easy-to-understand guidance on how to be more inclusive in both written and verbal communications, The inclusive language section features guidance for respectful communication on subjects such as Aboriginal Melbourne, age and ageing, cultural diversity, disability, gender, homelessness, LGBTIQ+ communities and trauma. It gives useful examples of how to show respect, avoid stereotypes and biases, avoid discriminatory language, and how to create a safe and positive environment through communication. • Accessibility improvements to the corporate website are being prioritised in the website upgrade project. Accessibility testing is a mandatory milestone for the project and prospective vendors were assessed on their ability to deliver accessible designs. • Access to information for new migrants and refugees is a focus area within the new Multicultural Hub agreement with AMES Australia. Improving access to information for this community was identified as a priority in a needs analysis undertaken in 2022. • Language Loop information workshops were attended by 63 staff to help them learn more about translating information and engaging interpreters. • A new translation function was implemented on Participate Melbourne, enabling online engagement material to be translated into the top 10 languages other than English that are spoken in the municipality. • TalktoMe was an application developed by St Vincent's hospital and funded by City of Melbourne to facilitate brief, sentence-based, non-clinical information in multiple languages when communicating about day-to-day topics relating to healthcare in the sub-acute setting. |

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| <p>Data capture, analysis and responding to community need</p> <p><i>Considered to be the world's most valuable commodity, data informs Council's decision making, investment and advocacy. There are many opportunities to leverage data to better connect to, understand, and respond to communities. Capturing community insights, sentiments, and demographics, will help Council understand and address the unique challenges and priorities within different communities.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Bank development continued, to build an internal repository of community data, collected through formal engagements and day-to-day interactions between staff and community. A prototype was launched in June 2022 and since that time the prototype has increased its data capture from approximately 14,000 comments from a small number of engagement projects, to over 47,000 comments from community members from 99 different engagement projects. Thirty-eight insights reports have been generated by the project team, using data from the prototype to inform projects and other pieces of work across the organisation. The prototype is being refined and the updated Knowledge Bank will be formally released to the organisation in late 2023. |
| <p>Inclusive Services, Events, Programs and Places</p> <p><i>City of Melbourne delivers a broad range of services, events, and programs, in many places across the municipality. From major festivals to community reading groups, there is something for everyone, and there are ongoing efforts to ensure that everyone has the same opportunity to participate. Initiatives to create inclusive services, events, programs and places include the delivery tailored services and programs, designed to support the participation of underrepresented groups, and incorporating initiatives that support the participation of all people in mainstream events.</i></p> | <p>Services and Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Inclusion and Access Officer role within Family Services was been created to provide inclusive and responsive support for families. The Inclusion and Access Officer will help families from culturally diverse backgrounds access support and services. • City of Melbourne received a High Commendation award at the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence, for the holistic organisational approach to supporting international students during COVID-19, and newly arrived refugees evacuated from Kabul. • Implementation of the new Child Safe Standards continued across the organisation. There were educational and awareness raising activities, updated information included in funding agreements, and a new e-learning module for staff which was completed by 93% of the workforce. • Children's Services supported the inclusion of children's voice and decision making through the provision of education and care programs. Services provided choice in play, routine, discussions and social interactions. The services provided opportunities for children to discuss matters that concern them and their community through storytelling, group discussions and play. • Childcare centres across the municipality adapted programming to meet the needs of children attending the centres. Examples include a Mandarin language program at North Melbourne, an Auslan language program at Lady Huntingfield, a respectful relationships program that supports body safety and positivity, and centre calendars that are developed annually with input from children to ensure they reflect the centre and local community culture. • Support for local young people continued through City of Melbourne's partnership with The Drum, which provides inclusive services and programs for young people from all genders, religions, cultural |

As an events capital, Melbourne has the responsibility and opportunity to lead the way in inclusive and accessible events. In the past year City of Melbourne delivered 52 events with a range of specific inclusion considerations to create safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for all people.

City of Melbourne is also a city with unique demographic differences across postcodes. Service delivery responds to this, with support and other services catering to the unique needs and priorities within each neighbourhood.

and identity backgrounds. This partnership also supported Queerspace Youth, a peer-led program for Queer, Trans, Intersex, Gender Diverse or questioning people aged 16-25 years old.

- **City of Melbourne libraries provided a safe and welcoming space for all community members**, through programs such as storytime for children, 'Cook to Connect' social cooking sessions, bookclubs including Chinese Book Club, Queer Book Club and Womempower Book Club, 'Connect Café' to provide tech help for older people, talks such as Queer History in Melbourne, and a trans and gender diverse writing group.
- **'What you need to know to survive on the streets'** is a short information booklet produced every two months by a group of people experiencing or with lived experience of homelessness, published by City of Melbourne Libraries in partnership with Cohealth. While the booklet itself is a major outcome of the project, the participants have also been supported to learn and care for each other and the community – building social, emotional, and practical skills.
- 8300 kilometres didn't stop **Talking with Shadows**. A group of imaginative and inspired children in the ArtPlay building in Melbourne connected with a group of children in Jeonju, Korea. The children connected through a large screen projector and multiple cameras. Interpreters worked with the Melbourne and Korean artists to exchange ideas and workshop content.

Events

- **Melbourne Fashion Week** delivered a range of inclusive initiatives throughout its programming. There was diverse representation in runway shows, which showcased models with disabilities, models who identify as LGBTIQ+, and curve models. Pronoun stickers were made available at multiple events, proximity to accessible sanitary facilities was a consideration for runway venues, and advice and warnings for high intensity audio visual productions were shared ahead of shows, in consideration of attendees that had sensitivities to sounds or light.
- **The Lord Mayor's Iftar dinner** was hosted at the Queen Victoria Market. This event strengthened connection with and amongst the Muslim community and demonstrated Council's commitment to diversity and inclusion. A social enterprise that employs migrant and refugee women, *Meals with Impact*, was engaged to provide the catering. With 80 guests, 2023 was the largest Lord Mayor's Iftar dinner to date.
- Several inclusive community events were delivered with the support of City of Melbourne, such as:
 - **Coming Back Out Social**, a celebration for LGBTIQ+ community members and allies.
 - **Somali Day Australia Festival**, acknowledging and celebrating Somali culture, performance, dance and history.
 - **Carlton Harmony Day Festival**, bringing the community together to celebrate cultural diversity and strengthen community bonds.

- **Queer Formal Melbourne**, a safe and inclusive event where more than 700 LGBTIQ+ young people were able to be themselves and connect with other young people.
- **Australian Oromo Cultural Week**, to engage the Oromo and wider community in a celebration of Australian and East African culture, music and entertainment.
- **Spanish Language Fiesta**, celebrating the Spanish language by inviting the wider community to connect with, and learn about, Spanish culture.
- **Vasant Festival**, in the lead up to Holi, which featured performances by community members, dance workshops, children’s art and Holi coloured powder making activities.
- **United Through Football** soccer tournament, for African young people.

Places

- **Arts House Quiet Space** – a quiet space was created at Arts House, which includes soft furnishings, dimmable lights, sensory and stimulating objects. It is used as a prayer room, a parenting room, and by people who may feel overwhelmed, to help avoid or recover from sensory overload, or to provide sensory input to meet a sensory need.
- **Kensington Community Garden** – a comprehensive engagement process was undertaken with users of the community garden to explore how access to the gardens could be extended to a broader group of people. In response to the feedback received, plans commenced to improve equity of access at the gardens, including re-designing and increasing the number of plots available, introducing communal spaces, and upgrades to improve access for people with disabilities or mobility issues.
- The **Excellent City Series** of forums explored what design excellence means if you live in, work in, learn in or visit Melbourne. A key objective of these forums was to engage directly with the community to hear their perspectives, to inform and improve outcomes in the built environment. Forums included:
 - **Build your Own City** – an interactive session where kids were the boss and teams were asked to imagine and construct their visions for a future healthy city.
 - **Enduring City** – a panel discussion exploring the importance of what materials are used to create cities, followed by a collage session where participants created a shared vision for an enduring city.
 - **Embracing Country** – a First Nations-led conversation exploring ways of building relationships with Country in urban environments.
 - **Design Futures** – an interactive session focused on platforming and empowering diverse communities to participate in design processes that shape the city.
 - **Intersectional Gender Equity in Practice** – a panel discussion exploring how intersectional gender equity can be embedded within our built environment, with a focus on how the Gender Equality Act can help enable this.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design Review in a Design City – a panel discussion exploring how design review is used to ensure great outcomes for communities. ○ City of Play – a panel discussion exploring how play can be integrated into the city and how it may be harnessed to create a more inclusive and enduring city. |
| <p>Priority Two: Sustainable and fair recovery – the city’s recovery and regeneration from COVID-19 provides an opportunity to build back better for all. A diverse and resilient community is at the centre of a liveable city.</p> | |
| <p>Enabling diverse entrepreneurship to enhance our city’s recovery</p> <p><i>COVID-19 exacerbated existing inequalities and had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities. To ensure that COVID-19 does not further entrench inequalities, it is important to work with diaspora communities and those experiencing disadvantage to improve access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In partnership with Migrant Woman in Business, the <i>Women, Culture and Business Fair</i> was hosted at Melbourne Town Hall on International Women’s Day showcasing a group of 120 migrant and refugee women with nano and micro businesses. City of Melbourne is providing ongoing support for these and other migrant and refugee women with small businesses. ● The annual Open Innovation Competition was delivered with the theme ‘<i>An inclusive city for international students and alumni</i>’. The competition called for community innovators, entrepreneurs, students and community members to submit their bright ideas to solve a city challenge. Participants came up with innovative solutions to deepen and enhance the impact international students and alumni make on our city. The three winning ideas for 2023 were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An online platform for students building their careers in Australia ○ A video recruiting platform to empower young talent ○ A foundation supporting employment through start up internships and entrepreneurship. ● Opportunities for people facing barriers to employment were created through funding partnerships with several organisations that provide pathways to employment programs and support for entrepreneurs. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keeping it in the Family, led by iGen, provided mentoring and business coaching to migrant families who have a small business. The program was run in Spanish, Mandarin, English and Arabic. ○ Magpie Meals Project, led by Meals With Impact, addressed food insecurity amongst multicultural communities experiencing disadvantage, by distributing culturally appropriate and halal meals to people in Inner Metropolitan Melbourne. Women from refugee and migrant backgrounds were employed to co-design, produce and package the meals, receiving on-the-job training, paid employment, and peer support. ○ A Trans Jobseekers Support and Capacity Building Program led by Transgender Victoria, supported trans, gender diverse, and non-binary job seekers find and navigate pathways to employment. The program was delivered over 10 weeks and included practical job seeking tools and emotional and peer support. The program culminated in a Trans, Gender Diverse and Non-Binary Jobs Fair where City of Melbourne showcased as an inclusive employer. |

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| <p>Capacity building</p> <p><i>The City of Melbourne works in partnership with community on a range of initiatives and funds organisations that provide opportunities to support and empower people and communities to become engaged, to connect and to take local action.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program to improve Sustainable Procurement practices was rolled out across the organisation. Key activities included updating the internal Sustainable Procurement Framework, updating 'Request for Quote' and tender templates to strengthen the social inclusion criteria, and the development of supporting guides and resources. • Social Inclusion outcomes were included in the 'Expressions of Interest' process for the Tree Maintenance, Graffiti Management, Animal Management, and Town Hall Catering tenders. • The office milk supply contract was awarded to a Social Enterprise, Fruit2Work, who provide employment for people impacted through the justice system. City of Melbourne is now recycling 70% of the Procal bottles the organisation receives for milk. <p>Community grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMIT held workshops with multicultural LGBTIQ+ people to create a glossary of LGBTIQ+ terms, concepts and services in different languages. These multilingual resources will be shared for community members, organisations, and translators to use when working in LGBTIQ+ contexts. • Laneway Learning hosted over 40 'Queer Social Sessions' for LGBTIQ+ people struggling with isolation and loneliness. These sessions were a place to learn new skills, be creative and connect with peers and friends • Anika Legal developed Self-Advocacy Guides for Renters in 10 priority languages to help local residents experiencing disadvantage navigate changes in rental laws and seek assistance for housing-related legal problems. • River Nile School partnered with North Melbourne Language and Learning to educate adult refugee and asylum seeker women who are not eligible for enrolment in government schools. Participants reported increased confidence in using technology, improved English language skills, and a better understanding of healthcare in Australia as well as job pathways. |
| <p>Integrated social, economic and environmental outcomes</p> <p><i>Long-term and sustainable recovery from COVID-19 requires integrating social, economic and environmental priorities.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been an organisational focus. City of Melbourne has localised these goals and has aligned every major initiative to the relevant SDGs to ensure that actions are being taken to achieve integrated outcomes across social, economic and environmental domains. Over the last twelve months the focus has been on aligning the organisation's work to the SDG targets, and this data will be used to inform where there are gaps and areas for improvement. There has also been a focus on education and building staff capability to view their work through a combined social, environmental and economic lens, through a program of workshops and presentations and the development of an e-learning module. |

Priority Three: Empowered, participatory communities – we want to encourage participation from all community members, ensuring that people feel heard, and their needs are addressed.

Neighbourhood model

The City of Melbourne is a dynamic place made up of unique neighbourhoods - Carlton, Parkville, East Melbourne, West Melbourne, North Melbourne, Kensington, Docklands, South Yarra, Southbank and the CBD Hoddle Grid – all with their own needs, services and priorities. The place-based neighbourhood model ensures that community strengths, needs and priorities are understood and supported.

- **Implementation of the place-based Neighbourhood Model has progressed**, with 10 Neighbourhood Portals launched in October 2022. These Portals were developed following extensive consultation with 7,000 residents, business owners, students and visitors, which identified community priorities for each neighbourhood. The Portals showcase these priorities, as well as providing updates, community news and local information. Awareness of the portals is growing, with 87,000 views since launch. Importantly, 80 per cent of the priorities that community identified align to existing Council priorities and work. Overall, the resounding feedback from the community was to get the basics right: safety, wellbeing, access and affordability. Other key community priorities included localised neighbourhood activities and opportunities for community members to make connections with each other.
- **The Connected Neighbourhoods Small Grants Program** was introduced, providing small grants to support community-led responses to the neighbourhood priorities. There were 46 community-led projects that were funded in the first year.

Community engagement and community led action

Participation and representation from diverse voices will lead to better decisions, and a more cohesive, inclusive city. Ensuring that everyone can participate in city decision-making and can take local action is essential to strong communities.

Community Engagement

- **52 community engagement processes were completed** in 22–23, supporting a broad range of City of Melbourne projects, programs and services. These were supported by foundational work to improve the inclusivity and accessibility of all community engagement projects. All engagement processes are now required to use documentation that is accessible to all people, and there has been investment in creating tailored opportunities to engage people who are often excluded from general engagement approaches.
- **An Inclusive Community Engagement checklist** was developed and will be rolled out across the organisation in the 23–24 financial year. The checklist sets the mandatory minimum requirements for inclusive community engagement and includes additional best practice advice.
- **The creation of inclusive engagement targets for projects** is being trialled to focus engagement effort on priority outcomes or communities. For example, if young people are identified as a primary stakeholder group in a project, setting a target for the number of young people engaged.
- **A consistent set of baseline demographics was established** for collection in community engagement activities. This was incorporated in all community engagement projects to increase

understanding of who is being heard from, and importantly who is not being heard from in community consultation. All demographic data provided by individuals is voluntary.

- **There were 556 residents that attended Neighbourhood Future Melbourne Committee (FMC) meetings.** These local FMC meetings commenced in February 2022 on the same night the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy was endorsed by Council. Since that time 16 FMC meetings have been held across Carlton, West Melbourne, Parkville, Docklands, North Melbourne, South Yarra, East Melbourne, Fishermans Bend, Kensington and Southbank.
- **There were 59 residents that attended a Neighbourhood FMC meeting in North Melbourne** in June 2022, making it the best attended neighbourhood FMC to date. Four submissions on local issues were made by community members. City of Melbourne partnered with the local neighbourhood house to support community members to prepare submissions, enabling engagement of community members who typically face barriers to participating in this forum.
- **There was ongoing engagement with residents following the North Melbourne FMC meeting,** to provide updates on actions completed or underway that were identified as priorities by residents at the meeting. Residents were able to have ongoing discussions with staff and Councillors on happenings in their local area. Community feedback continues to inform local community activities and initiatives, including the community engagement plan for the new community centre in North Melbourne.

Partnerships to support community-led action

- **A two-day Muslim Youth Parliament** was held in partnership with the Islamic Council of Victoria, with 15 young people learning about the Australian political system and participating in a mock parliament.
- **City of Melbourne supported the Welcoming Cities Symposium,** which brought together international and local researchers, policymakers, business innovators and community organisations to discuss the benefits and opportunities of migration, cultural diversity and inclusion across a two-day program.
- **City of Melbourne collaborated with Re-gen Melbourne** in a series of participatory workshops and forums throughout the year. Their project 'Participatory Melbourne' aims to identify experiments and scaling solutions to social, environmental and economic societal challenges in Greater Melbourne that require integrated interventions. These interventions seek to generate community led action, increase community connectedness, and inspire participation, and will be developed in the next phase of the project.
- **The Climate Justice Project** saw City of Melbourne partner with community sector organisations to address emerging climate justice issues and the disproportionate impact they have on vulnerable communities. This included a community led pilot in Kensington to improve food security – a key issue for Melbourne, identified during the pandemic.

Royal Commission on Mental Health

The Royal Commission outlined immediate priorities and a series of key dates for delivery of recommendations.

In the 2021 census nearly one in ten residents reported having a mental health condition.

- **Work commenced to deliver Recommendation 15 under the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.** The establishment of 'community collectives', formerly known as 'Social Inclusion Action Groups', is currently being rolled out by State Government in the first five local government areas. City of Melbourne was not included in this first rollout, but preparatory work is underway with the development of a new Wellbeing and Connection Directory to highlight social programs in the municipality. This is a proactive step that responds to Recommendation 15 and will support future work with State Government to establish a Social Inclusion Action Group.
- **Mental Health can be misunderstood across diverse communities.** The Victorian African Communities Action Plan identified that there are a significant number of community members experiencing mental ill health. As such City of Melbourne provided local organisation African Family Services with funding to deliver culturally appropriate education programs on mental health with community.

**Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–24, Embracing Equity in Participation (DAIP)
 Year Three Key Achievements: July 2022 – June 2023**

There was progress across 27 of 30 actions within the DAIP, as outlined below. An update on the other three actions is included at the end of this report.

Co-design, collaboration and engagement with people with disability

There is commitment across the organisation to create opportunities for community to be engaged on, contribute to, or co-design the services, programs and initiatives that impact them, and this underpins the achievements outlined below. Some of these examples include:

- City of Melbourne’s online community engagement activities, where there were 326 people with disability who provided input into a wide range of projects, including Greenline, the Creative Funding Framework, the Heat Safe City project, and a project about pedestrian safety and walkability in Kensington and North Melbourne.
- A forum to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act that was co-designed and delivered by eight community members with lived experience of disability. The presenters and facilitators were also people with lived experience
- The Disability Advisory Committee who provided insight and advice across several important initiatives. This included a walking tour of stage one of the Greenline development, where members provided practical advice that was taken on board by the access consultants and design team.
- Twelve people with lived experience of disability (physical and hidden disabilities) who were engaged to co-design and feature in content creation for What’s On, including providing insights on accessible venues in the city. What’s On is an important online source of information about events that are happening within Melbourne.
- Arts House, who engaged 26 people with lived experience to co-design a customised Disability Action Plan, be members of advisory group, develop programs and deliver workshops.
- ArtPlay, which brings together children from 0-13 years of age and artists to create innovative arts experiences, engaged with organisations who work with children with disabilities to seek their input in the development of a customised ArtPlay Disability Action Plan. Young people and children and their families will continue to be given opportunities to provide input and feedback on implementation of the plan.
- Signal, which is a creative studio for young people 14-25, engaged eight members with lived experience to co-design and facilitate programs and a customised Disability Action Plan. This work was premised on the principle of ‘nothing about us without us’.

Outcome 1: Infrastructure developments and public spaces demonstrate best practice in universal access

Improving accessibility of physical spaces

There has been significant investment in eliminating physical barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in the public realm. City-wide

- **Facilities** – works were completed to improve access at North Melbourne Children’s Centre, North and West Melbourne Neighbourhood House, and Kensington Community and Children’s Co-operative. These included changes to things such as doors and door controls, visual indicators, accessible toilets, and hearing augmentation (technology that enables people to access quality audio through their hearing device, which is particularly

upgrades to infrastructure and amenity have improved accessibility for many people, regardless of age, disability, caring responsibilities or other factors. Many of these upgrades have been undertaken under the guidance of qualified access consultants, ensuring City of Melbourne is not only legislatively compliant, but responding to the changing needs of the community.

helpful in places with lots of background noise). In addition, there were also 43 access audits completed and the findings from these will form the basis for future access improvements.

- **Changing Places Toilet Facilities** – a new Changing Places facility will be included at the new Munro development through \$180,000 grant funding secured from the Victorian Government. Access audits of adult change facilities were completed at Melbourne Town Hall and Community Hub at the Dock, and improvements have commenced. Access to these facilities allows people with high support needs to participate in all elements of community life, without having to limit their participation or time out due to concerns about not being able to access a suitable toilet.
- **Parking** – there are 501 accessible parking bays within the municipality. In May 2023 a new Parking and Kerbside Management Plan was endorsed which provides an opportunity to review the location and design of accessible parking spaces to ensure maximum benefit to the community. In addition, there were 418 City Access Permits issued to community members in the financial year. The City Access Permit is a City of Melbourne initiative that provides extra parking time for people with disabilities to regularly attend work, study or specialist medical appointments within the municipality.
- **Footpaths** – Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs) were installed at 13 sites across the city. This included pedestrian access ramps and directional TGSIs. These TGSIs guide and assist people who are blind or vision-impaired with warning or directional orientation information, making it safer for them to move around the city.
- **Tactile Street Signage** – a full audit of tactile street signage was conducted across the CBD to identify need for upgrades and improvements, which will be included in works programs in future years.
- **Beacon Technology** – Blindsquare beacon technology continued to be active along Swanson St and Bourke St. The beacons use a phone app to provide audio messages to users, including the location of obstacles, supporting ease of access for people with vision impairments.
- **Park paths** – four park paths were upgraded to provide safe, clear and well lit accessible paths of travel at Point Park, Princess Park (Icon Park Path), ArtPlay Playground boardwalk, and Princess Park (north) board walk.
- **Lighting** – lighting at Hotham Walk (Fitzroy Gardens) and Princes Park Sports Field was improved, making it safer for all people.

| Outcome 2: Our information, services, programs, events, festivals and civic engagements are accessible to people with disabilities. | |
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| <p>Disability Access and Inclusion Plans and Inclusive programs</p> <p><i>There is demonstrated commitment across the City of Melbourne, with a number of areas developing their own plans and programs with an emphasis on co-design.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customised Disability Access and Inclusion Plans – several programs across the organisation have developed program-specific action plans, to deliver focused and targeted actions to improve access and inclusion. These programs include Arts House, Signal, ArtPlay, Tourism and Libraries. A new Arts House plan was developed for 2023-28, and involved artists and arts workers with disability, and expert facilitation by Arts Access Victoria. The Signal and ArtPlay plans were completed this year and were developed through co-design processes with young people with disabilities and expert disability organisations. Young people and children and their families will continue to be given opportunities to provide input and feedback on implementation of the plans. • Children’s Services supported the inclusion of all children’s voices and decision making through the provision of education and care programs, including children with disabilities. Methods are varied and included visual routine cards, sensory friendly environments to support children with sensory regulation, and the Auslan language program at Lady Huntingfield to support children to express their needs, wants and thoughts. |
| <p>Training and Education</p> <p><i>There has been continued focus on education of staff and volunteers, building their understanding and capacity to address access and inclusion barriers.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Awareness Training was delivered to more than 75 staff by an accredited access consultant. This training was tailored to respond to the varied services and capability of different teams. • Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Training was completed by 518 ‘Red Coat’ and Event Volunteers, and by 74 staff members. This training helps volunteers and staff to be aware and support people living with non-visible disabilities. • Hidden Disabilities Sunflower ‘Can I help you?’ Badges were proudly worn by 332 volunteers at several major events. |
| <p>Events</p> <p><i>There has been greater emphasis on addressing the barriers faced by people who are neurodiverse, and who have sensory and hidden disabilities.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Products were distributed freely to community members at Moomba, Firelight, Melbourne Fashion Week and through libraries. • An accessibility checklist was shared with 201 event organisers through the event permit process. • The Event Partnership Program supported 62 events that incorporated accessibility and inclusion measures. These measures included wayfinding signage, physical accessibility considerations and responses, quiet spaces, interpreters, and training for event staff in disability awareness. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major events – there were 53 events across major festivals (Firelight, Melbourne Fashion Week, Melbourne Conversations, Melbourne Awards, Christmas Festival, New Years Eve and Moomba) that addressed access and inclusion needs. This occurred through things like the Sunflower Scheme, quiet spaces, social stories, hearing loops, accessible pathways and drop off points, Auslan interpreters, closed captions, and mobility support services. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At Melbourne Fashion Week, there were models from the disability community, and Jam the Label was showcased in the Walker Lane Runway (Jam the Label create clothing designed with people with disability in mind). ○ The Paralympian and disability activist Karni Liddel was on the panel for the Melbourne Conversations topic Genetics vs. Sport. ○ New Years Eve Celebrations were planned and delivered with a specific focus on enabling participation of people with disabilities. A dedicated accessibility page was created on the corporate website with event information, and accessible pathways were implemented to support patrons to travel with ease between event areas. ○ Firelight Festival created a Social Story to support participants to understand and plan for what they would see, hear and do at the event. Social stories are particularly helpful for children and people who are neurodiverse or have a neurological disabilities. They help to lessen the anxiety of the new by introducing attendees to the event ahead of time. The festival also provided accessible entry points with specific drop off and pick up zones and marshals/volunteers/staff had communication boards on hand to support conversations with people with limited language skills. |
| <p>Communication and information</p> <p><i>Improving access to information is critical to enabling the participation of people living with disabilities in daily and civic life.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Boards were provided at all customer service point and libraries. These boards contain symbols and pictures and are an alternative communication device for people with limited or no language. Scope Australia was engaged to update and customise the communication boards and provide training to staff in 2023–24. • The Accessing Melbourne webpage was updated in December 2022. This provides access information such as Changing Places and accessible toilets, mobility and access map, recreation, culture and recreation options, services for people with disability, information on the Sunflower Hidden disability scheme, accessible parking information, accessible public transport and ride share options, the location of accessible on street parking bays, accessible accommodation checklists, and tips on how to make businesses more accessible. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Stories were developed and promoted at Moomba, New Year's Eve, Firelight Festival and the forum to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act. • Easy English – a resource guide was developed and included in the Community Engagement Toolkit, and an Easy English version of the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy was developed. |
| <p>Mobility support services</p> <p><i>Investing in local mobility support services ensures that people with mobility challenges have the same opportunities to connect, engage and participate in daily life. These services play a key role in helping people with mobility challenges navigate the city with confidence, whether that be for appointments, meetings, events, recreation, or social activities.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travellers Aid – continued to be funded to provide mobility support services to help community members navigate through and participate in the life of the city. This included 140 companion services, 626 mobility equipment hire services from Southern Cross and Flinders Street Station, and 250 mobility equipment hire services at the Australian Open, Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, and Moomba. The Sunflower Symbol was also promoted and distributed at Traveller's Aid services and events. |
| <p>Inclusive businesses</p> <p><i>It is integral to the City of Melbourne economy, as well as to ensure equal participation by all, that business and tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical abilities, disabilities or age.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Capacity Program – a qualified and experienced access and inclusion consultant was engaged to design and deliver a tailored 'Business Capacity Program' for 14 nominated businesses in the first instance and then increasing the program further. The program will support businesses to address accessibility gaps, and make their premises and businesses inclusive for people of all abilities. This program will be delivered in the 23–24 financial year. |
| <p>Outcome 3: Diversity is valued and supported through education, advocacy and promotional activities.</p> | |
| <p>Celebrating community diversity and achievements</p> <p><i>City of Melbourne recognises the positive contribution of people with a disability and promotes initiatives that enable participation of people with disability</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A forum to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the Disability Discrimination Act was attended by 140 participants and was co-designed and delivered by community members with lived experience of disability. The forum celebrated the positive changes that have occurred over the last 30 years, but also highlighted numerous barriers that still exist, such as community attitudes, employment opportunities, and persistent gaps in accessible transport. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne Awards – the introduction of a new ‘access and inclusion’ category is an opportunity to recognise projects and initiatives that have significantly reduced access and participation barriers. • Laneway Artwork by two artists and disability activists was supported by City of Melbourne through Flash Forward, a program to revitalise historic laneways. Gonketa’s mural in Rainbow Alley depicts some of Auslan’s 66 official hand shapes, to shine a light on Deaf culture. Larissa Macfarlane’s Disability Pride mural in Royal Lane features portraits of six disabled women, who have all significantly contributed to the Disability Rights movement locally, nationally and internationally over the last 40 years. • Accessible dining in Melbourne was promoted via What’s On and social media. The content was developed in conjunction with an access consultant with lived experience of disability. • The International Day of People with Disability was celebrated through the forum mentioned above, and through a story on Graeme Innes, who was instrumental in developing the Disability Discrimination Act. In addition, 12 City of Melbourne staff participated in the Disability Sports and Recreation Festival Wheelchair Challenge to promote the day. |
| <p>Advice and advocacy</p> <p><i>City of Melbourne remains engaged with the community, the disability sector, and emerging ideas.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Advisory Committee provided access and inclusion advice on a number of initiatives, including Greenline, Digital Literacy and Access, Unique Events, Destination Melbourne Plan, Parking and Kerbside Management Plan, and the e-scooter trial. Their input increased awareness and understanding, and led to meaningful changes to improve access for people with disability. • Two submissions were made in response to the national Reform of Disability Standards for Public Transport, and the Victorian Government’s draft Disability Inclusion Bill. With input from the Disability Advisory Committee and Travellers Aid, City of Melbourne advocated for more accessible public transport, and to support and strengthen the Disability Inclusion Bill. |
| <p>Capacity building</p> <p><i>Capacity building both internally and externally is an important way that City of Melbourne improves participation, belonging, employment and mental health for people with disability in the community and in the workforce.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal staff People Matters Survey was completed, which provides the organisation with data on staff disability status. This data will be tracked over time and be used to improve policy and practice. In addition, activities commenced to build connections with disability providers, to understand what is available for City of Melbourne to support greater employment opportunities for people with disability. A review of job boards and advertising mechanisms was also started, with the intention to widen the recruitment platforms and methods used by City of Melbourne, to increase diversity of the workforce. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected Communities Grants 2022: \$53,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Blind Sport Victoria – guided walks in the city and Docklands – Disability Resource Centre – peer support for people with disability after COVID – Little Dreamers Australia – tutoring support for carers • Connected Communities Grants 2023: \$31,500 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Travellers Aid – Mobile events-based Accessibility and Inclusion Services – Guide Dogs Victoria – Connecting people with low vision or blindness in City of Melbourne • Social Partnerships Grants 2021-23: \$216,500 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contemporary Music Victoria – live music accessibility program – Attitude Foundation – mentoring young people with disability on media and video with Channel 31 and creating employment pathways – DAX Centre – mental health arts program |
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There were three actions within the DAIP that did not progress in 2022–23. These are outlined below:

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| Explore the establishment of a demonstration best practice universal access 'Inclusive Access Zone'. | This action was discontinued as it was reliant on another project no longer funded. Work has instead focussed on embedding access and inclusion advice on a number of initiatives, including Greenline, Digital Literacy and Access, Unique Events, Destination Melbourne Plan, Parking and Kerbside Management Plan, and the e-scooter trial. |
| Raise community awareness on the importance of 'caring' for fellow citizens. | While City of Melbourne is affiliated with 'companion' cards and 'carer' cards (to make it more affordable for people with disability and their companions and carers to attend events), this was not promoted in the 2022–23 financial year. This will be promoted via City of Melbourne events and Accessing Melbourne in the next financial year. |
| Undertake research to ensure currency of knowledge in relation to the needs of people with disability and innovations in universal access delivery. | Research was not undertaken in the 2022–23 financial year, instead planning occurred to review the structure and approach for the next iteration of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. Research to inform the development of the next plan will be undertaken in the 2023–24 financial year. |