

Rural City of Wangaratta

Community Access and Inclusion Charter 2015



Our Vision

Rural City of Wangaratta - the Ultimate in Liveability

A Shared Responsibility

Council, working together with community groups, service agencies, schools, health services and businesses, to build an accessible and inclusive community.

*This document is available in electronic format (email, website, CD)
and large print upon request*

Accessibility for All Abilities

Being involved in the community is important to all of us and most people take for granted the ability to go about their daily lives in the community without experiencing any barriers. People with disabilities face barriers to everyday activities such as hearing what is said, reading print and signs, climbing stairs, safely moving around the community and communicating with others.

The **Community Access and Inclusion Charter** adopts the *social model of disability* which emphasises that many of the difficulties experienced by people living with disability are the direct result of barriers imposed by the environment and not the disability itself. The Charter represents Council and community commitment to removing barriers to participation in community life for people with disabilities, their carers and families.

Through its operations the Council aspires to uphold and demonstrate **core principals** for access and inclusion. Working collaboratively with the community, Council will pursue and promote **shared goals** towards building an accessible and inclusive community.



Core Principles

Access – Safe and equitable access to the physical environment, information, services, education and employment.

Inclusion – People of all abilities have the right to participate in all aspects of our community and make the most of their talents and abilities in learning, training and work.

Diversity – Acceptance of all people as important to our community regardless of their similarity or difference in all areas including disability, ethnicity, language, sexuality, age, religious or cultural beliefs.

Human Rights – Recognition of the inherent dignity and alienable rights of all people to live free of discrimination.

Shared Goals

Reducing barriers for access to goods, services, facilities, activities and the natural environment for all community members and visitors.

Actively promoting inclusion and participation for people of all abilities.

Increasing the opportunities to obtain and maintain employment for all community members.

Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against community members.

Barriers to Access and Inclusion

Wangaratta residents with a disability, their families and carers were asked to tell us about the difficulties they face. This is what they said:

Attitudes Lack of meaningful employment Format of information Website usability
Access to buildings Lack of suitable parking Safety concerns for pedestrians Unsuitable signage
Limited transport options Family friendly Inadequate lighting Not enough suitable seating Entrance steps
Scooter access Respite options Recreational activities Involvement in decision making Disability awareness
Communication skills Bilingual information Cluttered aisles Access to events

Our Shared Responsibilities

Rural City of Wangaratta Council

Council accepts the following responsibilities in relation to its planning, decision making and operations and aims to:

- incorporate access and inclusion principles in the way we plan and deliver services
- consider how to improve how we communicate and engage with all members of the community
- systematically improve the accessibility of council buildings and infrastructure
- ensure council services, programs and events take into account the diverse needs of community members
- support equal employment opportunities
- exercise leadership by advocating for the rights of disadvantaged groups within our Community.

Community

Community groups, health and support services, educational institutions, retailers and businesses also have a crucial role to play towards building an inclusive and accessible community by:

- providing a safe and accessible environment
- treating all people with respect and dignity
- providing a professional and friendly service
- initiating and supporting events and campaigns to raise disability awareness
- being flexible to support individual needs where possible
- being proactive in improving your awareness of disability and confidence to communicate and assist individuals.

- incorporate *Principles of Universal Design* across planning for facilities, services, communication, consultation and events.

Principles of Universal Design

1. **Equitable** use for people of all abilities.
2. **Flexible** to meet a range of individual needs.
3. **Simple** and **Intuitive** to use.
4. **Easy to Interpret** and understand.
5. **Safe** and **Sensible** to use.
6. **Easy to Use** with low physical effort.
7. **Useable** in terms of size, space and accessibility.



People with disability have a unique insight into the barriers they face and practical suggestions to reduce these. They wish to be consulted on matters that affect them giving rise to the saying:

“Nothing about us, without us”

Whole-of-Council Approach

The Rural City of Wangaratta **Community Access and Inclusion Charter** is one of a suite of three Council documents that describe the background to and thinking behind a whole-of-Council approach to access and inclusion.

- 1. Policy for Equity and Access for People with Disabilities**
- 2. Community Access and Inclusion Charter**
- 3. Community Access and Inclusion Action Plan**

These documents outline the Council's commitment to meet its legislative and ethical obligations under federal and state legislation, standards and guidelines.



The **Policy for Equity and Access for People with Disabilities** guides Council's approach to good practice where diversity is celebrated, human rights protected and varying abilities valued and developed.

The **Community Access Inclusion Action Plan** links community expectations with opportunities for Council to improve accessibility of its services and facilities. Outcomes will be reviewed and reported in the Council's Annual Report.

By adopting this **Community Access and Inclusion Charter**, the Council aims to communicate its commitment to work together with all facets of the community to inform and meet the changing needs of people of all abilities within the community.

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Victorian State Government Disability Act 2006

Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act 2011

We Welcome Your Feedback

As part of the continuous improvement process at the Rural City of Wangaratta Council, we welcome feedback about your experiences of access and inclusion. You can contact us via:

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