

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT 2025-2029 DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Throughout March 2024, Golden Plains Shire Council undertook a new community engagement process seeking feedback on the new Disability Action Plan 2025-2029. This report outlines the process and feedback received which has informed the development of the Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework 2025-2029. The framework outline's themes to create a municipality that is more accessible, inclusive, friendly and supports full participation of people with disabilities. Through the engagement we heard from residents, carers, service providers, Active Ageing and Inclusion Advisory Committee and employees to ensure the needs and objectives of people with disabilities have been reflected in the framework.

HOW WE ENGAGED

Engagement Procedures

An engagement page was developed for the Golden Plains Shire website *Have Your Say* platform to provide project information and communicate ways that the community could contribute to the development of the Disability Action Plan.

A range of engagement tools were used to provide a range of opportunities for stakeholders and community to have their say.



28

Days of Engagement



156

Surveys Completed



38

People Attended Workshops



15

Liaised with Service Providers



241

Advisory Committee and Staff

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

HAVE YOUR SAY ONLINE PORTAL

An online *Have Your Say* project page was designed to encourage community feedback throughout the engagement process.

<https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/consultations/disability-action-plan-have-your-say>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOPS

The community was invited to give feedback at workshops facilitated by Golden Plains Shire staff. We held an in-person session at Bannockburn, Smythesdale and Dereel. Attended Golden Plains Shire local market with information available.

TARGET MEETING

Active Ageing and Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting held in March.

COMMUNICATIONS

The opportunity for the community to help shape the draft Disability Action Plan was communicated across multiple platforms and methods. People were directed to the *Have Your Say* project page for information about the project and details on how they could participate.

SOCIAL MEDIA



5,720

Comments, reactions, and shares



5

Presentations to community and networks



60

Hard copy distributed



127

Community groups/ organisations emailed

COMMUNICATION METHODS

NUMBERS REACHED

Facebook	2,159
Instagram	212
Twitter	3,084
LinkedIn	265
Hard copy surveys	39
Emails to key community groups	127
Golden Plains Shire Staff Newsletter	236

WHO WE ENGAGED WITH

Between 22 March 2024 and 18 April 2024, Golden Plains Shire received 156 responses from the community, advisory committee, and staff to inform the development of the draft Disability Action Plan 2025-2029.

The community were invited to share some demographic data through our *Have Your Say* survey.

Who responded: 17% identified as people with disabilities.

34% were carers or family members of a person with disabilities.

1% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 26% didn't say.

19% were women, 12% men, 69% didn't say.

66% were employees of Golden Plains Shire Council.

3% advisory committee members.

6% were between 17yrs and below, 1% were between 18-24yrs, 2% were between 25-34yrs, 9% were between 35-49yrs, 2% were between 50-59yrs, 11% were between 60-69, 4% were between 70-84yrs and 65% didn't say.



WHAT WE ASKED

We asked the community to tell us how they felt about current accessibility in Golden Plains Shire and how we can create a more accessible and inclusive community.

Specifically, we asked:

- What would enhance your community environment to make it more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities?
- What would increase participation of people with disabilities in health and wellbeing in Golden Plains Shire?
- What can be improved to enable people with disabilities to safely participate in community life across Golden Plains Shire?
- What can be done to increase employment and educational opportunities for people with disabilities across Golden Plains Shire?

WHAT WE HEARD

We heard the following feedback in relation to our key questions.

The most important change

The community identified having access to supports as their most important priority, recommending more employment and educational opportunities for all abilities across Golden Plains Shire municipality.

Improving services and facilities

Throughout the engagement process, the physical environment, facilities, and public transport in Golden Plains Shire were raised repeatedly. These factors were considered essential to people with disabilities being able to work, attend events, be independent and generally participate in society.

- More accessible public places and spaces.
- Greater provision of well maintained, footpaths, tracks and trails, a changing places facility, clearer signage and safer road crossings.
- More education and training for community groups relating to people with disabilities.
- Improve accessible public transport in Golden Plains Shire Council.

FOUR COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The engagement highlighted opportunities to reduce barriers and increase community participation for people with disabilities. These are grouped under four main themes:

The community scored their preferred priority areas under the main themes which will be considered for implementation in the new Disability Action Plan. These are grouped under four main themes:

- 1. Inclusive and Diverse Communities** - *Objective: To promote inclusion for all in Golden Plains Shire Municipality.*
 - 1.1 Improving access and participation.
 - 1.2 Social connection.
 - 1.3 Council infrastructure and community development.
 - 1.4 Universal access.
 - 1.5 Transport.

- 2. Health and Support** - *Objective: To improve overall wellbeing and access to health and support services.*
 - 2.1 Enhance awareness to health services.
 - 2.2 Disabilities support.
 - 2.3 Build a healthy community.
 - 2.4 Mental Health.
- 3. Safety and Advocacy** - *Objective: To ensure a consistent approach in safety and advocacy.*
 - 3.1 Community safety.
 - 3.2 Current and emerging needs of people with disabilities.
 - 3.3 Emergency awareness.
 - 3.4 Safe access.
- 4. Employment and Educational Opportunities** – *Objective: To embed the principals of access and inclusion across employment, education and or training.*
 - 4.1 Workplace Education and Training.
 - 4.2 International Day of People with Disability.
 - 4.3 Employment and educational opportunities for community.
 - 4.4 Networking with stakeholders e.g., LGA's and MAV.
 - 4.5 Leadership.

NEXT STEPS

Council acknowledges that at the time of the Community Engagement, community feedback that was gathered was to be used to inform the development of the draft *Disability Action Plan 2025-2029*. However, upon review of the feedback and recommendations, Council has proposed a draft Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework as opposed to an action plan. The framework will allow actions to be embedded into the Council Plan and reported on annually.

The framework will guide the actions Council will commit to that aim to reduce or remove barriers experienced by people with disabilities.

The draft Disability Action Plan Strategic Framework will be presented to Council in June 2024 to be endorsed for public exhibition and will then be released for public comment for a four-week period. Recommendations will then be presented to Council for consideration before a final document is proposed for adoption in August 2024.

Council will continue to engage with the community throughout the lifespan of the Disability Strategic Framework to track our progress on becoming a more inclusive and accessible community.