

City of Casey

Discovery Review Summary Report



GSA
Get Skilled Access

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Barriers to social and economic participation.....	4
Methodology	5
External Survey Data	6
Participant Data	10
Focus Groups – Findings & Recommendations	14
Focus Group 1	15
Focus Group 2	17
Focus Group 3	19

Executive Summary

5.5 million Australians or 21.4% of the population¹, have either a physical or non-physical disability, it's estimated that up to 80% of those disabilities are non-visible², and 2.1 million people are of working age (15-64 years). The unemployment rate for people with disability currently sits at 10% which is more than double the rate of people without disability, and people aged 15-24 with disability are more than twice as likely (25%) to be unemployed as those aged 25-64 (7.9%)³.

Community participation is an important consideration for local governments to achieve positive and inclusive outcomes for their citizens. Ensuring inclusion, safety and value supports healthy positive communities for local government areas. More than one-quarter (27% or 1.1 million) of people with disability aged 5 and over, living in households, do not leave home as often as they would like. A further 0.9% (or 38,000) do not leave home at all (ABS 2019).⁴

Australia's Disability Strategy⁵ calls on all Australians to ensure people with disability can participate as equal members of society. The role of Councils is integral to achieve these strategies and improve the lives of people with disability. Along with the recommendations found in the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability⁶ the response from actions across local governments will support the future of equitable and inclusive outcomes for people with disability.

¹ [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au)

² [What is a hidden disability? \(hdsunflower.com\)](https://hdsunflower.com)

³ [People with disability in Australia, Unemployment - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://aihw.gov.au)

⁴ [People with disability in Australia, Social inclusion - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://aihw.gov.au)

⁵ [Australia's Disability Strategy Hub | Disability Gateway](#)

⁶ [Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](#)

Community consultation was conducted to further support and inform the City of Casey Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The focus groups were designed to hear from, and better understand the lived experiences, barriers and opportunities that exist across City of Casey. The participants were open and honest and provided realistic feedback and opportunities for City of Casey to consider that would support an increase in disability access and inclusion across the LGA. Some of the feedback included the need to have the voices of lived experience considered in the decision-making process to ensure community needs are met. More education about disability access and inclusion to be delivered to all City of Casey employees to better understand the social model of disability, inclusive language and build internal capability, the importance of Council meeting access compliance and the future needs of people with diversity of disability including the neurodivergent community, people who are low vision or blind, people who are Deaf/hard of hearing, and people with complex disability.

Barriers to social and economic participation

People with disability often face barriers to social and economic participation in their communities due to a variety of factors. These include negative stereotypes and attitudes, lack of accessibility in physical environments and communication, limited educational opportunities, discriminatory hiring practices, inadequate support services, and systemic exclusion. These barriers can prevent people with disability from accessing education, securing employment, participating in community activities, and fully engaging in social and economic life.

As a community, it's important to address these barriers by promoting inclusive policies, improving accessibility, challenging stigma and discrimination, providing appropriate support services, and supporting inclusive attitudes and practices in society. By doing this we will increase the liveability and economic return across City of Casey. Investing in accessible community spaces, more employment opportunities for people with disability, and supporting entrepreneurship opportunities for businesses that provide support services for people with disability.

Methodology

For the purposes of step one of the discovery phase, a community survey was completed by 47 participants across City of Casey to garner a deep and genuine understanding of the current accessibility and inclusion experience for people with disability. It asked questions such as 'Is disability celebrated across City of Casey?', 'How would you rate the accessibility of the following Council facilities and services for people with disability?' And 'If you could change one thing to improve disability inclusion at City of Casey, what would it be?' We also asked questions to capture the demographic of the participants. These questions were carefully designed to not only understand the barriers people living in City of Casey face but encourage creativity and a solution based focus that may support actions for the DIAP.

Following the survey three external focus groups were conducted, these included people with lived experience of disability, carers and agencies located within the City of Casey and employees of the City of Casey. We had a total of thirteen external participants in the focus groups, who represented broad diversity of disability, carers and people who work in the industry.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered has been provided in the below report to support Council in the development of their Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Throughout the Discovery Project, Get Skilled Access have collated and synthesised information to identify key areas of opportunity to improve accessibility. This report will provide an overview of the findings and recommendations from the desktop review and focus sessions. The objectives of this project are to:

- Gather insights into the experience of people with disability living and working within City of Casey.
- Gain a strong understanding of current accessibility and inclusion practices.
- Identify potential barriers to inclusion and accessibility that currently exist across the City of Casey.
- Identify areas of opportunity and make recommendations on priority actions to enhance the disability inclusion experience for City of Casey.

External Survey Data

An external survey was conducted as another way to understand the access and inclusion experience of people with disability living within City of Casey. Forty one people responded to the survey, the overarching theme among the responses is the need for a multifaceted approach to disability inclusion, encompassing internal and community education, infrastructure improvements, community engagement, awareness campaigns and collaborative partnerships. By addressing these various aspects, the City of Casey Council can work towards creating a more inclusive and accessible community for people with disability.

“The fact we have this survey in the first place is a big step up.”

Limited Visibility and Promotion:

Some respondents expressed that they haven't noticed much promotion or celebration of disability across City of Casey. They suggest there could be more visibility in council-related events and communications, such as on council website and marketing material, especially within culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities with disability.

There are positive insights about accessibility in council-owned premises, including good access and representation of diversity in Council imagery. However, it seems these efforts may not be adequately promoted or visible to the community.

Partnership with Disability Services Providers:

Disability services providers acknowledge their collaboration with the council on various initiatives, such as employment projects and community networks, which promote diversity and inclusion. These collaborations are seen as positive steps towards increasing disability access and inclusion in the community and should be promoted and utilised more to support that progress.

Challenges with Accessibility at Events:

Some respondents highlighted challenges with accessibility at council events, such as uneven surfaces in parking areas, making it difficult for people with disability to attend.

Developing a Council Access and Inclusion Event Guide will support event organisers to ensure community events consider the needs of people with disability, and training is offered to event teams to develop their confidence and capability for disability access and inclusion.

“We do not attend many Casey events marketed to children because my neurodiverse child is overwhelmed by large crowds and over-stimulation.”

Call for More Activities and Social Groups:

It was acknowledged that whilst there are opportunities for children and young people to increase social participation, there is an opportunity to increase activities and social groups that cater more to adults with disability. Council would benefit from utilising the existing collaborative partnerships to advocate for more opportunities for social inclusion and community engagement.

Education and Inclusion Programs:

Many respondents emphasised the importance of education and disability inclusion programs, particularly in schools, workplaces, and public spaces. These programs aim to raise awareness about visible and non-visible disability, promote understanding, and foster greater understanding and support within the community.

“Understanding of invisible disabilities. Adoption of the Sunflower lanyard scheme and training of staff and volunteers what this means and what people's needs may be.”

Improved Housing, Medical Access, and Infrastructure:

There were calls for improved access to housing, medical services, and infrastructure, such as public transport and pathways. This includes advocating for more accessible housing options and reliable public transport routes, as well as ensuring that pathways and facilities are accessible for people with disability. Although these issues are not directly the responsibility of Council, there is a strong advocacy role across all levels of government that City of Casey leaders could be striving towards.

“Bus stops are not raised so it is difficult for wheelchairs to use public transport buses without driver getting a ramp up and holding up other passengers.”

Community Engagement and Representation:

Respondents highlighted the need for increased representation of people with disability in council events, initiatives, and decision-making processes. They also called for greater inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, and people who are neurodivergent. This has begun with the great work of the City of Casey Disability Action Group. Further promotion of the group would allow more information and opportunities for others to participate.

Awareness and Messaging:

Suggestions were made for increased community messaging about inclusion, inclusive language in signage, and promoting awareness of diverse disability through events, workshops, and speakers. This allows disability to be integrated into all conversations across Council and works to overcome disability as a secondary conversation.

Accessibility Features and Facilities:

Requests were made for practical improvements, such as automatic doors, more accessible parking spaces, accessible footpaths, and inclusive playgrounds with rubber surfaces.

Financial Support and Grants:

Some respondents proposed financial support initiatives, such as grants for community groups to install low-cost mobility aid hire for those who may require them.

Physical Accessibility:

Suggestions include increased internal training for better internal understanding of disability access and the experience of the user such as wheelchair access, fully fenced playgrounds, accessible bathroom and Changing Places facilities, and designated parking spaces for people

in wheelchairs. People with disability encourage Council to think beyond compliance and consider the practical use in the early stages of planning.

Sensory Accommodations:

There is opportunity to create sensory rooms in libraries for visitors who are neurodivergent to feel calm and providing quiet breakout spaces for people needing a respite from sensory stimuli. Furthermore, promoting these features on the Council website and other marketing opportunities would better inform the community of these facilities and initiatives.

Communication Accessibility:

Respondents emphasised the importance of providing Auslan interpreters, captions on screens, and clear communication about accessibility features and accommodations available in public spaces.

Sport and Health Programs:

Calls were made for more affordable options for recreational activities like wheelchair sports and access to facilities like hydro pools and gyms for people with disability to improve their mobility and overall well-being. Collaborating with local sports clubs about inclusive sport would also provide more options for people with disability to participate.

“My child has stopped playing community sport because it has become an environment that increases anxiety and negative impact.”

Improving Recruitment Process for People with Disability:

Suggestions for enhancing the recruitment process for people with disability include providing clear communication about available adjustments or accommodations, offering opportunities for work experience and volunteering, actively reaching out to disability communities for recruitment, improving the definition of disability, and removing biases and barriers that may hinder employment opportunities.

Participant Data

Participants were asked to assess the level of accessibility for Council services and spaces. The below data shows the perception of access to and helps to identify opportunities for improvement.

Council Service	Level of Accessibility	Total
Information about Council events, facilities and services (including Council website and social media)	Very accessible	8
	Somewhat accessible	18
	Not very accessible	6
	Not accessible at all	3
	I don't know	6
Council Customer Service	Very accessible	6
	Somewhat accessible	16
	Not very accessible	9
	Not accessible at all	0
	I don't know	8
Libraries	Very accessible	14
	Somewhat accessible	16
	Not very accessible	2
	Not accessible at all	1
	I don't know	8
Sporting Facilities	Very accessible	4
	Somewhat accessible	14
	Not very accessible	12
	Not accessible at all	1
	I don't know	10
Civic and Community Events	Very accessible	3
	Somewhat accessible	19
	Not very accessible	9
	Not accessible at all	1
	I don't know	9
Civic and Community Centres	Very accessible	5
	Somewhat accessible	21
	Not very accessible	2
	Not accessible at all	1
	I don't know	11

PUBLIC

Parks and Playgrounds	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	3 16 12 5 3
Public Restrooms	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	5 17 12 4 3
Footpaths	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	3 15 16 6 2
Road Crossings	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	6 16 13 5 2
Council Car Parks	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	6 15 13 1 7
Council Run Events	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	5 15 7 1 13
Aqua and Recreational Facilities	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	2 19 9 2 9
Community Hubs	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all	7 15 5 1

PUBLIC

	I don't know	12
Art Spaces	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	4 15 5 1 14
Walking and Cycling Tracks	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	3 19 8 4 6
Waste Management services	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	3 8 5 2 20
Child Care Services	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	4 6 1 1 23
Health Services	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	4 21 5 2 9
Maternal Child and Healthcare	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	5 7 4 1 24
Immunisation Services	Very accessible Somewhat accessible Not very accessible Not accessible at all I don't know	7 10 4 1 18

What can Council improve to make communication more accessible?

Below are the raw data responses from the survey participants that suggest ways City of Casey can improve access and disability inclusion across the LGA.

- Have interpreting services and have voice to text facilities
- Diversity in the communications services
- Consult people with disability
- Casey is all about white and English-speaking community. Others are either ignored or not prioritised
- Online communications- less text, with plain English and Easy English versions.
- Better UX (User experience) design
- Different options for communication both traditional and digital.
- Mailed out options, website advertising, social media and maybe tv. Along with public transport advertising and movies advertising.
- Communication is just generally lacking and clearly not a priority
- To make sure it's clear, captions, Auslan interpreters, posters of Auslan sign
- Get a newsletter or list of services and venues for people with disability
- Need to consider people especially our aged citizens who do not have access to social media
- Have information available in more languages, simple English.
- The website is hard to navigate at the best of times
- It is important to speak directly with people with a disability to know first hand what is required in the Plan. There are many groups and services in Casey that can support with this.
- It would be good to invite disability service providers to an in-person consultation session to discuss proposed strategies and plans so we can all work together better and achieve more for our communities
- Run Focus groups with people with disability
- The website doesn't favour eye gaze technology. It is difficult for users who rely on eye gaze (a computer controlled by the users eyes), to make a series of clicks to select

an item on a drop-down menu. There should be multiple ways to access the sub-menu options other than typing in the search bar

- Have people involved who are really concerned about disability issues, not just people who want to gain recognition for themselves.
- Put someone in a wheelchair and go around the City of Casey yourself and see how you go!
- Better recognition of different types of disability, better training for staff and volunteers especially around hidden disabilities and neurodivergence.
- Cleaning up public spaces to make it cleaner for people who are more prone to infection. Especially toilets and hiring disability focused staff to help those in need specifically when they visit
- Just to make sure that it is translated into every day, accessible language for your staff! So that it doesn't just become a document that only a few specially trained staff actually 'get' and use when it comes to going for grants and that it filters down and truly informs the everyday workings of council. Thanks for everything you are doing on our behalf. We appreciate it.
- To provide people with disability a clear understanding of what available to them and what's accessible. To think about the people that don't have the privilege of walking. See the world through their eyes every time you go somewhere, even just for a week. Simple things, like entering, doorways to businesses, buildings, shops is limited. Disability car parks that open your door into a gutter, not at all accessible for people in a wheelchair.
More ramp access as stairs and gutters limit access.
- Improved access to Casey race subsidised membership maybe.
Assistance for people to get solar and batteries installed.
- Educate teams about biases

Focus Groups – Findings & Recommendations

The City of Casey Council conducted a series of external focus groups to gather insights and feedback from the community regarding various aspects of council operations, particularly

concerning disability initiatives, community participation, events, and organisational approaches. The below findings aim to summarise feedback and recommendations derived from these focus group sessions.

Focus Group 1

Community Participation, Education and Events:

Participants expressed a desire for increased opportunities for community participation in sports and events.

The need for education and funded targeted approaches for events to enhance inclusivity and accessibility was highlighted.

There was anticipation for City of Casey to move into a new era, emphasising the importance of adopting a holistic approach to disability inclusion across the community.

Disability Initiatives and Inclusivity:

Consideration for sensory disability was emphasised, suggesting the need for inclusive design and services.

Connecting services and sharing information to support families of people with disability was deemed essential.

Meeting Participation and Access Needs in the Community:

Accessibility concerns were raised regarding the Fountain Gate shopping complex, particularly regarding connectivity and accessibility between different areas.

Concerns were raised about the overcrowding of hydro pools, indicating a growing need exacerbated by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Participants sought more information on planned facilities and urged for consultations to capture the needs of the disability community effectively.

The role of the council in supporting people not eligible for the NDIS was queried, emphasising opportunity to fill existing gaps in services and support.

Employment and Representation:

The lack of representation of people with disability, and historical decision-making by people without disability in employment settings was highlighted.

Participants stressed the importance of increasing recruitment opportunities for people with disability, aiming for equal opportunities and a sense of belonging.

The principle of "Nothing about us without us" was emphasised, advocating for the active involvement of people with disability in decision-making processes.

Participants called for proactive policies to employ people with disability, ensuring better representation and diversity across all levels.

Inclusive workplace environments, accommodating diverse disability, were deemed essential.

Communication and Website Accessibility:

Concerns were raised regarding the accessibility and clarity of the council's website, particularly for people with disability.

Accessibility issues with Council's answering machine were noted, highlighting the need for improvements to cater to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Recommendations were made for simplified, easily accessible information, including the provision of documents in easy English and conducting accessibility audits on all communication channels.

Action Plan Considerations:

- Develop an Accessible Event Guide
- Review Council feedback systems and increase accessibility for people living across City of Casey
- Provide training and education on how to events accessible and inclusive for people with disability, and the business case for accessible events
- Continue conversations and commit to participating in the [Sport4All - Disability Inclusion in Sport Across Australia](#) program

- Undergo a Recruitment Review that considers the unconscious bias that often exists within recruitment practices to better understand how to make the recruitment process more accessible for people with disability.
- Develop an accessible communications guide

Wishlist Recommendations and Suggestions:

- Allocate 10% of the City of Casey budget to disability initiatives.
- Enhance community engagement and listen more attentively to community feedback.
- Prioritise intersectionality, cultural inclusion and diversity.
- Investigate collaboration opportunities with other councils.
- Create a centralised platform for all resources and information.
- Conduct accessibility audits on communication channels and infrastructure.

Focus Group 2

Inclusivity and Intersectionality:

Participants expressed a need for more education, both internally within the council and externally, to raise awareness about the needs of the queer community and other marginalised groups with disability, and better understand the impacts of intersectionality within City of Casey.

Disability Awareness and Support:

Participants noted a lack of celebration of disability across City of Casey, highlighting the prevalence of a social model view of disability within the community.

While some attempts have been made to support people with disability, there is a perceived lack of adequate support, particularly in areas such as education, recreational facilities, and community events.

The accessibility of facilities, such as the Endeavour Hills Leisure Centre, was praised, but more efforts are needed to ensure inclusivity in all public spaces and events.

Accessibility Information Hub:

Participants discussed the opportunity to have a centralised space for information, particularly for people with disability that would provide information on local services, events, activities, consultation opportunities and employment opportunities. It would allow for a more streamlined approach to accessing important information and could be a collaboration between council and other organisations across City of Casey.

Infrastructure and Amenities:

Concerns were raised about the lack of inclusive playgrounds and accessible parking across the city.

Participants suggested developing a playground directory showcasing accessibility features and improving parking facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Maintenance issues with public amenities, such as unclean toilets and challenging footpaths, were highlighted, indicating the need for improvements in infrastructure upkeep.

Feedback Mechanisms:

Accessibility issues were identified with providing feedback to the council, with many people, especially those with high needs, facing challenges in accessing the feedback channels.

Suggestions were made to streamline feedback processes and provide third-party support for relaying information to the council.

Action Plan Considerations:

- Conduct a research project to better understand the impact of disability across City of Casey to better understand how future services with support the needs of the community in the future.
- Understand the access and inclusion successes across the City of Casey and utilise them to build a business case to increase access and inclusion in other areas across council.

- Collaborate and advocate for a centralised hub space where people with disability can access all the information they need participate and be included in the community.
- Audit the accessibility of all City of Casey Playground areas and prioritise areas to increase access to the facilities.
- Advocate for funding to support upgrades for Playground facilities.
- When developing new playground facilities, consider the access and inclusion needs of children and young people with disability.
- Identify opportunities to increase the number of Changing Places facilities across City of Casey.
- Conduct a WCAG 2.2 audit across the City of Casey Website to ensure it can be accessed by the most amount of people.
- When reviewing the website, consider a user experience audit of people with disability to ensure it is intuitive and user-friendly.

Wish List Recommendations and Suggestions:

- Increase education and awareness programs for council staff and the broader community regarding disability.
- Enhance support and accessibility for people with disability across all aspects of community life, including education, recreation, and events.
- Improve infrastructure to ensure inclusivity, including the development of accessible playgrounds and parking facilities.
- Establish a centralised information hub for people with disability to access resources and services easily.
- Enhance communication channels and feedback mechanisms to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all residents.

Focus Group 3

Community Access

Participants expressed concerns about the limited availability of accessible parking spaces across City of Casey and meeting the access needs of the community.

Inclusive Activities:

There is a significant need for quiet or sensory spaces for the neurodivergent community to feel comfortable and included in public settings.

Community Engagement and Accessible Facilities:

Activities and programs that cater to people with disability, such as those offered at the YMCA, were praised and suggested for replication within the City of Casey.

Community groups and activities often overlook the importance of physical access, creating barriers for people with disability, as observed in Neighbourhood houses.

Participants expressed a desire for inclusive dance classes, singing, or arts programs tailored to the needs of people with physical disability.

Inclusive Language and Education:

The communication board at the Berwick Botanic Gardens was commended for its effectiveness in providing information to visitors.

While an All Abilities week exists, some people expressed discomfort with the term "All Abilities," suggesting the need for alternative terminology.

An education program focusing on inclusive language, disability awareness and inclusion was highlighted as essential for raising awareness and fostering understanding within the community.

Potential Hub Options and Community Centres:

Participants raised questions about Banjo Place and its potential suitability as a hub or community centre for people with disability. The Hub concept was also suggested in focus group 2 as a strong priority for consideration for Council.

Examples from other councils, such as Box Hill's community arts centre, were cited as positive models for providing inclusive spaces and activities for people with disability.

Action Plan Consideration:

- Conduct a carparking audit to ensure the parks meet current compliance and meet the needs of the community and develop a priority plan to upgrade all non-compliant accessible carparks.
- Commit to initiatives that consider the neurodivergent community, such as age and gender-neutral sensory spaces, sensory gardens and quiet shopping times to increase access and inclusion for the neurodivergent community.
- Advocate for accessible and inclusive programs for people with disability across City of Casey
- Provide Council staff with training to build capability in inclusive language for people with disability
- Develop an inclusive language guide for City of Casey employees to use as a resource
- Research the opportunity and business case for developing a centralised Hub space as a source of information and potential activities for people with disability across City of Casey.

Wishlist Recommendations and Suggestions:

- Increase the availability of accessible parking spaces throughout the city to improve mobility and access for people with disability.
- Develop quiet or sensory spaces in public areas to accommodate the needs of the neurodivergent community.
- Implement an education program focusing on disability awareness and inclusion for the broader community.
- Expand the range of activities and programs that cater to people with disability, incorporating inclusive dance, singing, and arts classes.
- Ensure that community groups and activities prioritise physical accessibility to promote inclusivity for all residents.
- Consider alternative terminology for events like All Abilities week to better reflect the preferences of the community.
- Explore the potential of Banjo Place or similar spaces as hubs for disability-related services and activities.

- Investigate options for establishing community arts centres or hubs that cater specifically to the needs of people with disability.