

MELTON CITY COUNCIL

Disability Action Plan

2013-2017



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Message from our Mayor



Melton City Council is proud to present the Melton Disability Action Plan 2013-2017.

People with a disability, their families and carers, told us what is important to them and this Plan reflects their needs and aspirations. The Plan builds on what has already been achieved by Council and the community over the past four years, and ensures people with a disability have more choice and control over their lives.

This Disability Action Plan complements the Melton City Council Plan 2013–2017 and demonstrates our commitment to addressing the physical and attitudinal barriers that people with a disability face on a daily basis. The Plan reinforces the underlying principle that we all share responsibility for ensuring that people with a disability, and their carers, pursue their interests, and have the same opportunities, as their peers.

I acknowledge the many contributions made by people with a disability, their families, friends and carers who have been so open and forthright in providing insight into their everyday lives.

Through their frank and honest revelations, they have highlighted the things that are working well within our community and those that, for now, continue to be a barrier. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to the residents, groups and Council staff who contributed towards the development of the Melton Disability Action Plan 2013–2017. I am proud that this Plan reflects the voice of our community.

Cr Bob Turner
Mayor

Disability Advisory Committee, Message from the Chairperson

As the Chairperson of the Disability Advisory Committee, I am delighted with the Melton Disability Action Plan 2013–2017; to which, the Committee has made a significant contribution and will play an integral role in delivering its actions.

The Disability Advisory Committee is made up of people who live with a disability, carers and a disability service provider who were appointed on the basis of their knowledge and experience of issues faced by people living with a disability. The Disability Advisory Committee is also supported by Melton City Council and truly is a collaborative partnership that works to improve the lives of people who are affected by a disability, their carers and families living in the City of Melton.

The role of the Disability Advisory Committee is to raise concerns and provide advice to Council about issues of accessibility and inclusiveness that affect all people. This advice enables Council to build a more inclusive and accessible community in which everyone can participate.

To my fellow Committee members, I extend my sincere thanks for your contributions and look forward to watching the actions and objectives outlined in the Disability Action Plan come to fruition.

Cr Kathy Majdlik (GAICD)



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Introduction

The Melton City Council Disability Action Plan 2013-2017 strengthens the voice of people with a disability and supports the significant role that families and carers play.

This Plan recognises all people with a disability including children, young people and adults with a sensory, physical, or neurological impairment, acquired brain injury or mental illness. It understands the important role that families and carers play and the need for them to be supported, valued and respected.

Input from people with a disability, their families and carers has shaped the Plan, determined its priorities and put into actions the things that are important. It supports what people with a disability have told us; that they just want to be able to live, work and socialise in the same way as everyone else.

The Plan will guide Council decision making and create opportunities into the future. It will enhance the participation and wellbeing of people with a disability; helping to remove barriers and increase control and self-determination in everyday life.

The Plan sets out a four year plan that builds on the success and learning's from Council's two previous disability action plans and supports and aligns to the:

- Melton City Council Plan 2013-2017, and
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017.

It will also meet Council's obligations under the Victorian State Government Disability Act 2006, reinforcing Council's commitment to achieving positive outcomes for people with a disability, their families and carers.





Much has been achieved in recent years:

- Inclusive playspaces across the municipality have been developed
- The CARE Melton Expo has been implemented
- Resources and publications that support carers and people with a disability have been developed
- A range of recreational and arts opportunities involving people of all abilities have been established
- Council has established strong networks and partnerships with providers who support people with a disability
- New buildings are designed with state-of-the-art accessible features
- Council delivers information forums and workshops to educate the community on access and inclusion for all

But there is still more that can be done.



Through this Plan, Council will work in partnership towards ensuring people with a disability:

- feel supported and have access to the things they need to reach their goals and aspirations
- are valued members of the community who can easily move around and enjoy the company of their friends and family
- actively contribute to their community, have a voice that is heard and positively influences the future of the City
- have the same opportunities as everyone else

This is a time of significant change with the implementation of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) along with the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-2016. These two important initiatives will have wide ranging impacts on the way services are delivered both at a state and national level. The Melton City Council Disability Action Plan 2013-2017 will complement this, helping us to prepare for change and respond with innovation and flexibility.

The City of Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia offering the best in urban and rural lifestyles within a comfortable commuting distance from Melbourne.

The City of Melton embraces a series of townships and communities, the larger activity centres being in Caroline Springs and Melton township. Caroline Springs is just 19 kilometres west of Melbourne's CBD and Melton township is 35 kilometres west of the CBD.

Other communities include Brookfield, Burnside, Burnside Heights, Diggers Rest, Exford, Eynesbury, Hillside, Kurunjang, Melton, Melton South, Melton West, Mount Cottrell, Parwan, Plumpton, Ravenhall, Rockbank, Taylors Hill, Toolern Vale and Truganina.



Our History

The Wurundjeri are the earliest known inhabitants of the Western Plains of Melbourne with Aboriginal occupation of the area going back 40,000 years. In 1863, the last known corroboree in the area took place near the present site of Hannah Watts Park in the township of Melton.

The first European settlers arrived in 1830. During the gold rush in the 1850's travellers rested beside the Toolern Creek on their way to the goldfields, now known as the community of Diggers Rest.

By 1862, Melton was created as a District, which would develop a rich pastoral and farming heritage. The City has some of the oldest and most interesting examples of the different styles of dry stone wall fences and structures in Victoria, constructed from the local volcanic rock.

On 18 March 1910, the famous American escapologist Harry Houdini made the first powered, controlled, sustained flight of an aircraft in Australia at Diggers Rest. This event was the start of the aviation industry in Australia.

In 1974, Melton was declared as Melbourne's first 'satellite city'. Extensive suburban development led to a major increase in population through the 1980s. In acknowledgement of our growth, Melton Shire Council was granted city status by the State Government in September 2012 and is now known as Melton City Council.

City of Melton Today

The population of the City of Melton is 122,783 (as of 30 June 2013) with an annual growth rate of 4.7%. The population in the City will continue to rapidly grow and by 2031, it is expected to more than double to be in excess of 243,000 residents.

This is a young municipality. The medium age of residents was 31 at the 2011 Census, making the City population one of the youngest in Victoria. This is reinforced with 42 babies being born each week and more than seventy percent of our population aged under 40.

The municipality is becoming increasingly culturally diverse. We welcome people from around the world and are enriched by cultural and linguistic diversity. The City of Melton is the place that more than 30,000 immigrants presently call home, representing more than 130 different nations.

Disability Profile

In 2013, an estimated 4,750 residents of the City of Melton or 4.9% of the population have disabilities causing profound or severe restriction of communication, mobility and self-care. For a further 8,850 residents, their disabilities place limits upon employment or educational opportunities.

The 2011 Census data indicates the City of Melton is one of the top eight local government areas in Victoria supporting residents with a disability. The 2011 Census and population forecasts prepared by the Department of Planning and Community Development project that the City of Melton will face significant increase in residents with disabilities into the future.



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Our communities inspirational stories

Bev

Getting involved and Active

Due to a childhood accident over 60 years ago, Bev is permanently stooped but she believes that having a disability creates compassion for others and an awareness of their issues.

Bev loves music, dancing and dogs but most of all she enjoys helping people, particularly older people. As a volunteer, Bev spends a considerable amount of her time at the Melton Seniors Community and Learning Centre, sharing, caring and spreading smiles.

Now living on her own after losing her husband suddenly two years ago, Bev knows what it's like to be alone and understands that her volunteer work is a two way street.

Bev says, "Being a volunteer gives me a great deal of pleasure. If you can make just one other person smile that smile immediately comes back to you; and two smiles are better than none."



“

Just being able to cheer people up and give hugs, especially to people who are on their own, is what makes me happy. I actually feel for some people I've made their day special and that's a huge reward for a little of my time.”



Brayden

Valued Work, Employment and Further Education

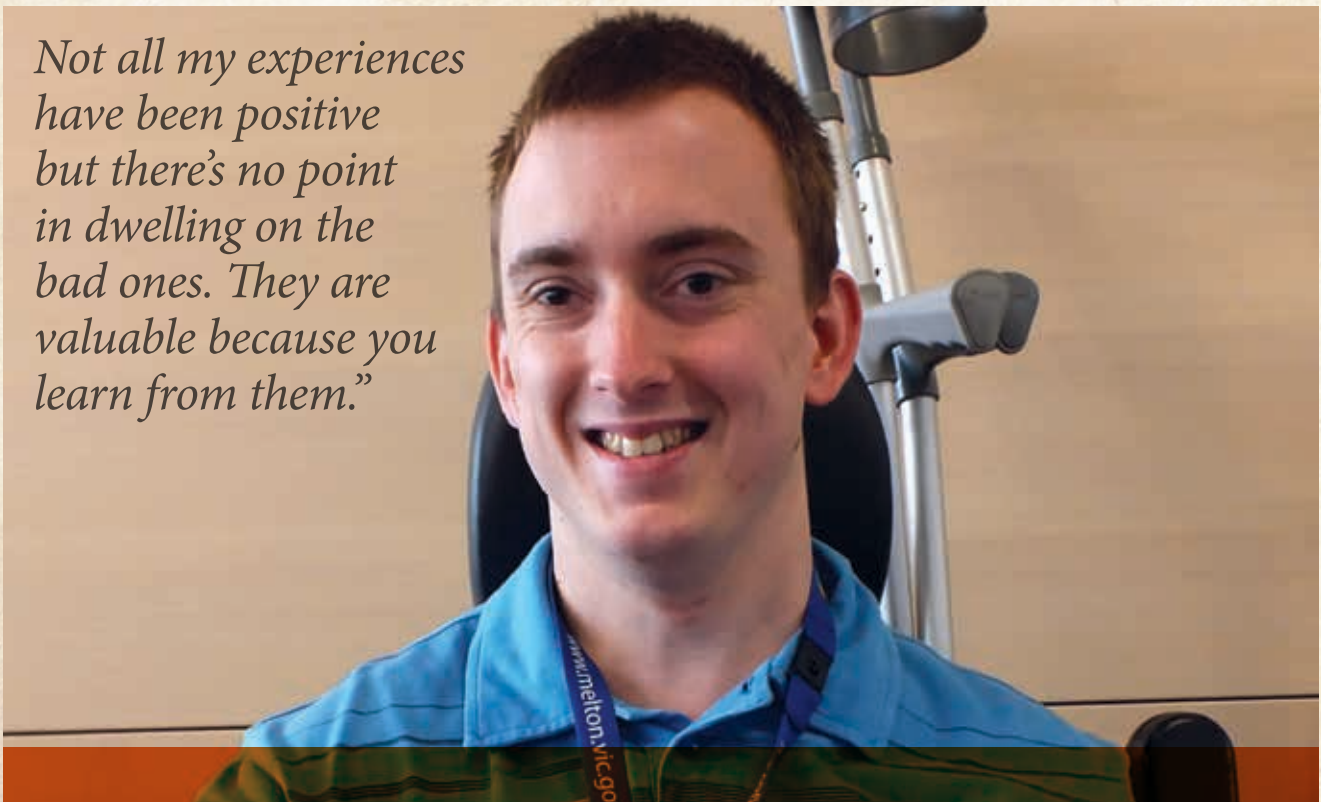
Brayden is 23 years old, honest and forthright but never rude. He has cerebral palsy but with his strong personality his disability is the last thing you notice. Mature beyond his years, he has experienced many of the drawbacks that confront people with a disability but it's left him wiser, not bitter.

Brayden recently took up a Traineeship at the Melton Library, combining hands-on work, while attending TAFE. His passion is Information Technology and he considers himself fortunate to have obtained work locally, particularly at the Melton Library. He's the first to admit

that the road to employment has been a rocky one and it's not easy to find the right job when you have a disability.

"At my work the atmosphere is supportive but disability is not the focus. If I need help I ask for it, just like anyone else."

“ *Not all my experiences have been positive but there's no point in dwelling on the bad ones. They are valuable because you learn from them.*”



Gus

Quality Services

At 28 life was good for Gus; he was married with two children. Just over ten years ago a motorist driving too fast and 'just a little over the limit,' turned Gus' life upside down.

His injuries were acute to his back, brain and sternum. Since his accident, Gus has spent nine years rehabilitating. He now has permanent, short term memory loss and will need aids to support his mobility for the rest of his life.

But out of all of this comes the 'new and improved' Gus, who believes moving to Melton a few years ago was the best thing he's ever done.

Gus said, "I've had so much help from all the community support services in Melton and from my experience, you don't get that level of support everywhere."

"I'm now a much nicer person to be around and lead a busy life. I'm a volunteer Public Advocate for people with a disability, mentor for Melton's youth at The Gap on Graham and studying Certificate 3 in Community Services with plans to study for my Diploma or Degree in Disability Services."



“

*Life's what you make it
and mine is fantastic.”*

4 Consulting with the community

People with a disability, their families and carers were asked about the things that are important to them, the challenges they face and their views on how access and inclusion across the City could be improved. The view of disability service providers and health care agencies was also sought and considered. Through this process Council has encouraged everyone to have their say and actively contribute to shaping priorities for the next four years.

In developing the Melton City Council Disability Action Plan 2013-2017, Council consulted with over 350 people through a series of discussion groups, forums and surveys. Participants included people from across the municipality representing people with a disability, their families, friends, carers, residents, local health and disability service providers and the Melton Disability Advisory Committee.

Many people participated with enthusiasm, reinforcing that the City of Melton is a great place to live but still having more work to do to ensure people of all abilities can simply do the same things in life that everyone else takes for granted.

A number of research methods were used to gather information which included:

- Data analysis (ABS 2011 census)
- Four community discussion groups
- Community feedback from the 2012 Care Melton Expo (over 550 people in attendance)
- Forum with representation from 12 disability service providers, Government and non-Government organisations and health care agencies
- Public forums with interested members of the community
- Surveys (125) identifying key issues for people with a disability, carers and disability service providers
- Feedback from the Disability Advisory Committee

The information gathered identified six key priority areas which can be summarised under the following headings:

- Quality services
- Getting information
- Getting involved and active
- Valued work, employment and further education
- Built environment
- Transport

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How will Council measure success

Now that Council has listened to its community and determined priorities for the next four years it is time to shift the focus to delivering the Plan.

Having a rigorous process in place to monitor and measure our success is essential, and it will help us to:

- know if we are succeeding
- determine where we need to put more time and energy
- make informed decisions and better respond to change
- be transparent and accountable

Therefore Council will:

- provide bi-monthly reporting to the Melton Disability Advisory Committee
- report quarterly through Council's quarterly reporting process
- provide an annual outcomes report in Council's Annual Report
- report to the community through Council's Moving Ahead newsletter



6 Themes, goals and actions

THEME 1

Quality Services

Goal: Work together to deliver accessible, flexible services that inform and meet the changing needs of people with a disability, their families and carers.

Service providers told us they wanted to work closer together, partner and deliver services that focus on the individual and family needs in line with NDIS. People with a disability wanted better services and care that supports their independence, health and wellbeing. Carers wanted better resources to support their role as carers.

Actions:

- * Work in partnership with Disability, Mental Health, Early Childhood Intervention Services and carer organisations to enhance capacity and service delivery responses across the municipality, in line with NDIS and Aged Care Reforms.
- * Actively develop and resource flexible interest based respite options which meet individual and family needs in a timely manner.
- * Advocate to State and Federal Governments to attract specialist health services, programs and funding.
- * Further develop and implement 'Person Centred' approaches including the active service model and 'Family Centred' practises across Councils aged and disability services and programs.
- * Deliver Council's Carer Support Program to enhance carer's physical and emotional wellbeing and support them to access other carer support initiatives.
- * Develop and grow 'Care Collection' resources that better support carers of people with Autism, Dementia and people with a disability.
- * Develop volunteer programs that enhance the health and wellbeing of people of all abilities.
- * Develop a Men's Shed at Morton Homestead and volunteer programs that focus on improving the health and wellbeing of men of all abilities.
- * Utilise the expertise of the Melton Disability Advisory Committee to support community planning and decision making.
- * Consult with children, young people and adults with a disability, their families and carers to identify needs and aspirations and increase community participation.

THEME 2

Getting Information

Goal: Improve access to information that supports informed decision making and increases awareness of services, opportunities and entitlements.

People with a disability, their families and carers told Council they enjoy living in Melton, but the geographical location, emerging suburbs and growth meant it was difficult to keep abreast of new and developing services. They want an easier to navigate support system and understandable information. Cares valued the opportunities that Council provided to them but wanted more information.

Actions:

- * Develop alternative and effective ways to communicate with people with a disability, their families and carers.
- * Deliver the CARE Melton Expo.
- * Implement publicity and marketing initiatives to raise awareness of community attitudes about disability.
- * Review and disseminate 'A Guide to Disability and Aged Services in the City of Melton' and 'Early Years Guide'.
- * Develop and implement a promotion plan to better inform the community of services provided for people with a disability, their families and carers.
- * Continue to provide opportunities for families and professionals to access further education and information relating to disability with an emphasis on Autism Spectrum Disorders.





THEME 3

Getting Involved and Active

Goal: Provide people with disability opportunities to actively participate, socialise and have fun in the community, improving their health and wellbeing.

People with a disability want opportunities to socialise and make new friends. They wanted to be welcomed and included like everyone else their own age. Carers wanted flexible and individual respite options that provided them a break, but activities that were meaningful and interesting for those they cared for.



Actions:

- * Develop and support arts, culture and leisure programs that are inclusive and welcoming of people of all abilities.
- * Explore and create innovative pathways for people with a disability to access Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres.
- * Continue to improve access to Council's arts and cultural festivals, events and celebrations.
- * Support and cultivate a range of inclusive programs through Community Funding Programs.
- * Encourage people with a disability and carers to be physically active through the provision of well planned sporting facilities, open space, playgrounds, walking and cycle trails.
- * Consider accessible needs as part of equipment upgrades in Council facilities that support participation.
- * Deliver a community arts celebration that acknowledges the skills and participation of people with a disability.

THEME 4

Valued Work, Employment and Further Education

Goal: Increase opportunities and participation in further education and employment for people with a disability.

People with a disability were very clear that they want valued work or employment opportunities. They expressed their interest to further learn and have opportunities like everyone else that would assist them to develop and grow. Carers want every opportunity for the person they cared for to have an easy transition in the process of finding education, valued work and employment.



Actions:

- * Work with service providers and the local business sector to create pathways and support transition for people of all abilities into employment and further education.
- * Continue to support the Business Excellence Awards as a platform to educate local businesses of the benefits of engaging people of all abilities.
- * Support further education student placement within Council for residents studying disability or direct care, to enhance the capacity of the disability sector.
- * Support local business sector to provide a range of volunteering opportunities for people with a disability within the local community.
- * Promote further education options for people with disability within the Learning Directory.
- * Offer inclusive and affordable educational options for people of all abilities at Community Centres, Learning Hubs and Neighbourhood Houses.



THEME 5

Built Environment

Goal: Increase participation and access to the local community.

People with a disability told Council that older buildings and infrastructure in Melton needed to be fixed for them to use. They find it easier to participate and move around the newer suburbs compared to the older suburbs. Carers are appreciative of new facilities in particular the accessible play spaces Council had provided and want more to be built.

Actions:

- * Design accessible parking bay spaces that meet the current Australian standards and consider parking of multi-purpose vehicles that transport people with a disability.
- * Continue to build and upgrade accessible shared path networks and Council facilities throughout the municipality.
- * Investigate accessible change rooms for Melton Waves Leisure Centre.
- * Advocate for adult change spaces and hoists in new emerging hubs or community centres to better support people with complex disabilities.
- * Continue to advocate to the business community for improved accessibility and inclusion of people of all abilities.
- * Work in conjunction with Public Transport Association and Public Transport Victoria to achieve better outcomes for uses of the Melton Train Station.
- * Continue to develop Ageing Well Precinct at 1-7 McKenzie Street Melton.
- * Continue to plan new and upgrade existing assessable play spaces.
- * Continue to ensure requirements of the DDA are met in planning and building stages.
- * Ensure all capital works projects comply with DDA standards and implement the annual DDA works program.

THEME 6

Transport

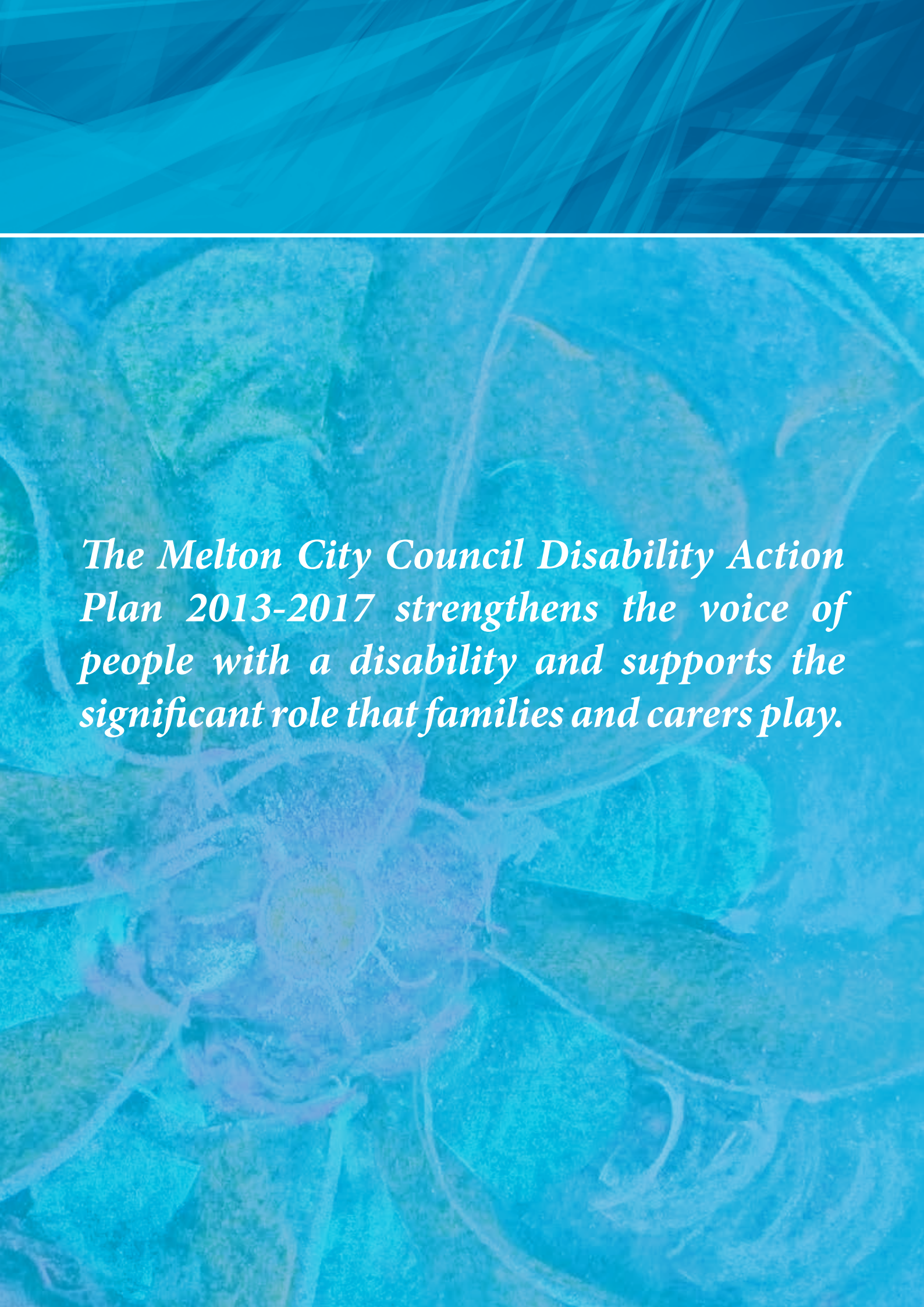
Goal: Support people with a disability to move freely in and around the municipality.

People with a disability told us that it is difficult to move around, in and out of Melton. They want Council to advocate for better accessible transport options. Carers and people with a disability who drive expressed their frustration in finding and using accessible parking bays that meet their needs. They want Council to provide larger bays to park their modified larger vehicles.

Actions:

- * Advocate for better and inclusive public transport.
- * Promote community transport options and initiatives within the municipality.
- * Develop strategies to better monitor use of accessible parking spaces.
- * Continue to link walking, bicycle and shared path networks throughout the municipality and provide signage for shared paths.
- * Continue to liaise with Public Transport Victoria to implement the upgrade of bus stops across the City to achieve DDA compliance.





The Melton City Council Disability Action Plan 2013-2017 strengthens the voice of people with a disability and supports the significant role that families and carers play.

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