



# Baw Baw Shire Council

## Disability Action Plan

2013-2017



## Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Disability Discrimination Act	2
Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-16	4
Council Plan 2013-14	5
Values and Behaviours	7
Baw Baw Shire Disability Advisory Committee	8
Aims of Disability Action Plan	9
What is a Disability Action Plan	9
Why Develop a Disability Action Plan	10
Purpose of the Disability Action Plan	10
Baw Baw Shire Disability Profile	11
Socio-Economic Index	13
The Disability Action Plan	15
Objective 1: Accessible Community	16
Objective 2: Inclusive Community	19
Objective 3: Informed Community	22
Objective 4: Equitable Community	25
Review and Evaluation	28

## **Introduction**

Baw Baw Shire Council developed its first Disability Action Plan in 1999 in consultation with the local community and guided by the Council's Disability Advisory Group. Throughout the period that the Disability Action Plan has been in effect Council has made progress in many areas in ensuring our services and programs are equitably available to all within our diverse community. This current plan seeks to address newly emerging issues as well as build on and extend the positive effects of earlier Plans. The key principle of 'Social Model of Disability' guides current good practice in meeting the requirements of people with a disability. This places lived experience of disability in a social context where 'disabling' environments – rather than an individual's impairment – is seen as the most significant cause of disadvantage and exclusion. Actions to improve access and inclusion for people with a disability therefore focus on eliminating where practical or reducing the impact of the 'disabling' environmental factors.

As a local government authority, Baw Baw Council has legal and community obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1992) to ensure that all members of the community are afforded the same opportunities to become active and engaged citizens. Council has a range of roles in delivering services to its local community, and must ensure the needs of people with disabilities are considered at all levels.

Baw Baw Shire Council has developed a new Disability Action Plan as a requirement of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), and the State Disability Act 2006 which came into effect in July 2007. These Acts provide uniform protection against discrimination for people with disabilities in Australia.

## **Disability Discrimination Act**

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1992) was developed to protect everyone in Australia from discrimination based on disability. Under the DDA, 'disability' is defined in broad terms to offer protection to everyone with a disability. It encompasses the following:

- Physical disabilities;
- Intellectual disabilities;
- Psychiatric disabilities;
- Neurological disabilities;
- Sensory disabilities
- Learning disabilities;
- Physical disfigurement; and
- The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.

The DDA definition also includes:

- People who currently have a disability;
- People who had a disability in the past;
- People who may have a disability in the future;
- People who are believed to have a disability; and
- People who have assistance for a disability.

Under the DDA, Baw Baw Shire Council has an obligation to:

- Ensure that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community;
- Promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that people with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community; and
- Where possible, eliminate discrimination against persons based on disability in the areas of employment, education, access to premises, provision of goods, facilities, services, accommodation, clubs associations, sport and buying land.
- Within the context of the Access and Inclusion Plan's objectives and actions, the term 'people with disabilities' also includes reference to their family and carer(s).

## Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-16

The framework of the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016 supports the Victorian Government to:

- uphold the rights of people with a disability
- remove and prevent structural, systemic and attitudinal barriers to participation
- build a welcoming community
- give the individual choice and control over their supports and services
- enable people with a disability, their families and carers to get the right mix of services and supports.

The goals of the plan are the long-term changes that the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016 is working towards. The goals are interconnected – people with a disability will not be able to benefit fully from the achievement of one goal if the others remain unchanged.

- **A strong foundation in life** – everyone needs a strong foundation in education, housing and health to lead an independent and fulfilling life.
- **Upholding rights and promoting participation** – people with a disability have the same rights to choice, control and to take part in all aspects of society and community as everyone else.
- **Accessing information, transport, buildings and places** – better access to information to make decisions and choices and better physical access to take up opportunities in study, work and leisure, to use shops and services and visit family and friends.
- **A contemporary approach through disability system reform** – more flexible, integrated supports and services that complement and connect with mainstream services and give meaningful choice and control to the person.

## **Council Plan 2013-17**

The Council Plan represents a four year road map for the Council, and describes the key priorities that Council will focus on between 2013 and 2017.

The Council plan is based on the key priorities identified by Council, and the community's aspirations for the future as expressed in BawBaw 2050. The Council Plan contains a number of strategic objectives:

- Delivering affordable and quality services to the community.
- Dynamic, vibrant and inclusive communities.
- Enhanced quality of life.
- Financial responsibility and responsible management of Council resources and people.
- Council is community focused, engaged and accountable.
- Continuing to reduce the asset renewal gap.
- Investing in quality and affordable community assets which are balanced against the growing needs of the community.
- Planning to meet needs of the community today and in the future.
- Prosperous local business and industry.
- Protecting and sustainably managing the natural environment and resources now and into the future.
- Building resilience and preparedness for climate and environmental impacts.

There are some specific directions in the Plan that relate directly to people living with a disability. These include:

- Services are responsive to the needs of the community and are accessible to those members of the community for whom the service is provided.
- More residents are actively involved in their communities and community life, and feel more connected.
- Increasing numbers of people volunteering in the community.

## Values and Behaviours

Through its vision, mission and values Council commits to working towards the best possible outcomes for the Baw Baw community.

### Our Vision

Happy, healthy people sharing prosperity and knowledge from living sustainably and in harmony with our rural identity, thriving villages, productive and inspiring landscapes.

### Our Mission

Leaders in delivering quality, innovative and community focused services today that make a difference for tomorrow.

### Core Values

- **Community focused** *Accessible, responsive (we're here to help), can do attitude, communicative, empathetic.*
- **Integrity** *Equitable, honest, ethical, transparent.*
- **Respect** *Listening, compassionate, open minded, understanding, patient.*
- **Pride** *Caring, enthusiastic, inspiring, accountable.*
- **Innovation** *Creative, bold, challenging, flexible.*
- **Collaboration** *Partnering, building productive relationships, inclusive.*

## **Baw Baw Shire Disability Advisory Committee**

The Disability Advisory Committee was initially established in 1999 and brings together people and organisations with broad and diverse knowledge and experience of disability related issues, providing the Council with strategic advice on disability related issues that can be dealt with at Council level.

The Disability Advisory Committee will:

1. Identify issues that impact on people with a disability living in, working in, or visiting the Shire - particularly in relation to accessing Council's services and facilities.
2. Provide advice to Council on workable solutions towards achieving equity for people with disabilities including monitoring and providing advice on the Council's implementation of its Disability Action Plan.
3. Provide information from organisational or personal experience that is relevant to the role and responsibilities of local government.

The Committee is made up of a Councillor who will chair the meetings, a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 relevant and suitable community representatives, the Rural Access Officer and a senior Council officer.

This Disability Action Plan has been developed with the input and assistance of the Disability Advisory Committee.

## **Aims of Disability Action Plan**

To eliminate discrimination for people with a disability who use services, facilities and infrastructure provided by Council, including current and prospective employees of the Council.

Victoria's Disability Act 2006 requires that all government departments, Statutory authorities, statutory corporations and councils prepare a Disability Action Plan (DAP).

## **What is a Disability Action Plan**

A Disability Action Plan (DAP) is a strategic document that enables organisations to implement actions to address access and inclusion issues for people with disabilities. The Victorian Government, under Section 38 of the Disability Act (2006), states that a Disability Action Plan (DAP) should be developed for the purpose of:

- Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;
- Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;
- Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability; and
- Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

The Plan will be lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission and implementation of the Plan will be reported annually to Council.

## **Why develop a Disability Action Plan**

The development of a Disability Action Plan is a further opportunity for Council to enhance the provision and planning of services and community supports, including infrastructure. The development of this Plan is a further step in developing an inclusive community, where people with disabilities feel recognised, accepted and valued for their skills and the contributions they make to society. Baw Baw Shire Council also has obligations under State and Federal legislation to develop and implement a Disability Action Plan and to comply with the various legislative Codes and Guidelines.

## **Purpose of the Disability Action Plan**

The purpose of the 2013-17 Disability Action Plan is to demonstrate Council's ongoing commitment to reducing barriers, whilst enhancing access, participation and inclusion for people with a disability in Baw Baw Shire. This plan aims to build on the achievements and outcomes of the previous plan whilst incorporating legislative changes and emerging issues.

## Baw Baw Shire Disability Profile

Baw Baw Shire is located in the West Gippsland region of Victoria, about 100 kilometres east of Melbourne. Statistics indicate that some 18.5% of the population are affected by disability (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009 Disability Prevalence). 2,117 people or 4.9% of the population in Baw Baw Shire report needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. The table below indicates the growth in people needing assistance with core activities in Baw Baw Shire.

### Need for assistance with core activities

Baw Baw Shire	2011			2006			Change 2006 to 2011
	Number	%	Regional VIC	Number	%	Regional VIC	
Assistance needed by age group (years)							
Total persons needing assistance	2,117	4.9	5.7	1,604	4.3	4.9	+513
Total persons not needing assistance	39,091	91.2	89.4	33,853	91.1	90.1	+5,238
Not stated	1,654	3.9	4.9	1,723	4.6	5.1	-69
<b>Total population</b>	<b>42,862</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>37,180</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>+5,682</b>

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2006 and 2011)

Analysis of the need for assistance of persons in Baw Baw Shire compared to Regional VIC shows that there was a lower proportion of persons who reported needing assistance with core activities.

Overall, 4.9% of the population reported needing assistance with core activities, compared with 5.7% for Regional VIC.

The major differences in the age groups reporting a need for assistance in Baw Baw Shire and Regional VIC were:

- A *smaller* percentage of persons aged 75 to 79 (12.2% compared to 14.6%)
- A *smaller* percentage of persons aged 80 to 84 (21.3% compared to 23.6%)
- A *smaller* percentage of persons aged 85 and over (45.2% compared to 47.0%)
- A *smaller* percentage of persons aged 70 to 74 (8.1% compared to 9.4%)

- 

The major differences in the age groups reporting a need for assistance between 2006 and 2011 in Baw Baw Shire were in the age groups:

- 20 to 59 (+100 persons)
- 60 to 64 (+82 persons)
- 85 and over (+71 persons)
- 10 to 19 (+56 persons)

## Socio-Economic Index

Socio-Economic Indexes for areas developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics from the 2011 Census data provide a comparison of the social and economic conditions across Australia. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas values are derived from variables such as income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, unskilled occupations and other aspects that reflect disadvantage (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008). The Census 2011 data identified Baw Baw Shire at 998.1 on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas scale. A relative measure of 1,000 is considered neutral. An area with an index value less than 1,000 is more socio-economically disadvantaged while an area with a rank above 1,000 is considered less disadvantaged. The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas ranking for other local government areas across Gippsland highlights the differences in disadvantage across the region.

Bass Coast	977.5
Baw Baw	998.1
East Gippsland	958.2
Latrobe	937.6
South Gippsland	999.5
Wellington	974.1

## Baw Baw Shire Disability Action Plan 2013-17

The table below indicates local areas of Baw Baw Shire and the Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage.

<b>Baw Baw Shire's small areas and benchmark areas</b>	
<b>Area</b>	<b>2011 index</b>
Drouin - Drouin East	975.1
Tanjil South - Willow Grove and District	978.0
Longwarry - Labertouche - Longwarry North	981.1
Warragul - Warragul West	993.3
Trafalgar - Trafalgar East	998.0
Baw Baw Shire	998.1
Neerim South - Noojee and District	1,008.9
Victoria	1,009.6
Yarragon - Darnum - Nilma	1,017.2
Thorpdale - Drouin South and District	1,038.5
Jindivick - Buln Buln and District	1,053.2

(Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011)

## The Disability Action Plan

This Disability Action Plan is a strategic framework that will be implemented over the four year period between 2013 and 2017. It aims to address the structural, attitudinal and cultural barriers people with a disability experience when participating in community life. It aims to eliminate discrimination for people with a disability who use services, facilities and infrastructure provided by the Council, or are current or prospective employees of Council.

The Disability Action Plan consists of four key objectives each supported by a series of objectives that will turn each objective into reality.

- Accessible Community *Reduce barriers to people with disabilities accessing goods, services and facilities*
- Inclusive Community *Ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities to participate in lifestyle choices across the Shire.*
- Informed Community *Ensure communication works two ways to empower all.*
- Equitable Community *Ensure that all people are able to gain equitable access to appropriate and responsive services*

## Key Objective 1: Accessible Community

Goal: *Reduce barriers to people with disabilities accessing goods, services and facilities*

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Footpath Trading Policy.</b> Policy to be developed to support the safe use of footpaths by people of all abilities across the Shire. Provide information and support to local traders through resources, information sessions and events for business.</p>	<p>Local Laws/Economic Development</p>	<p>Implementation of policy. Provide information sessions on access and resources e.g. 'Good Access is Good Business'</p>	<p>June 2014 Annual – evaluation Annual – information sessions and mail outs</p>
<p><b>Accessible Parking Priority Report.</b> Using existing audit report to develop a priority list of accessible car parking places that do not meet AS 2890.</p>	<p>Local Laws</p>	<p>Completion of priority report to identify issues and assist in upgrade of accessible parking</p>	<p>December 2014</p>

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Accessible Parking Upgrade.</b> Audit results to be used to assist in upgrading all accessible parking bays to ensure compliance with AS 2890</p>	<p>Infrastructure</p>	<p>Non compliant parking bays from audit results to be checked for compliance with AS 2890. Works to be completed to ensure compliance where practical.</p>	<p>June 2017 Annual evaluation upon completion of works</p>
<p><b>Improved access to public transport and taxi services.</b> Development of Talking Taxi program and Pictorial Bus Timetables to assist people with a disability</p>	<p>Rural Access</p>	<p>Development of resources to be available on website and in hard copy. Yearly updates and evaluations to be conducted.</p>	<p>March 2015 Annual-updates and improvements</p>

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Development of Access Design Guidelines in accordance with Australian Standard 1428 and Access to Premises Standard 2010.</b> Building guidelines to be developed for all new Council facilities to help identify the key access issues and elements that should be considered in order to provide the highest level of access possible for all users, including people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Planning/ Rural Access</p>	<p>Development of guidelines.</p>	<p>December 2016</p>

## Key Objective 2: Inclusive Community

Goal: *Ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities to participate in lifestyle choices across the Shire.*

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Mobility Maps.</b> Development of mobility maps for five towns in Shire to provide accessible options for town centres to the community</p>	<p>Rural Access</p>	<p>Completion of maps.                      Distribution of maps to Disability Permit holders upon renewal.                      Annual report on number of hard copy maps distributed.                      Feedback from access issues identified to be raised with appropriate department</p>	<p>December 2013                      2014 – maps to be included with renewals for Disability Parking Permits.                      Ongoing – access issues</p>

Baw Baw Shire Disability Action Plan 2013-17

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<b>Mobility Maps.</b> Development of maps in electronic and hard copy format to be available to the public.	Rural Access	Printing and distribution of maps to appropriate outlets and availability online.	March 2014
<b>Provide community with up to date information on inclusive activities.</b> Weekly newsletter to be developed and distributed to subscribers and made available on website	Rural Access/Communications	Development and distribution of newsletter. Extension of database and distribution to be evaluated annually.	June 2013 – newsletter June 2014 – newsletter available on web Ongoing
<b>Develop an Inclusive Event Guide.</b> Inclusive Event Guide to be developed and made available to all staff to assist in planning of Council events and take into consideration the requirements of people with a disability	Rural Access	Development of event guide, followed by annual training/information sessions for staff	June 2015 Annual - training

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Promotion of Accessible Tourism in Baw Baw.</b> Distribute Gippsland Accessible Tourism plan and brochure to businesses across the Shire. Provide support and assistance to businesses to become more inclusive.</p>	<p>Tourism Officer</p>	<p>Distribution of plan and brochure. Annual monitoring of barriers and issues identified.</p>	<p>2014 and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Promote Awareness Through Events.</b> Annual events to be held for Social Inclusion Week and International Day of People with Disability to promote inclusion for people with a disability. Link to other community events to provide resources and information to the community.</p>	<p>Rural Access/ Community Development</p>	<p>Development and evaluation of annual events. Attendance at community events</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

### Key Objective 3: Informed Community

Goal: *Ensure communication works two ways to empower all.*

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Inform businesses to promote access for all.</b> Promotion of Good Access is Good Business to be held in conjunction with information sessions and to provide businesses with access to grants to improve access.</p>	<p>Economic Development/ Rural Access</p>	<p>Evaluation and attendance at training sessions. Businesses that have made adjustments to enhance physical access.</p>	<p>Ongoing A minimum of one training session to be held each year commencing 2014</p>
<p><b>Good Access is Good Business Awards.</b> Develop an inclusive business award to be included in the annual Baw Baw Shire Business Awards</p>	<p>Economic Development/ Rural Access</p>	<p>Introduction of new category in business awards.</p>	<p>June 2014 Annual case studies to be provided from awards</p>

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Council Website.</b> Improve access to information and communication on website and information considering the requirements of people with a disability</p>	<p>Communications/ Web Champions</p>	<p>Upgrading of website to ensure accessibility based on W3C (Web Accessibility Initiative guidelines). Training provided to Web Champions.</p>	<p>June 2014 Annual training for Web Champions</p>
<p><b>Upgrade Council Signage.</b> Conduct audit of Council signage at all offices and install new signage where required to ensure access for all and compliance with Australian Standard 1428 Design for Access and Mobility.</p>	<p>Facilities Maintenance/ Depot/Communications</p>	<p>Audit of signage to identify where new and improved signage is required.</p>	<p>December 2014 - Audit December 2016 – Upgrade of signage as required Annual report on progress of new signage.</p>

Baw Baw Shire Disability Action Plan 2013-17

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Access and Disability Webpage.</b> Relevant Council departments to provide information and links to access and disability for webpage.</p>	<p>All departments/Communications/Web Champions</p>	<p>Monitoring of website through number of page visits on a six monthly basis for updates</p>	<p>June 2014 Annual-ongoing</p>

### Key Objective 4: Equitable Community

Goal: *Ensure that all people are able to gain equitable access to appropriate and responsive services*

Action	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>All new staff to receive disability awareness training.</b> Extend the Council corporate induction program to include a disability awareness session</p>	<p>Organisational Development/ Rural Access</p>	<p>Development and delivery of sessions to all new staff. Advocate for disability awareness to be included on agendas of department meetings. Introduction of annual staff award in recognition of best inclusive practice.</p>	<p>2013 – training 2015-staff award Advocacy-ongoing</p>

Actions	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>All Council staff and Councillors to be provided with disability awareness training.</b> Provide extra training sessions in addition to corporate induction program</p>	<p>Organisational development</p>	<p>Attendances at sessions to be monitored to ensure all attend. Bi-monthly induction for new staff to include disability awareness training module.</p>	<p>December 2014 Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Customer Service Training.</b> Annual training session to be provided to all customer staff on updated disability issues to ensure highest level of service</p>	<p>Customer Service/Rural Access</p>	<p>Development, delivery and evaluation of sessions</p>	<p>Annually to 2017</p>

Actions	Responsible Officer/ Department	Measures	Timing
<p><b>Acceptance of Carer and Companion Cards.</b> Promote and encourage the acceptance of Carer and Companion Cards at all Council owned facilities. Expansion and promotion of program to attract the participation of local business.</p>	<p>Rural Access/Recreation /Arts Centre</p>	<p>Evaluation of Shire facilities accepting Carer and Companion Cards. Annual report to monitor number of facilities/business involved in programs.</p>	<p>June 2015 and ongoing for new facilities and business</p>
<p><b>Address Barriers to Paid Employment for People with a Disability.</b> Review of job application process to be conducted to ensure access and equity for all.</p>	<p>Organisational Development</p>	<p>Evaluation and implementation of any changes as required.</p>	<p>December 2015 and ongoing</p>
<p><b>Development of Reasonable Adjustment Policy.</b> Develop a policy to incorporate work place changes that are required to employ a person with a disability.</p>	<p>Organisational Development</p>	<p>Development and implementation of policy.</p>	<p>March 2015</p>

## **Review and Evaluation**

This plan will be subject to an annual review and reporting process to ensure actions are incorporated into the work plans of Council business units. An annual report for Council will be produced in April each year in accordance with the Disability Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference, and quarterly progress reports provided to the Disability Advisory Committee. Responsible departments will be required to report on their actions including evaluations where required. This plan is subject to changes on an annual basis due to changing circumstances including policy, legislation and resources available.

The Disability Advisory Committee will be engaged as a resource in the annual review and evaluation process. Achievements of the plan will be documented and case studies shared with the community to highlight Council's ongoing commitment to access and inclusion for people with a disability.