



13 March 2015

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Supports Strategic Advice  
National Disability Insurance Agency  
Level 1, 43-45 Brougham Street  
GEELONG VIC 3220

Ask for: Natalie Walker  
Phone: 9932 1096  
Our Ref: A2091546

Dear Ms Green,

**Hobsons Bay City Council submission regarding the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Policy Framework**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to provide feedback on the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Policy Framework.

Hobsons Bay City Council is supportive of the direction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme's (NDIS) framework for Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC). We recognise its substantial potential to complement Council's current work, especially in relation to Council's Metro Access and Inclusion Officer role, a project unique to Victorian Councils funded via the Victorian Government through the Community Building Program (CBP).

People with disability represent approximately 17 per cent (15,656 people) of the total Hobsons Bay population, with the rate of disability increasing with age. The range of disabilities that people can experience is broad and can include physical, intellectual, psychiatric, neurological, learning and sensory disabilities. The majority of people with disability in Hobsons Bay have a physical disability and over a quarter identify as having a disability of a profound or severe nature.

The state and federal governments estimate that the incidence of all disabilities is set to increase primarily due to population growth, ageing and increased life expectancy. People with disabilities in Hobsons Bay have told Council that they want the things that everyone else in the community takes for granted. They want to go to school and work, get married, go on holidays, and have access to shops and restaurants. Most importantly people with disabilities in Hobsons Bay want to be accepted and want the opportunity to live a spontaneous life.

Through the Victorian Government funded Community Building Program the Metro Access and Inclusion Officer within Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to, and has access to be able to, work across all Council departments to integrate and support organisational activities and developments across the economic, social, natural and physical environments to ensure they are accessible for all.

Within the suggested ILC framework, five key themes have been identified. These themes align with Councils current work within disability, with Hobsons Bay City Council already playing either a supporting or lead role. This is further identified below.

1. Information, Linkages and Referrals

Council provides a support role with this theme through the delivery of Home and Community Care Services (HACC). The Metro Access and Inclusion Officer and other staff also promote local services and community groups through Council websites, social media, brochures, networks and other contact points with clients and community members.

2. Capacity building for mainstream services

A key role for the Metro Access and Inclusion Officer within Council is to build relationships with mainstream services including health, recreation, public transport, employment and education opportunities to ensure they are inclusive of people with disabilities. Being situated in Council is a major lever for this work as local governments often play a key service delivery role as well as having strong relationships with local services and community.

3. Community awareness and capacity building

Again this is a key role for the Metro Access and Inclusion Officer. Given the position of the role within Council the Metro Access Officer is able to integrate disability access and inclusion within arts and events, health promotion programs, economic development strategies, community consultations, community training sessions, as well as infrastructure and technology that council implement.

4. Individual capacity building

Council provides a support role within this theme through the delivery of Home and Community Care Services and the development of personalised client care plans. In addition Council coordinates a range of parent break programs including school holiday programs for young people with disability.

5. Local area co-ordination (LAC)

Council provides a support role within this theme through involvement in regional networks as well as providing municipal wide research, data and a vision for future directions via a municipal wide Disability Action Plan.

Over the last 11 years, through the CBP, Council has a proven track record of successful initiatives that align with the ILC's goals, intent and expectations. Due to Metro Access Officers being situated in local governments, the access to cross departments has resulted in the return on investment being significant and substantial, including the construction of buildings, footpaths and community infrastructure that goes beyond minimal DDA compliance, strengthened services and communication practices, integration of disability within mainstream arts and cultural events, and an increased voice for people with disability, family and carers.

In 2013 the state government defunded Access All Abilities (AAA) Officers (a program similar to Metro Access focused on recreation) to become a centralised state role. This change has resulted in loss of connection to local opportunities, relationships with community recreation groups, loss of skill development, loss of support within Council's recreation roles, and loss of connections between community and local recreation options.

Metro Access and Inclusion Officers are a crucial resource within councils. Before NDIS implement the ILC framework, Council would strongly suggest that the Victorian Metro Access and Inclusion model be considered and or incorporated into the implementation of the framework.

Should you wish to discuss this further please contact Natalie Walker, Director Strategic Development on 9932 1096 or [nwalker@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](mailto:nwalker@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Eddy", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Eddy  
**Chief Executive Officer**