



18 July 2018

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Office of Disability
50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
email: ofd@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Ask for: Kathleen McClusky
Phone: 9932 1004
Our Ref: A2905488

Dear Office of Disability,

**Department of Health and Human Services Draft Disability Action Plan 2018-20
Submission**

Hobsons Bay City Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback for consideration as part of the development of the next Department of Health and Humans Services Disability Action Plan 2018-20.

Council is committed to working towards achieving a fully accessible and inclusive municipality where all residents, regardless of their ability, can reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. This requires collaboration from all levels of government, local and regional stakeholders, and the community.

Please find attached Council's submission to the draft Disability Action Plan 2018-20. We look forward to the outcome of the consultation and the implementation of the Plan.

If you would like to discuss this submission further, please contact Kathleen McClusky, Manager Strategy and Advocacy on 9932 1004 or email kmccclusky@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Millard'.

Bill Millard
Director Strategic Development



Draft Disability Action Plan 2018-20

The City of Hobsons Bay covers an area of 64 square kilometres, extending seven to 20 kilometres south-west of Melbourne's central business district. The current population is estimated to be just over 95,000 people of which approximately 18.5 per cent have a disability.

People with a disability 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 a disability in Hobsons Bay want to be accepted, want the opportunity to be spontaneous, and the chance to participate and contribute to community life. In order to be able to achieve this they require others in the community to share their vision.

Overall

Overall the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Disability Action Plan 2018-20 is an effective document to articulate the department's commitment towards improving the lives of people with a disability, their family and carers, improving workplace, service and program outcomes.

The two focus areas, building internal departmental capability and maximising accessibility of service delivery, succinctly articulate some of the key barriers to full participation. These are followed with well identified actions, timeframes and monitoring mechanisms.

Priorities and action areas

Positive change will occur faster when unique needs and diverse circumstances are accounted for up front. The concept of 'Designing for Diversity' included in the draft Plan provides a platform for all levels of government and other sectors to start questioning service delivery and service planning to ensure that the needs of the whole community are met from the outset in everything we do.

In relation to accessibility, Council recently endorsed its Universal Design Policy Statement 2017 which sets out the regulatory framework for developing buildings and public infrastructure that are accessible for all. The policy builds an understanding and a process amongst Council departments demonstrating commitment and leadership to accessible places and spaces. It is encouraging to see the draft plan also embraces Universal Design; applying it across technology, property and communication.

In relation to employment of people with a disability, it is pleasing to see the commitment and targets set across the State Government as well as the key actions that the department are doing to increase employment opportunities. This is something that many organisations and businesses still struggle to know where to start. Hopefully learnings from the department's employment strategy can be shared with others to build capacity of the broader sector.



Opportunities for improvement

Overall the draft Plan encompasses key priorities and actions areas, some highlighted above, others such as advocacy, Changing Places, violence and abuse prevention, sport and recreation, housing, and service capacity building, all of which will work towards improving wellbeing for people with a disability.

The department's Office for Disability is responsible for coordinating efforts across the State Government to advance the inclusion of people with a disability in all aspects of life. Disability cannot be a standalone strategy or issue. Inclusion needs to be everyone's business therefore integrated across all government departments. Within the draft Plan it is difficult to understand how the department is going to work across the State Government sectors, transferring the Office of Disability's knowledge and skills to positively influencing and build the capacity of other areas of Government. It is recommended that this element be strengthened within the Plan.