

Universal Design Policy Statement

Council buildings and the public realm
September 2017



Acknowledgements

September 2017

This policy statement was compiled by the Hobsons Bay Strategy and Advocacy Department with guidance sought from Allen Kong Architect Pty Ltd. For further information contact the Hobsons Bay City Council on 9932 1000 www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

Council acknowledges all language groups of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of these municipal lands. We recognise the first people's relationship to this land and offer our respect to their elders past and present.

Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with *the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to 20 fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

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Background

Hobsons Bay 2030, the community's long term vision for the municipality states that by 2030, embracing our heritage, environment and diversity, we – the community of Hobsons Bay – will be an inclusive, empowered, sustainable and visionary community, led and supported by a progressive Council of excellence.

Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to valuing the wellbeing of our people and our place now and into the future. Providing a safe, clean, accessible and connected municipality, which values diversity, protects its heritage and environment, fosters a strong sense of community and provides opportunities to achieve the best possible health and wellbeing. A place that people are proud to call home.

In relation to accessibility, Council is 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. In order to achieve this, Council is reviewing buildings and public spaces to ensure they are accessible for all, including older people, people with a disability, children, prams users, people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and people with low literacy.

People with a disability represent approximately 17 per cent (15,769 people) of the total Hobsons Bay population. Whilst disability can impact individuals in many different forms, some of the largest impacts on people with a disability are physical barriers within the built and natural environment. These barriers can restrict their ability to conduct their lives in a spontaneous and unplanned manner. If a community is physically accessible for people with a disability, there is increased access for all community members.

As outlined in Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-17, people with a disability, their families and carers, have told Council that accessing places and spaces within Hobsons Bay is still an issue. They also stated that some shops, restaurants, playgrounds and beaches continue to be inaccessible. These barriers not only put people with a disability and their families at a greater disadvantage, but also impact other community members such as children, older people, people who have low literacy levels and pram users.

Currently Council builds new buildings, and buildings undergoing significant upgrades or alterations, to comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA), which requires compliance with a range of access provisions under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). These standards, however, are only minimum requirements and do not facilitate access for all.

The definition of Universal Design is: "The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design" (Ron Mace et al, 1997).

Council is committed to exceeding minimum standards to include Universal Design principles when building new buildings, undertaking significant upgrades to existing buildings, the public realm, and where possible during minor upgrades and maintenance works to existing buildings. In addition, Council will work with private developers and businesses to encourage the use of Universal Design principles as well as advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments to include the principles of Universal Design into relevant regulatory frameworks.

Vision

Through Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-17, Council is working towards the vision of "achieving a fully accessible and inclusive municipality where all residents, regardless of their ability, can reach their full potential".

The Universal Design Policy Statement for Council buildings and the public realm (the Policy Statement), aims to support Council in achieving its vision through ensuring Universal Design principles are included in:

- new buildings
- buildings undergoing significant upgrade
- retrofits of existing buildings
- infrastructure, features and open spaces within the public realm

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy Statement is to provide Council with guidance on how Council buildings and the public realm can improve access through the use of the Universal Design principles. The Policy Statement:

- demonstrates Council's commitment and leadership to accessible places and open spaces and encourages private developers and businesses to implement a similar approach
- sets out the regulatory framework for developing Council's buildings and public infrastructure that are accessible for all
- builds an understanding and a process amongst Council departments for the implementation of the principles of Universal Design when planning, building or redesigning Council buildings and public spaces in order to continually improve accessibility

Scope

The Policy Statement aligns with the principles of Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-17 and Hobsons Bay 2030, the community's long term vision for the municipality. This statement also provides a targeted approach to Council's role in creating accessible public places and spaces.

The Policy Statement only includes the built environment and public realm owned and or managed by Council. It is acknowledged that it is also important to consider other dimensions of access such as the social, communication and information systems. These elements are included within the principles of Universal Design and within Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-17.

While the Policy Statement does not look at the built environment outside of Council's direct influence, it does address Council's role in advocacy, calling on the Victorian and Australian Governments, as well as private developers to increase access for all.

In order for this policy statement to be implemented, Council will develop a priority list of

Universal Design interventions and investments based on the capital works and assets and maintenance renewal works to be implemented within a realistic timeframe. It is recognised this policy statement sets a vision and aim for Council to work towards upgrading all Council buildings to meet the principles of Universal Design will be an ongoing process.

What is Universal Design?

Definition

Universal Design is a philosophy and not a standard. It is a set of principles developed by architects, product designers, engineers and environmental design researchers to support and guide designers of built environments, products and communications. It is defined as:

“The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.” (Ron Mace et al, 1997)

Principles of Universal Design

Universal Design consists of seven guiding principles. The principles can be applied to evaluate existing designs, guide the design process and educate both designers and consumers about the characteristics of more usable products and environments. The principles are:

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive use
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance of error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use

Table 1 below articulates the definition for each of the principles as well as corresponding guidelines.

Table 1 The seven principles of Universal Design (Ron Mace et al, 1997)

Universal Design Principle	Definition	Guidelines
1. Equitable use	The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not • avoid segregating or stigmatising any users • provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users • make the design appealing to all users
2. Flexibility in use	The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing choice in methods of use • accommodate right- or left-handed access and use • facilitate the user's accuracy and precision • provide adaptability to the user's pace
3. Simple and intuitive use	Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate unnecessary complexity • be consistent with user expectations and intuition • accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills • arrange information consistent with its importance • provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion
4. Perceptible information	The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information • provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings • maximise "legibility" of essential information • differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e. make it easy to give instructions or directions) • provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations
5. Tolerance for error	The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrange elements to minimise hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded • provide warnings of hazards and errors • provide fail safe features • discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance
6. Low physical effort	The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow user to maintain a neutral body position • use reasonable operating forces • minimise repetitive actions • minimise sustained physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use	Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user • make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user • accommodate variations in hand and grip size • provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance

What is the cost of Universal Design?

It is a common misconception that Universal Design will inflate budgets. In most cases Universal Design will add no or minimal additional costs, especially when it is addressed during planning, design and construction.

A number of studies indicate that the costs for incorporating Universal Design for private dwellings is as little as half to one per cent and for new public buildings or facilities approximately one to two per cent if planned, designed and implemented from the outset.

Another misconception relating to the cost of incorporating Universal Design is how much extra physical space is required. In many cases, it only requires rearranging and planning within existing space.

Implementing Universal Design principles can save costs, particularly in the long run, by lessening the dependence on mechanical features that require maintenance such as lifts, or retrofitting features at a later date to comply with legislation and meet community needs. Universal Design allows for greater flexibility to respond to demographic shifts, with its advantage to be accessible for all ages and abilities.

The cost of not incorporating Universal Design can be significant. Inaccessible environments limit economic, education, health, social and other opportunities for people with a disability, older people, young people, people with low literacy, and people with prams, making them more dependent on others and or socially excluded.

If Universal Design features and principles are included from the outset of a project, the building will allow access for all community members, regardless of their age and ability.

Regulatory framework

Council has a responsibility under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) to provide equitable dignified access to goods, services and premises used by the public.

There are a suite of regulations which buildings and developments must and or are encouraged to implement. These regulations are continuously being reviewed and updated. The below list of regulatory documents at the federal, state and local level were in place during the development of this policy statement.

Australian Government

Legal and regulatory documents which outline access requirements for the built environment in Australia are:

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (Premises Standards)
- National Construction Code Series (NCC), Building Code of Australia (BCA)
- Australian and New Zealand Standards, current edition:

- AS1428.1-2009 Design for access and mobility Part 1: General requirements for access – New building work
- AS1428.2-1992 (R2015) Design for access and mobility Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements – Buildings and facilities
- AS1428.3-1992 Design for access and mobility Part 3: Requirements for children and adolescents with physical disabilities
- AS/NZS 1428.4.1:2009 Design for access and mobility Part 4.1: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment-tactile ground surface indicators
- AS1428.5-2010 Design for access and mobility Part 5: Communication for people who are deaf or hearing impaired
- AS1735.12-1999 Lifts, escalators and moving walks Part 12: Facilities for persons with disabilities
- AS/NZS 2890.6:2009 Parking facilities Part 6: Off-street parking for people with disabilities

Draft Australian Standards include:

- DR AS1428.4.2:2015 Design for access and mobility Part 4.2: Wayfinding

Victorian Government

In addition to the federal regulations, buildings in Victoria must also comply with the Victorian legislation including:

- *The Building Act 1993*
- *The Building Regulations 2006*

Under the above Victorian legislation, new buildings and renovations to buildings which require a building permit must comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA). The BCA encompasses compliance with the Premises Standards for new buildings and some renovated buildings. It includes requirements to adhere to some parts of the above listed Australian and New Zealand Standards.

Hobsons Bay City Council

Council has a responsibility under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA), to provide equitable dignified access to goods, services and premises used by the public. In addition to this, Council is committed to implementing the principles of Universal Design, exceeding minimum compliance for new and substantially renovated Council owned buildings and public spaces, creating accessibility for all ages and abilities.

This aligns with Council's strategic objectives and vision in Hobsons Bay 2030, the Council Plan 2017-21 as well as the Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-17. In addition, Council will continue to encourage developers and other organisations, and educate the community to implement the principles of Universal Design when constructing and/or undertaking works to private dwellings and businesses. Consideration will be given to incorporating more specific Universal Design requirements in the Hobsons Bay Planning Scheme to reflect Council's commitment.

Implementing Universal Design

The suite of Australian Standards define the national approach to developing accessible environments and are under constant revision. As Figure 1 below indicates, under the current Australian regulations, new buildings that require a building permit to complete works (both public and private) have to comply with BCA. The BCA requires compliance with a range of access provisions under the Premises Standard of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA), however these provisions do not allow access for all as they are the minimum access requirements.

For example, for a new building to comply with the BCA only specific circulation routes are required to comply with AS1428.1, rather than all circulation routes. Similarly with door widths, door furniture, and other elements, compliance with AS1428.2 is not required. In addition, there are currently no standards that ensure accessible design for people with acquired brain injury or dementia.

Furthermore, the Australian Standards do not include all elements of Universal Design, what the principles of Universal Design are or how to implement them. Given this gap, the Australian Standards in isolation do not provide the access requirements needed to ensure that Council buildings and public realm are accessible for all community members. Therefore, in order to reach full access, all three levels of compliance need to be addressed in the planning stages.

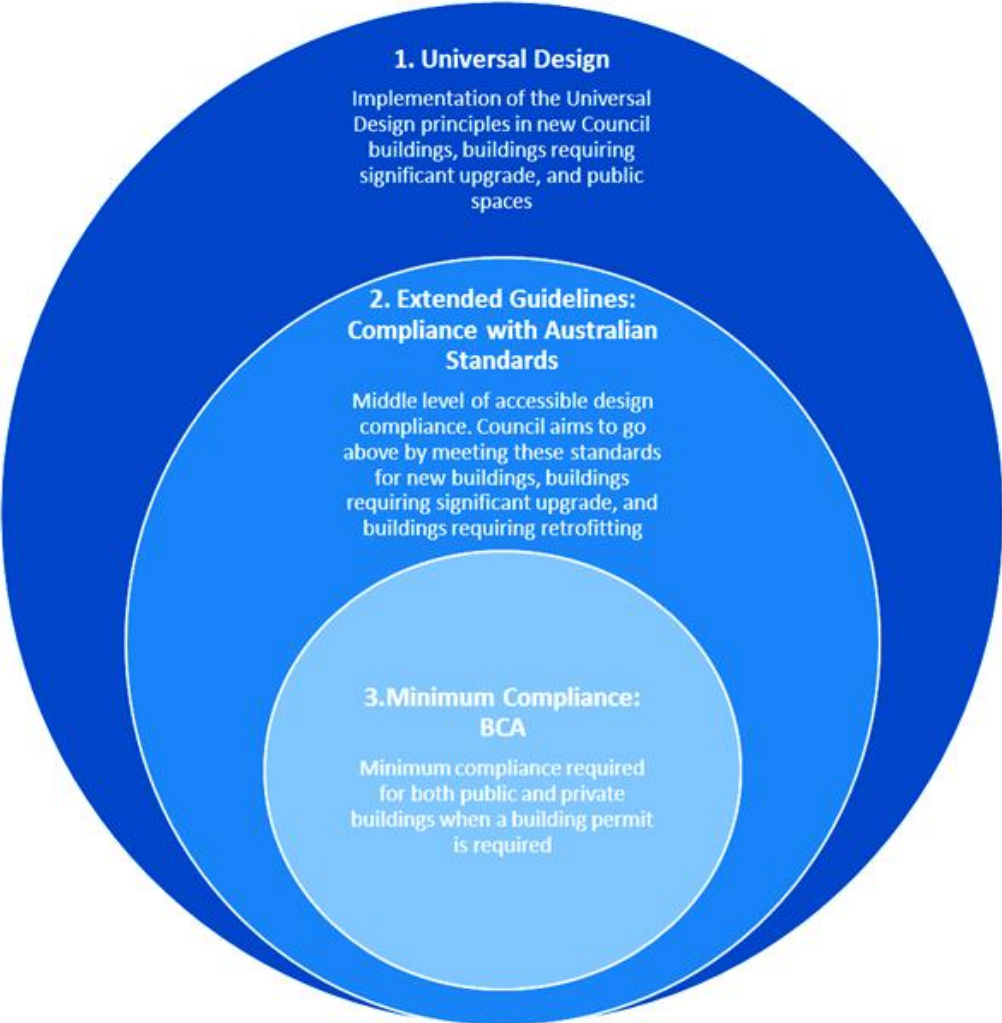


Figure 1 Levels of design compliance

Application of Universal Design

To meet Council's aim for applying Universal Design in its buildings and public realm, Council will:

1. Ensure the principles of Universal Design are applied at the outset of every new Council building, buildings requiring significant upgrade, upgrades to existing Council owned buildings (retrofitting) and open spaces within the public realm
2. Ensure the project group is required to consider the need for engaging an accredited access adviser at the outset of every works project to assist in establishing the current requirements and opportunities for incorporating Universal Design
3. Refer to the priority features contained in this Policy Statement

To assist with implementing Universal Design, Council is committed to ensuring specific features are considered within new buildings and buildings requiring significant upgrades, and the public realm.

While Council acknowledges the level of works required on every project will differ, Council aims to incorporate the features described in Tables 2 to 5 highlighted in the following sections specifically as they relate to new buildings, buildings requiring significant upgrades, buildings requiring retrofits, and the public realm.

New Council buildings and buildings requiring significant upgrades

Below is a summary of features that Council aims to ensure are incorporated in new buildings or significant upgrades to buildings. This applies to projects with a budget **\$300,000 and above**. The project group is required to engage an accredited access advisor at the outset.

Table 2. Universal Design features required within new buildings and buildings requiring significant upgrades

Universal Design Feature	Description of improvements
Car parking	Provide the appropriate number of spaces as per building type and install shared areas where there are two or more dedicated parking spaces for people with disabilities. (As per AS 2890.6:2009 Parking facilities Part 6: Off-street parking for people with disabilities)
Continuous accessible path of travel	Provide a safe, continuous step-free accessible path of travel from transport set down points, accessible parking and public streets or walkways to the accessible building entrance and through the building. (As per AS1428.1 – 2009 CI 6)
Ground and floor surfaces	A continuous accessible path of travel shall have a slip resistant surface. Ensure abutting surfaces have a smooth transition, carpet to have reduced level pile height, and gratings on walking surfaces are reduced but where required have complying opening sizes. (As per AS1428.1 – 2009)

Universal Design Feature	Description of improvements
Circulation spaces	Additional allowances for increased space for stationary wheelchairs, turning wheelchairs, width of path of travel and passing space. (As per AS1428.1 – 2009 for passing and turning spaces, and add 200mm for width of path of travel)
Signage and way finding	Provide signage at an appropriate height that incorporates Braille and tactile markings, luminance contrast and appropriate font styles and sizes for viewing by all people. (As per AS1428.1-2009 CI 8 and AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 17)
Stairways	Provide stairways, if required, as an alternative to ramps and lifts and include features designed to provide independent access for some people with mobility impairments including modification of the configuration of the steps, warning strips on nosing of steps and handrails on both sides extending past the steps with a continuous gripping surface. (As per AS1428.1 – 2009 CI 11, with tread and riser dimensions as per AS1428.2 – 1992)
Handrails and grab rails	Handrails shall have a circular or elliptical profile, be securely fixed, have extensions and turn downs, a continuous gripping surface, and clearance between the grab rail and the adjacent wall surface. (As per AS1428.1 – 2009 CI 12)
Doorways and doors	Ensuring an increased clear opening of doorways, circulation spaces at doorways, luminance contrast and accessible door controls. (As per AS1428.1 – 2009 CI 13)
Controls	Controls and operating mechanisms, i.e. handles and switches, shall be operable with one hand and shall not require tight grasping, pinching or twisting of the wrist. (As per AS1428.1-2009 CI 13.5 and 14 and AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 23)
Contrasts	Provide luminance contrast to fixtures, fittings, poles, doors, doorways, signage and way finding, handrails, changes in surfaces and clear paths of travel to maximise accessibility for people with a vision impairment. (As defined in AS1428.1-2009 CI 4.11)
Accessible change room	Provide accessible change rooms which include an accessible WC, adult change table and hoist. (As per Changing Places - Transforming Lives (Information Kit) November 2013)
Auditorium and assembly areas	Provide hearing augmentation in auditoriums, and provide a podium or stage which is accessible via a ramp, with space for a wheelchair and all controls and facilities to be usable by a seated person. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 26)
Reach ranges	To provide shelves and benches at an appropriate location for both ambulant people with disabilities and wheelchair users. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 22)
Furniture and fitments	Provide tables, worktops, benches and counters at an appropriate height from the finished floor and clearance beneath the unit. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 24)
Viewing ranges	Ensure all features are within comfortable common viewing zone. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 25)
Vending machines, automated library return chutes and similar services	Provide access at an appropriate height, with knee and foot clearance and sufficient circulation space, using controls requiring minimal force, which are easily identifiable by touch and sight and have a tactile surface to facilitate use by a person with a vision-impairment. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 29)

Universal Design Feature	Description of improvements
Telephones	Where public phones are provided within Council owned facilities, at least one phone shall be provided at an accessible floor level, with clear space in front of the phone and sufficient circulation space, with all operable parts within the common reach zone, while being equipped with the appropriate controls for people with a hearing impairment. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 30)
Letter boxes	Ensure sufficient circulation space is provided at the front of the letter box and the operative components are within the common reach zone. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 CI 31)
Kitchens and laundries	There is no typical kitchen or laundry for people with disabilities, each has to be specifically designed for the users of the facility, now and into the future. Consultation with users must be completed to determine the most appropriate specifications to follow for each facility. (As per AS1428.2 – 1992 Appendix A)
Hearing augmentation	Provide assistive listening systems to aid people with hearing impairment at counters connected with service provision to the public, in meeting areas seating more than five participants (including auditoria, sporting venues etc.), in lifts, at payphones, at intercommunication and emergency warning systems, and at security barriers (e.g. library exits). (As per AS1428.5 – 2010)

Upgrades to existing Council owned buildings (retrofitting)

Below is a list of key features that Council aims to upgrade in Council owned buildings through Council's capital works program for minor capital works, building alterations and maintenance **below \$300,000**. The project group is required to consider to engage an accredited access adviser at the outset.

Table 3. Universal Design features required within existing buildings requiring upgrades (retrofitting)

Universal Design Feature	Description of improvements
Car parking	Ensure the appropriate number of accessible parking spaces are provided and displayed. (As per Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010 - table D3.5)
Continuous accessible path of travel	Provide a safe, continuous step-free accessible path of travel from transport set down points, accessible parking, and public streets or walkways to the accessible building entrance. (As per AS1428.1 – 2009 Design for access and mobility - general requirements for access - New building work)
Accessible entrance	Provide a safe, slip resistant, wide, level, step free access with self opening doors for use by all people. (As per AS1428.1 - 2009 Design for access and mobility - general requirements for access - New building work)

Universal Design Feature	Description of improvements
Unisex accessible toilet	Provide an accessible toilet if one does not currently exist. (As per AS1428.1 - 2009 Design for access and mobility - general requirements for access - New building work)
Luminance contrast	Provide luminance contrasts on steps, doorways, fixtures and fittings, and changes in surface to assist with a clear path of travel. (As per AS1428.1 - 2009 Design for access and mobility - general requirements for access - New building work)
Signage and way finding	Provide signage and way finding elements that are clear, concise, and easy to read and display the blue international symbol for access, as appropriate (include Braille and tactile markings where appropriate). (As per AS1428.1 - 2009 Design for access and mobility - general requirements for access - New building work)

Public realm

Public realm refers to all external spaces accessible to the public that are owned or managed by Council. Council is directly responsible for the planning, design, improvement and maintenance of specific aspects of the public realm such as residential streetscapes, activity centres, parks, open space, shared pathways and playgrounds.

Barriers within the natural environment restrict people with a disability and their families to conduct their lives in a spontaneous and unplanned manner. Where possible Council will endeavour to make the local natural environment accessible for all.

At the time of writing this Policy Statement Council's Open Space Strategy was under development. A key priority action of this strategy will be to develop Urban Design Guidelines and an Integrated Design Manual that will articulate the specific design standards for fixtures and types of infrastructure in the public realm. This work is proposed to be undertaken in 2018-19, following the adoption of the Open Space Strategy.

This Policy Statement will apply the principles below in the design of parks, reserves and play spaces as well as guide the development of design standards to ensure all types of furniture, fixtures and pavements surfaces within the public realm are appropriately designed to support access for all.

Parks and reserves

While the size, use and level of amenity for each park or reserve may vary, the following key principles will be considered when designing for improved or new open spaces.

Table 4. Universal Design principles within parks and reserves

Universal Design Principle	Description of improvements
Connections	All elements within parks and gardens should be connected via a continuous accessible path of travel, for example, car parking, toilets, buildings, play areas, drinking fountains and seating
Park approach and entry	Parks and gardens require approach routes for both vehicles and pedestrians. These should be well signed with entry points that users can easily find. Entry points should be easily identifiable and incorporate effective contrasts to the background area
Pathways	Continuous accessible paths of travel free from obstacles should be provided to all installations in parks and gardens including all play spaces and activities. They should incorporate alternatives to steps, be firm, stable and slip resistant and avoid excessive slopes and cross falls wherever possible. Ramps with appropriate gradients, kerbs, handrails, landing and resting points should be provided where slopes cannot be avoided
Scenic vista and observation areas	Observation areas along paths should be designed so that people who stop to enjoy the scene do not obstruct the path. Spaces should be provided beside, but connected to the path, for effective use by everyone
Furniture and resting places	Rest and picnic areas should include seating with backs and armrests, tables with extended ends or clear spaces to allow for a person using a wheelchair to move underneath or to clip on a child restraint
Barbecues	Barbecues must be useable by everyone with controls at the front of the hot plate. A level bench top next to the hotplate must be provided. Barbecues should be located off, but connected to, a continuous accessible path of travel, as well as being close to other important facilities such as toilets and play spaces
Shade and shelters	Where picnic and rest areas incorporate structures, such as a rotunda, there should be level or step free access available, as an alternative to stairs
Toilets	If toilets and change rooms are provided they should be available for use by everyone. In addition to male and female areas, unisex accessible toilets, showers and change rooms are required as these can be effectively used by children as well as adults and carers, including people with a range of access challenges
Drinking water access	The availability of drinking water for both people and animals is important. Children and adults as well as people using assistance animals will require access to drinking fountains, bowls or other ways of obtaining drinking water. Drinking fountains that are easy to reach, have large lever handles for operation and incorporate a low level drinking bowl for an assistance animal support access for everyone. A firm, slip resistant surface around the installation to support access is also important

Universal Design Principle	Description of improvements
Park signage	It is important to ensure that everyone can effectively interpret and use the different types of signage within the environment. Accessible signage incorporates the positive elements of traditional signage as well as alternatives such as Braille, tactile and audio elements and gives consideration to a number of other key components that impact on accessibility and usability

Public play spaces

Council has a current Play Space Strategy 2013-23 that identifies all existing play space locations and areas in need of new play spaces. Play spaces are currently categorised as either Local or Destination Play Spaces. Similar to the Open Space Hierarchy the extent, size and number of play elements and equipment may vary based on the type of play space and its function.

The following key Universal Design principles will be considered when designing for improved or new public play spaces.

Table 5. Universal Design principles within public play spaces

Universal Design Principle	Description of improvements
Equity and inclusion	Play environments designed to be fair as well as socially and physically inclusive, allowing everyone to participate equitably and as independently as possible
Smart	Play environments designed to be understandable, intuitive, and developmentally appropriate, providing opportunities for everyone to discover and demonstrate that they are smart, capable, able to take risks and be successful.
Independent	Play environments that communicate information in multiple sensory modes support the development of the whole child and the independent participation of everyone in play
Safe	All play spaces will be designed to be compliant with Australian safety standards and address physical, social, and emotional needs. Safe environments allow children of all abilities to develop their skills through fun and challenging play opportunities and to take developmentally appropriate risks
Active	Play environments designed to offer various degrees of challenge and alternatives to extraneous, sustained physical effort allow everyone to participate more actively in stimulating physical and social play
Comfortable	Play environments designed for the comfortable use and movement of individuals with diverse abilities, allowing everyone to participate in play more independently and equally

Implementation plan

The Policy Statement has been developed with input from across Council with the support of universal design experts.

Implementation will be achieved by embedding Universal Design principles into project management, planning, budgeting and decision making, monitoring and evaluating progress and outcomes, and driving continuous improvement in Council processes.

Implementation will work towards achieving the statement's vision for Universal Design and access for all in Hobsons Bay. In order to achieve this Council will:

- form a cross Council working group to champion the principles of Universal Design, keeping the intent of the policy statement relevant, build internal capacity, manage Australian Standard changes, share information and monitor learnings from project delivery
- consult project teams to identify key Universal Design issues and opportunities, and clarify Council's role and responsibilities
- establish internal project management processes and guidelines
- develop practical tools that will be used to apply Universal Design principles to Council planning, budgeting and decision making such as guidance materials (e.g. developer checklists) and updated reporting requirements (e.g. Project Plan templates)
- facilitate Universal Design training for Council staff to build internal capacity, knowledge and advocacy

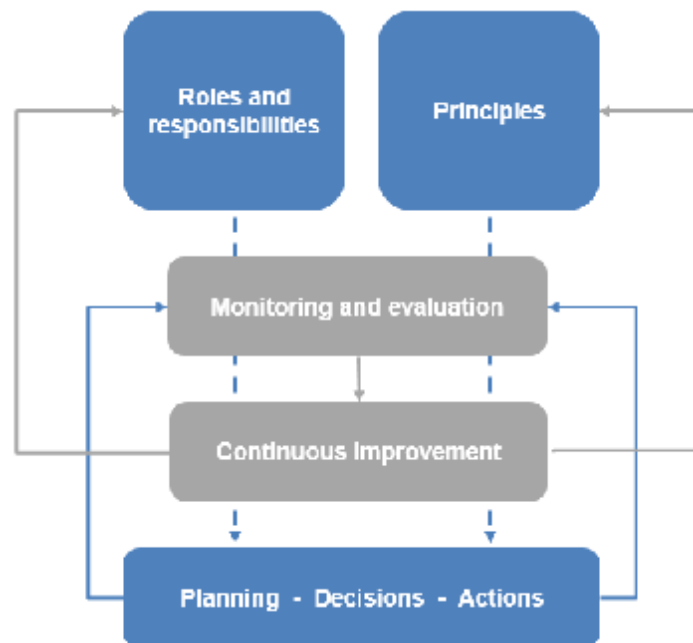


Figure 2: Universal Design Policy Statement Implementation plan

Monitoring and evaluation

The Policy Statement will be a live document monitored and updated on a regular basis to ensure it meets the current and future needs of the community and aligns with building regulations and standards.

Evaluation will include a thorough bi-annual review to appraise what has been achieved, barriers to achieving results, community needs and priority features. Monitoring and evaluation is critical to keeping the Policy Statement on track and understanding how it is improving access outcomes in Hobsons Bay. It will also drive continuous improvement in Council planning and processes.

The cross Council Universal Design working group will identify agreed measurable indicators which will demonstrate:

- Council's building activities and achievements against Universal Design audit recommendations
- specific projects outcomes and how well they contribute to positive access
- community user numbers of Council buildings
- feedback from key user stakeholder groups and community members

Advocacy

Businesses and private developments

Council seeks to become a leader in implementing Universal Design and making Hobsons Bay a more accessible place for all. In doing this, Council also aims to work with local businesses and private developers to encourage them to also implement the principles of Universal Design.

Due to the age of many existing buildings within the municipality and the changes to access standards since their construction, many local businesses are faced with access barriers. While major structural changes to buildings may be difficult, Council will continue to work with local business owners to increase access options.

For private developments, requirements for access fall under the building permit stage of development. It is important to consider accessibility at the early stages of design. Council will continue to work with developers to provide information about Universal Design as well as encourage all private developers to engage an accredited access adviser to provide advice and recommendations to assist their developments to exceed the minimum Australian Standards requirements for access. Through the use of Universal Design greater use of buildings for all ages and abilities is created, therefore increasing marketability, functionality, liveability and aging in place.

State and Federal Government

Council will continue to advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments to increase legislation regarding access, incorporating the principles of Universal Design within the Building Code of Australia, ensuring both public and private developments, buildings and infrastructure, including the urban environment, are accessible for all ages and abilities.