ALPINE SHIRE COUNCIL

Draft
Access and Inclusion Plan
2026 – 2029

DRAFT

Contents

Statement of Acknowledgement 4

1. Introduction 4
2. Commitment to Accessibility 5
3. Purpose of the Plan 5
4. Understanding Disability 5
   - 4.1 Social and Human Rights Models of Disability 6
   - 4.2 Inclusive Language 6
   - 4.3 Person-first and Identity-first language 7
   - 4.4 Disability and Intersectionality 7
5. Disability Data 7
   - 5.1 Intersectionality in Disability Data 8
   - 5.2 Women and Girls with Disability 8
   - 5.3 Disability in the Alpine Shire 8
   - 5.4 Disability in the workplace 9
6. Consultation 9
7. Disability Policy and Legislative Framework 10
8. Our Progress to Date 11
9. Priority Areas 11
10. Access and Inclusion Plan - Action Plan 12
11. Governance and Reporting 17
12. Accessibility 17
13. Appendices 18
    - A.1: Documents, legislation and resources 18

References 19

DRAFT

DOCUMENT UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

Document Control		
	Status Draft	Approved by Council
Date approved TBC		
Directorate	Corporate and Community	External

REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description
2011	1.0	Disability Action Plan adopted
2014	1.1	Plan reviewed
2021	2.0	Access and Inclusion Plan 2021 - 2024 adopted
2026	2.1	Plan reviewed and placed on public exhibition

DRAFT

This document was written by Alpine Shire Council. When you see the word 'we', it means Alpine Shire Council.

Statement of Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the region known as Alpine Shire is the traditional land of many Traditional Owners. We acknowledge them as the custodians of their Country; we recognise their rich and diverse cultural history and continuous connections to Country and thank them for sharing their lands and cultures.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of (in alphabetical order) Bpangerang, Dalka Warra Mittung, Dhuduroa Waywurru, Duduroa Dhargal, Gunaikurnai, Jaithmathang, Taungurung, and Waywurru.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to ancestors that guide through history, and emerging leaders that will lead the way into the future.

1. Introduction

This Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2029 (the Plan) outlines Alpine Shire Council's (Council's) commitment to ensuring our community is accessible inclusive and empowers people with disability within the Alpine Shire.

The Plan is a way for us to be accountable for identifying and addressing the barriers faced by people with disability, their families, and carers.

Common barriers include:

- Physical access to buildings and facilities
- Access to information
- Access to community services and programs
- Access to employment.

The Plan may also help us to address attitudinal barriers and both unintentional and intentional discrimination towards people with a disability in our organisation and the community.

Other members of the public who may have difficulty using services, including elderly citizens, parents with prams, and people with short-term injuries or health conditions may also benefit from the Plan.

The Plan outlines actions and the outcomes we seek to achieve, considering relevant National and Victorian legislation.

The actions presented in this Plan have impact for:

- Our customers – Delivering accessible and inclusive customer experiences in moments that matter
- Our employees – An inclusive work culture at Council that meet the needs of people with any form of disability
- Our community – Identifying and removing barriers that make it hard for people with disability to take part in community life.

DRAFT

Every action within this Plan is underpinned by Council's commitment to Alpine Shire being an accessible and inclusive community, through achievable, impactful, integrated and measurable actions.

2. Commitment to Accessibility

Alpine Shire Council is committed to building and supporting a community that is accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for all people who live, work, or visit our region. We are dedicated to ensuring everyone can participate fully in community life. We strive to remove barriers to access, physical, social, digital, and attitudinal, by embedding inclusive practices across our services, facilities, communication, and decision making.

3. Purpose of the Plan

The Plan is part of the bigger picture of how Council uses an integrated approach to ensure that Council's strategies, plans, and operations are connected and aligned towards the achievement of the Community Vision and Council Plan 2025-2029 including Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (see Appendices, A.1.)

It will help Council embed accessibility and inclusion throughout our planning, activities, and services over the next 4 years.

The Plan will serve as a way for us to systematically identify, understand, and address barriers that persist within our community, that prevent people living with a disability from participating fully. It is also a statement of commitment from Council to improve accessibility and inclusion and promote equal rights for all community members.



4. Understanding Disability

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this defines disability as:

'Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments…[and] disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'[1]

The definition of disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities. Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible or invisible.

Some conditions and impairments are present from birth, some people acquire or develop disability during their lifetime from an accident, condition, illness or injury and others can experience episodic, or fluctuating disability. Some people may have more than one disability giving rise to different support requirements.[2]

4.1 SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS MODELS OF DISABILITY

The Plan is supported by the social and human rights models of disability.

The social model of disability recognises that the 'disabling' factor of a person's disability are the barriers experienced from a society made up of inaccessible physical spaces, attitudes, and communications. It draws a distinction between limitation caused by disability and the "limitation of opportunities" to take part in the normal life of the community due to physical and social barriers.[3]

Underpinning the human rights model of disability is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), of which Australia is party to. This model recognises the barriers that people with a disability may face in realising their rights and fundamental freedoms. This model helps us consider rights accorded to people with disability in legislation, policy or programs to ensure that people with disability have the same right as others to live, take part and be included in the community.[4]

4.2 INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The language people use may have an impact on the way people with disability feel and are perceived in society. It is important there is awareness of the meaning behind the words that are used when talking to, referring to, or working with people with disability.

Disrespectful language can make people with disability feel hurt and excluded and be a barrier to full participation in society.[5]

Similarly, Aboriginal peoples and multicultural communities may have a very different understanding of disability. In many languages, there is no word for disability in the way it's broadly understood in English.[6]

Council recognises and respects individual and community preferences and will always endeavour to use them when applicable.

4.3 PERSON-FIRST AND IDENTITY-FIRST LANGUAGE

In the Plan Council uses person-first language when referring to people with disability. We do this to put the focus on the person and not their disability.

Some people with disability and some disability communities prefer identity-first language.

Person-first language (people with disability) and identity-first language (disabled people) are both used in Australia. People with disability often have strong preferences for one term or the other, so it is best to follow the lead of the person or group you are talking to.

4.4 DISABILITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

The concept of intersectionality has become a key part of the way we understand diversity, access and inclusion.[7] It provides context to individual experiences of disability, and how this experience may intersect (or overlap) with other parts of a person's identity - such as Aboriginality, gender, age, religion, cultural and linguistic background, sexuality, and more.[8]

These intersecting factors not only shape how people experience the world, but they can also result in multiple and compounding forms of discrimination which can lead to a person being further marginalised.

For people with disabilities, intersectionality reveals how discrimination rarely occurs in isolation. A person may face multiple barriers at once. For example, a First Nations woman with a disability may encounter ableism, sexism, and racism simultaneously. Each layer compounds the challenges she faces and affects the kind of support she may need.

Another example is people with disability living in regional, rural or remote communities, where barriers often increase due to limited local specialist services, transport options, reduced digital connectivity, and geographical distance.[9]

An intersectional approach encourages listening and openness to different perspectives. It recognises that for us to become an equitable society, it requires us to go further than treating everyone the same – it's about understanding that people begin from different starting points and need varying types of support to thrive.

5. Disability Data

We can find out disability data through various means including Census counts, surveys, and from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Although these data sources provide important insights into the experiences of people with disability in Australia, this data may underestimate the true extent of disability in Australia.

These gaps in data are due to inconsistent definitions of disability in current disability data, barriers to data sharing, or data about disability not being collected at all. These limitations were further highlighted the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.[15]

DRAFT

The data from the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) released in 2024, showed that in Australia,

- There are 5.5 million Australians with disability, representing 21.4 % of the population
- Of this number, 2.3 million were aged 65 years and over, representing more than half of all older Australians
- Of the 5.5 million Australians with disability, 75.3 % reported a physical disorder as their main condition
- 42.9% of people aged 16–85 years (who reported) had experienced a mental disorder at some time in their life
- Of this number, 21.5% of people had a 12-month mental disorder, with Anxiety being the most reported, making up 17.2% of people aged 16–85 years
- 38.8% of people aged 16–24 years had a 12-month mental disorder.[10]

5.1 INTERSECTIONALITY IN DISABILITY DATA

- 1 in 2 people (52.3%) aged 65 years or older have a disability, as opposed to about 1 in 7 (15.0%) people who are under 65 years old experience disability.
- 43.8% of primary carers had disability themselves.[11]
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait: In 2022, one-quarter (25.3%) or 183,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had disability in Australia.[12]
- 4.9% of people with disability described their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian, bisexual or used a different term such as asexual, pansexual or queer (LGBTQIA+.)[13]
- The proportion of men who reported in 2021–22 that they have experienced physical violence in the last 2 years were similar for men with disability (9%) and without disability (9.1%.)[14]

5.2 WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITY

- In 2023–24 61% of female NDIS participants (aged 15–64) get the support they need to do their job, compared with 64% of males
- Women with disability are more likely to have recent experiences of violence than women without disability. In 2021–22, 5.8% of women with disability (aged 18 and over) have experienced physical violence in the last 2 years, compared with 4.2% without disability
- Females (12.8%) were more likely to be carers than males (11.1%)
- Women with psychosocial disability (such as disability arising from emotional, nervous, or mental health condition, memory problems, or social or behavioural difficulties) are more likely to have recent experiences of violence, abuse and harassment than other women with or without disability.[15]

5.3 DISABILITY IN THE ALPINE SHIRE

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census, the Alpine Shire has:

- An estimated 21.8% of residents (2,756 people) living with a disability
- Those experiencing *more than one* disability or health condition in the Alpine Shire is 10% which is higher than the Australian average 8.9%

DRAFT

- 5.4% of this cohort require assistance with day-to-day activities.
- 16.7% (2,010 people) are either primary, or non-primary carers for someone with a disability. Carers provide significant care often without receiving any financial compensation. While some informal carers may receive support payments, many carers contribute to the community without recognition or financial support. Carers are more likely to be women.
- Alpine Shire's age profile is relatively old, with a median age of 49. This is significantly higher than the Victorian median of 38 years. Over a quarter of Shire residents (26%) are aged 65 years and over. The rate of physical and cognitive challenges, and therefore rate of disability often increases as we age.[16]

5.4 DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

- Disability can affect a person's capacity to work and earn an income. In 2022, the median gross personal income of people with disability of working age (15-64 years) was $575 per week, compared with $1055 per week for people without disability.
- 1 in 10 employed people aged 15-64 with disability are underemployed.[17]
- People with disability may experience employment restrictions because of their disability, such as restrictions around the type of job or number of hours they can work.
- 59% of people with disability aged 15 – 64 who are not in the labour force are permanently unable to work.
- The good news is that in a 2022, 30% of employers said their workplaces were more prepared to hire someone with disability now than they were 12 months ago.[18]

6. Consultation

Applying the disability advocacy principle "Nothing about us without us",[19] Council sought feedback from community members with disability and carers to inform the Plan. Insights gathered through targeted community and staff engagement, supported by Census data, help identify both the number of residents experiencing severe disability and those providing unpaid care. This approach ensures the Plan addresses the needs of people with mild to moderate disabilities who may not be captured in Census data. The Plan also recognises the diverse experiences of people with disability from intersecting and marginalised groups, including gender-diverse, LGBTQIA+, culturally diverse, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

6.1 EMBEDDING LIVED EXPERIENCE INTO THE PLAN

The Plan adopts a place-based approach, recognising that disability access and inclusion are shaped by local conditions and community knowledge. This approach supports collaborative planning, shared ownership of decisions, and coordinated action across Council departments to address complex, interconnected barriers affecting people with disability.

DRAFT

Council undertook community engagement in November 2025 to inform the development of the Plan. People with disabilities, carers and local disability organisations contributed through an online and hardcopy survey, library drop-in sessions, and informal submissions.

Key issues identified included

- improved footpath safety and accessibility
- accessible play equipment
- access to facilities
- more accessible transport options
- greater availability of local support and specialist health services.

Community members also identified strengths within the Alpine Shire, including accessible sporting opportunities, community markets, walking trails, and peer-led support.

An internal survey of Council staff was also conducted to assess organisational accessibility and inclusiveness.

7. Disability Policy and Legislative Framework

Councils play an important role in understanding, and providing local-level strategies tailored to the community's needs and aspirations and ensure disability access and inclusion is locally relevant and impactful to ensure that all members of our community can participate fully in the life of the community.

Under Section 38 of the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, Councils are required to prepare a Disability Action Plan, also known as an Access and Inclusion Plan, identifying actions to remove barriers and increase inclusion for, and change attitudes and practices which discriminate against, people with disability.

The implementation of this Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2029 contributes to Council's obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.* It also supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

AUSTRALIAN DISABILITY LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

International
United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)

↓

Australian Legislation	**Australian Policy**
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	National Disability Strategy (2021–2031)

↓



8. Our Progress to Date

Council has delivered a range of actions to improve accessibility and inclusion across the Alpine Shire under the Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2024. Diversity is now more visibly reflected across Council and tourism communications, and awareness has been strengthened through guest speakers, including Dylan Alcott, as well as recognition through Alpine Shire Youth Awards.

A number of facility upgrades have improved physical access with major upgrades including a mobile stage lift located at the Bright Community Centre, electric doors at the Bright Council offices and Visitor Information Centre, an accessible ramp at the Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre, and pool hoists at the Mount Beauty and Myrtleford outdoor pools.

Council has supported community-led accessibility initiatives through the Community Grants Program and embedded accessibility principles in program design, including the First 72 Hours Program. Mental health education initiatives have further contributed to building a more inclusive and supportive community.

9. Priority Areas

We have evaluated progress and lessons learned through implementation of Council's previous Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2024, researched best practice by other local governments and engaged with community to identify areas for further action.

The actions within this Plan are divided into five (5) Priority Areas based on Council's services and responsibilities:

1. **Systems, attitudes and behaviours**
   Council plans, policies and programs are pro-actively and transparently designed and reviewed to consider and integrate disability access and inclusion, driving impactful change at a community level.
2. **Creating Inclusive, Accessible and Safe Communities**
   Ensuring Council buildings, open spaces, events and services are accessible for people with disability.
3. **Employment and Financial Security**
   Council is an employer of choice for people with disability.

DRAFT

4. **Inclusive Communication and Digital Services**
   Provide respectful, understandable and inclusive digital services and written information, that highlights community diversity.
5. **Connection and advocacy**
   Partner with local groups and organisations to advocate for broader change.

9.1 ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Many issues that affect our communities are outside the direct control of Council, but we can play a role by advocating for change. These issues include:

- Transport
- Accessibility of local businesses
- Health services, including in-home care
- Housing
- Life Support Services.

Council is committed to partnering with local groups and organisations to advocate for broader change where possible.

10. Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2029 - Action Plan

The below forms specific actions and initiatives Council will focus on over the life of the Plan and form integrated, and measurable actions to achieve against each priority area. The actions outlined involve every area of Council.

Priority 1

Systems, attitudes and behaviours

Council plans, policies and programs are pro-actively and transparently designed and reviewed to consider and integrate disability access and inclusion, driving impactful change at a community level.

Priority 1	**Systems, attitudes and behaviours** *Actions and Initiatives*
1.1	Review Council policies and processes to ensure they are inclusive for people with disability and other intersectional identities.
1.2	Support community groups applying for grants for accessibility upgrades or initiatives.
1.3	Council develops organisational capacity and awareness of Australian and Victorian disability policy and legislation, and how these align with Council documents across all relevant Council departments.

Associated Outcomes

- Mid and end point engagement and consultation with stakeholders, staff and the community to measure or adjust impact of programs and initiatives.

DRAFT

- Increase in grants awarded to projects that enhance disability access and inclusion in the community.
- Access and inclusion is embedded in staff inductions, organisational wellbeing initiatives, and internal processes, and is a part of cross-departmental collaboration.

Priority 2

Creating Inclusive, Accessible and Safe Communities

Ensuring Council buildings, open spaces, events and services are accessible for people with disability.

Priority 2	**Creating Inclusive, Accessible and Safe Communities** *Actions and Initiatives*
2.1	Conduct accessibility audits of existing facilities, open spaces, footpaths and infrastructure throughout the Shire.
2.2	Review accessibility audits, prioritising accessibility upgrades of Council owned facilities.
2.3	Conduct needs assessment schedule and create a matrix to prioritise and implement improvements to facilities, open spaces and infrastructure.
2.4	Develop a program of works for footpath inspections and upgrades to include accessibility.
2.5	Investigate best practice engagement process to include feedback from people with disability and other intersectional identities when developing project proposals for major new infrastructure builds.
2.6	Investigate funding opportunities to implement recommendations from the Aquatics and Indoor Stadium Feasibility Study.
2.7	Review council-run Emergency Relief Centres to ensure they are planned to incorporate the access and inclusion needs of people with disability.
2.8	Review Council's Youth specific programs, events and initiatives to ensure standard accessibility and inclusion procedures are in place so all young people we work with are supported.
2.9	Review event planning processes to ensure that Council run community events are accessible, and access information is provided when promoting events.

Associated Outcomes

- Council facilities and open spaces are fully accessible and inclusive to our community – drawing from best practice accessibility resources and expertise
- The accessibility needs of our community are prioritised

DRAFT

- People with disability and other intersectional identities have an inclusive and accessible platform to provide feedback on Council projects and policies
- The diversity of challenges faced by individuals with disability before, during, and after emergencies are identified, and support at all stages of Council's emergency management plan have been investigated
- All young people in our communities are able to access Council services and programs
- People with disability can fully participate in events held in the Alpine Shire.

Priority 3

Employment and Financial Security

Council is an employer of choice for people with disability.

Priority 3	**Employment and Financial Security** *Actions and Initiatives*
3.1	Offering and providing workplace adjustments for employees with disability and carers who need them.
3.2	Clearly stated commitment to the employment of people with disability, including list of adjustments for accessible and inclusive recruitment.
3.3	Supporting inclusive career pathways at all levels, through skills development and progression.
3.4	Investigate partnering with the *JobAccess* National Disability Recruitment Coordinator (NDRC) program to support Council in creating a strategy for increasing disability employment.

Associated Outcomes

- Council monitors the number of workplace adjustments received and successfully implemented
- Measurable increase in employment of a diverse range of candidates, including people of all abilities, ages, genders, backgrounds and sexualities
- All staff, regardless of career stage, age, ability, gender, or background feel supported and inspired to progress their career with Council
- Council designs recruitment processes and roles that are disability inclusive, helping Council to become a disability employer of choice

Priority 4

Inclusive Communication and Digital Services

Provide respectful, understandable and inclusive digital services and written information, that highlights community diversity.

Priority 4	**Inclusive Communication and Digital Services** *Actions and Initiatives*
4.1	Investigate installation of accessibility tools to Councils websites
4.2	Investigate installation of an Emergency Dashboard to facilitate easier access to emergency information for all community members
4.3	Review of communications with consideration of WCAG 2.1 AA standards
4.4	Review livestreaming of Council meetings to ensure accessibility for people with disability
4.5	Engaging with people with disability so that lived experience is reflected in policies affecting them
4.6	Investigate best practice for Council templates and accessible documents in Word, PDF, PowerPoint and Outlook using tools that support inclusive communication
4.7	Review media images to ensure they are representative of diverse intersectional experiences of people with disability

Associated Outcomes

- The accessibility of Council websites and communication is enhanced for users with disabilities
- There are no barriers to any community member having the opportunity to engage with their Councillors in a fair and open manner
- Community feedback from follow up Survey results show an improvement on feedback from initial engagement survey
- All employees, regardless of their disabilities, can access and understand the information shared in the workplace
- Council's media images celebrate the diversity of people and experiences in our community

Priority 5

Connection and Advocacy

Partner with local groups and organisations to advocate for broader change.

Priority 5	**Connection and Advocacy** *Actions and Initiatives*
5.1	Connect with disability advocacy groups, support groups, and services within our region
5.2	Partner with Alpine Health to inform the community and improve experiences of people with disability accessing primary health care

DRAFT

Priority 5	**Connection and Advocacy** *Actions and Initiatives*
5.3	Partner with other councils to improve data collection across the local government sector
5.4	Investigate ways to incorporate the experiences of domestic and institutional violence against people with disability into the Free from Violence and 16 Days of Activism projects

Associated Outcomes

- Council can support the community in advocating for accessible and inclusive services such as transport, housing and care
- Council website is enhanced for users with disabilities
- Access and inclusion is a part of the running agenda of the Alpine Health and Wellbeing Partnership
- Council participates in a north east Victorian network of councils that share knowledge and resources to benefit the wider community
- Relevant statistics and resources are promoted during the Free from Violence and 16 Days of Activism Campaign to raise awareness, and link vulnerable community members to support disability and domestic violence services

10.1 HOW WE MEASURE PROGRESS: OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

An Outcomes Framework provides a structured approach to plan, implement (timeline, responsibilities and resources), monitor, and evaluate (assessment, feedback, refinement, reporting and evaluation) the effectiveness of the Access and Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2029.

Refer to appendix A.1 Priority Outcomes Action Plan.

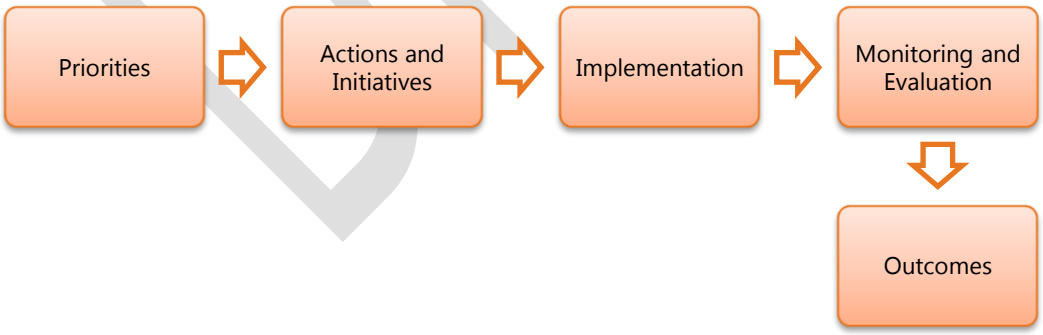


Image description: This image defines the workflow of the identified priorities in Council's Access and Inclusion Action Plan (the Action Plan). The actions and initiatives outlined in the Action Plan will be given a timeline for completion in line with the 4-year duration of the Plan. It has been noted in the Action Plan if implementation is contingent on funding allocation - which may impact project scope or timeline.

DRAFT

Monitoring and evaluation are key components of the implementation of actions and initiatives, to ensure impactful outcomes for the community.

11. Governance and Reporting

We are committed to reporting every year on how we are implementing the Plan. We will use measurements from our actions to see what is working and what more we can be doing. This progress report will form part of Council's Annual Reporting.

Reporting on progress will improve performance, build accountability and demonstrate that Council is committed to achieving its goals over the span of the Plan and beyond.

12. Accessibility

This document is available in alternative formats upon request including easy-read, hard copy in standard and large print and electronically by email in Word or PDF by contacting Council:

2 Churchill Ave, Bright, Victoria, 3741

Phone: (03) 5755 0555

Postal: PO Box 139, Bright, Victoria, 3741

Email: info@alpineshire.vic.gov.au

DRAFT

13. Appendices

A.1: DOCUMENTS, LEGISLATION AND RESOURCES

- Alpine Shire Community Vision and Council Plan 2025-29 - The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan is incorporated into the current Council Plan
- Alpine Shire Action Plan | Council Plan 2025-29
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)
- Disability Services Safeguards Bill 2018 (Vic)
- National Disability Strategy (2021–2031)
- United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)
- Inclusive Victoria – State Disability Plan (2022–2026)
- Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) Gendered Data Insights: A tool for local government public health and wellbeing planning 2025
- National Autism Strategy 2025–2031: The National Autism Strategy 2025–2031 provides a national approach to services and supports for Autistic people and their families. As the number of people diagnosed with autism continues to grow, the Strategy provides a framework for improving outcomes, specifically in relation to social and economic inclusion; diagnosis, services and supports; and health and mental health via the National Roadmap to Improve the Health and Mental Health of Autistic People.
- Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031: Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (the Strategy) is Australia's national disability policy framework. In 2024, the ADS was updated in response to a Royal Commission recommendation.
- In addition to the national reforms and strategies outlined above, the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) is being developed to better understand and meet the needs of people with disability. It will bring together a range of Australian government and state and territory datasets from disability, health, social security, education, employment, housing, transport and justice to better understand the experiences of people with disability and the programs and services they use. By having more information about programs and services we are better able to support people with disability, their families, and carers.
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), provides funding directly to eligible people who were either born with or acquire a permanent and significant disability to pay for supports they need. In 2023, the NDIS was reviewed. The Review made 26 recommendations to improve the scheme's design, operations and sustainability.

DRAFT

References

[1] United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) [Entry into force: 3 May 2008, in accordance with article 45(1)]: Article 2 – Definitions. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.html [easy-read format.]

[2] Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth).

[3] The human rights model and the social model are characterised by a different meaning to "belonging" in society as person with disability/s – fundamentally, the human rights model is a model of disability policy, whereas the social model is a model of disability itself. The human rights model helps provide a road map for the development of human-rights-consistent law and policy, as well as systems and frameworks for monitoring progress. The social model provides a way to better understand that it is society that can be the disabling factor for those who experience disability/s. (Lawson, A & Beckett, Angharad E (2021), pp. 371, The social and human rights models of disability: towards a complementarity thesis, The International Journal of Human Rights, 25:2, 348-379, DOI: 10.1080/13642987.2020.1783533.)

[4] Attorney-General's Department (2026). *Rights of people with disability: Public sector guidance sheet*. Commonwealth of Australia 2026. Retrieved from https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/human-rights-scrutiny/public-sector-guidance-sheets/rights-people-disability#legislation.

[5] Queensland Government (2019). Child Safety Practice Manual: Disability in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The State of Queensland (Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety), https://cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au/practice-kits/disability/working-with-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/seeing-and-understanding/), accessed 2 December 2025.

[6] Note: Some Aboriginal communities believe that disability can come about because of payback (resulting in guilt and shame), curses, because of violence or substance use, or spiritual beliefs. Some communities also believe that disability is not a 'sickness', rather it is a difference, and children are treated the same way regardless of their disability. Retrieved from Queensland Government (2019). Child Safety Practice Manual: Disability in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The State of Queensland (Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety), https://cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au/practice-kits/disability/working-with-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/seeing-and-understanding/

[7] Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2018). *General comment No.6 on equality and non-discrimination*. https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no6-equality-and-non-discrimination.

[8] 'Intersectional discrimination' is further defined in Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 2018. General comment No.6 on equality and non-discrimination. Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no6-equality-and-non-discrimination.

[9] National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) (2023), *Fact Sheet: Disability and Access to the NDIS in Rural Australia*, nrha-disability-factsheet-feb-2023-final.pdf, accessed 10 December 2025.

[10] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2020-2022). *National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing*. ABS. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/latest-release.

[11] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) '*Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2022: key findings in plain language*', [https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/2022/key-findings-plain-language], accessed 21 January 2026.

[12] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Avery S. (2025) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability, 2022 Survey Disability Ageing and Carers. ABS, Canberra.

[13] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, ABS Website, accessed 7 January 2026.

[14] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021-22). *Physical violence*. ABS. Retrieved from https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/physical-violence/latest-release.

[15] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). *People with disability in Australia*. Retrieved from https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia

[16] Those who were living in households and whose income was reported (see Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2022.)

[17] 'Underemployment' means those that worked part time and wanted to, and could, work more. Notes that the 10% of employed people aged 15–64 **with disability** compared with 6.9% of those **without disability**. See People with disability in Australia, Employment – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au.)

[18] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2024) People with disability in Australia, Employment – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Retrieved aihw.gov.au.

[19] The 'nothing about us without us' slogan calls for co-designed inclusion frameworks within policy development. Disability Representative Organisations (2025). *Joint Statement: Disability Representative Organisations stand united in our reiteration to government of nothing about us without us*. Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA). https://dana.org.au/resource/joint-statement-disability-representative-organisations-stand-united.

DRAFT