



SOUTHERN MALLEE DISTRICT COUNCIL **DISABILITY ACCESS** **PLAN**

2025 - 2029



Acknowledgement

Southern Mallee District Council acknowledges the Ngarkat people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and work. We respect their culture, and we extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Executive Summary

Southern Mallee District Council recognises that people living with disability make a vital contribution to our community. Local government plays a key role in creating supportive, accessible environments, and this plan sets the direction for our municipality over the next four years and beyond.

It outlines our shared long-term goals and aspirations for an inclusive future, where every resident is valued and able to participate fully. The Council is committed to building a connected community that is accessible to all, ensuring equal opportunities across our district.

We affirm that access and participation are fundamental rights. This plan strengthens our commitment to improving inclusion, so that people living with disability feel welcome, can contribute meaningfully, and have equitable access to everyday services and activities throughout the region.

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Contact Details

This Disability Access Plan (DAP) is available on the Southern Mallee District Council website www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au

If you require a copy in an alternative format, (such as Easy Read or a fully accessible word version), please contact Council on 08 8577 8002, via email on council@southernmallee.sa.gov.au or at PO Box 49, Pinnaroo SA 5304.

About us

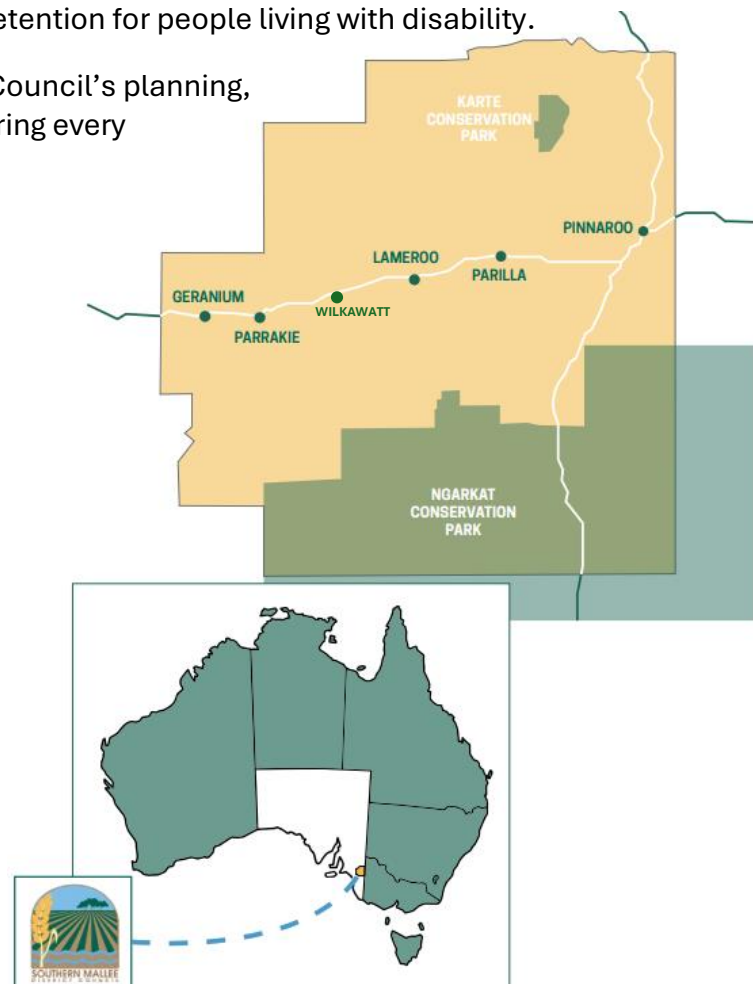
The Southern Mallee District Council administers a region of approximately 6,000 km², located 200 km east of Adelaide at the heart of the greater Mallee Region. The Council was formed in 1997 and today provides governance, services, and facilities to the communities of Lamerook, Pinnaroo, Geranium, Parilla, Parrakie, and Wilkawatt. Lamerook and Pinnaroo serve as key service hubs along the Mallee Highway, hosting schools, libraries, recreation spaces, and community facilities.

Council employs 53 staff members, who deliver services and support across the district. Its role extends beyond infrastructure and service delivery. It is recognised for fostering strong community engagement, volunteerism, arts and sport.

The local economy is driven by agriculture and horticulture, and Council supports this through planning and community development initiatives. A central priority is accessibility and inclusion. Council values the participation of all residents, ensuring people with disability can contribute to community life and decision-making. Facilities and community spaces are designed to be welcoming and accessible, supported by inclusive communication practices and active community networks.

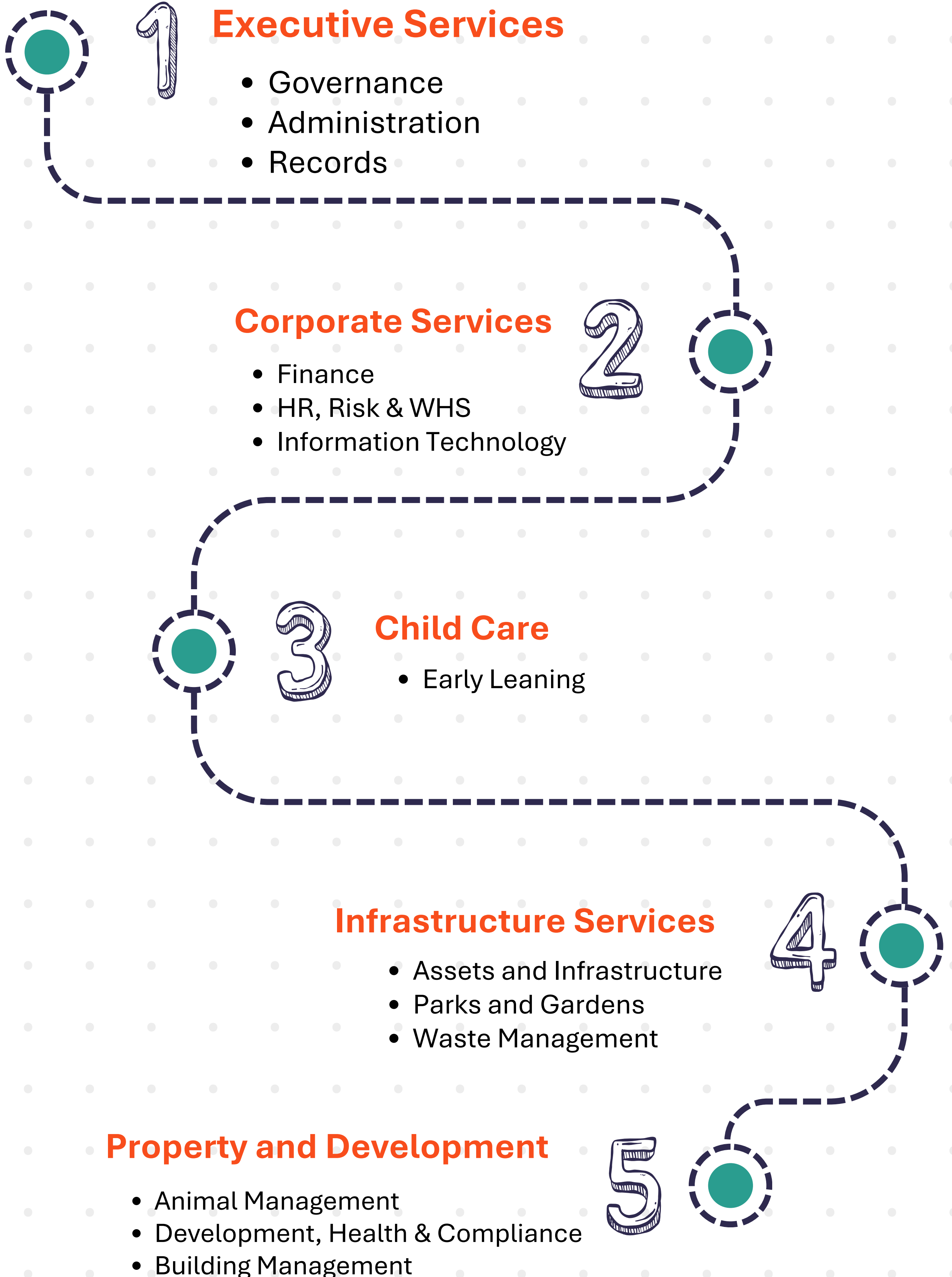
Council also recognises the importance of inclusive employment pathways. Through its Disability Access Plan (DAP), workforce strategies are in place to promote equitable opportunities in employment, training, and retention for people living with disability.

These commitments are embedded across Council's planning, services, and community engagement, ensuring every resident has the opportunity to thrive.



OUR WORKPLACE

We are committed to ensuring the workplace is accessible and inclusive for everyone.



Our vision

The Southern Mallee District Council's Draft Strategic Management Plan 2025–2030 sets the direction for our community's future. At its heart is a commitment to building a place where everyone feels welcome, supported, and able to thrive.

This vision directly reflects the goals of our Disability Access Plan (DAP), ensuring that accessibility and inclusion are woven into all of Council's priorities. Whether it's planning new infrastructure, delivering services, or creating opportunities for employment and training, the draft plan makes clear that people living with disability are valued, included, and empowered to participate fully in community life.

Council's Strategic plan themes are:



Theme 1: Our Community

Objective: Supporting safe, welcoming and connected communities where people of all ages feel they belong



Theme 2: Our Economy

Objective: Unlocking opportunities for agriculture, business, and tourism, showcasing the unique strengths of our region.



Theme 3: Our Infrastructure and Assets

Objective: Managing and renewing the facilities, roads and services that connect us, while planning for the needs of tomorrow



Theme 4: Our Organisation

Objective: Building a strong and stable foundation so future generations can rely on essential services and infrastructure. Acting with integrity, transparency, and vision, always placing community at the centre of our decision-making.

Defining Disability

Southern Mallee District Council recognises that disability can affect anyone, and many people will experience some form of disability during their lifetime.

Disability can result from illness, ageing, or other long-term conditions. Under the Disability Act 2018 (SA), disability includes physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, neurological, or psychosocial impairments that may limit a person's ability to fully participate in society.

Types of disability may include:

- **Sensory and speech** – affecting sight, hearing, or speech
- **Cognitive** – difficulties with learning, understanding, or memory
- **Physical** – mobility issues, chronic pain, or breathing difficulties
- **Psychosocial** – mental health or emotional challenges
- **Acquired brain injury** – from stroke or trauma
- **Other** – Long term conditions affecting daily life

Disability can vary in severity and may involve more than one type. Ageing can also increase the likelihood of disability.

Disability and Care in our Community

According to the 2021 Census:



24.6%
Aged 60+



Population
1,979



Unpaid
Carers
10.9%

Long Term Health
Conditions
56.6%



34.7%
Live Alone



5.8%
Need for
Assistance



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan development

Purpose of a Disability Access Plan:

Under the Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA), the Southern Mallee District Council is legally required to maintain a plan that promotes access and inclusion for people with disability.

Council's first Disability Access Plan (DAP), introduced in 2020, demonstrated its commitment to building a community that is welcoming and inclusive for both residents and visitors. That plan delivered progress across key areas, including:

- Strengthening employment opportunities and financial security
- Building inclusive and connected communities
- Promoting leadership and collaboration
- Enhancing training and development

Council's new Disability Access Plan (DAP) continues this work, aligning with the priority areas of the **State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029** to ensure consistency across South Australia.

South Australia's first statewide plan, *Inclusive SA*, was launched in 2019 and set the foundation by focusing on fairness, respect, and inclusion for people with disability. The updated State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029, released in August 2025, builds on that foundation and provides a clear framework for councils and communities to follow.

Strategic Context

The Southern Mallee District Council's commitment to accessibility and inclusion is guided by a strong legislative and policy framework at the local, state, national, and international levels.

“ This Act provides the legislative foundation for disability inclusion in South Australia. It requires all state authorities, including local councils, to develop Disability Access and Inclusion Plans. The Act emphasizes removing barriers, promoting participation, and ensuring people with disability have equal access to services, facilities, and opportunities. ”

Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)

“ The new State Plan sets out whole-of-government priorities for advancing inclusion across South Australia. It focuses on improving accessibility in public spaces, strengthening employment pathways, and ensuring people with disability are involved in decision-making. Local councils, including Southern Mallee, align their DAIPs with this plan to ensure consistency and shared progress across the state. ”

State Disability Inclusion Plan
2025–2029

“ This national framework outlines Australia's ten-year vision for an inclusive society. It highlights key outcome areas such as inclusive communities, safety, housing, education, employment, health, and community attitudes. The Strategy provides guidance for all levels of government, including local councils, to embed disability inclusion into everyday practice ”

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031

“ As an international treaty ratified by Australia, the UNCRPD establishes the global standard for protecting and promoting the rights of people with disability. It affirms the right to full participation in society, equal access to opportunities, and respect for dignity and autonomy. The Convention underpins national and state frameworks and informs Council's approach to inclusion at the local level. ”

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Council's Action Priorities

Focus of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan:

Southern Mallee District Council's Disability Access Plan aligns with the key priority areas outlined in the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029. These domains guide our commitment to building a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable community for all.

Under each domain, Council has identified specific priority areas and actions that will be implemented through the accompanying Action Plan, ensuring that objectives translate into measurable outcomes for the community.

Domain 1: Inclusive Environments and Communities

We strive to create welcoming and connected spaces where everyone including people with disability, can actively participate in community life.

Objective: Ensure people with disability have equitable access to Council buildings, facilities, and public spaces by fostering inclusive community attitudes, eliminating discrimination, and recognising the value of diversity and the contributions of people with disability.

Priority Areas for Domain 1

- 1** Active participation
- 2** Inclusive communities and attitudes
- 3** Universal Design
- 4** Accessible facilities
- 5** Communications and information
- 6** Transportation
- 7** Collaboration, consultation and innovation
- 8** Housing

Domain 2: Education and Employment

We are dedicated to promoting equal access to education and employment, empowering people with disability to learn, work, and achieve financial independence.

Objective: To foster an inclusive community by creating and supporting opportunities for people with disabilities to actively participate in employment, community leadership, volunteering, and civic life.

Priority Areas for Domain 2

- 1** Targeted knowledge, understanding and support
- 2** Supports and resources for children and young people
- 3** Targeted transitional supports
- 4** Access to employment opportunities
- 5** Inclusive working environments
- 6** Data and reporting

Domain 3: Personal and Community Support

We aim to ensure that people with disability have access to tailored support services that enable independent living and meaningful community engagement.

Objective: Ensure that people with disabilities in our rural region can access the support and services they need by facilitating connections to appropriate resources and advocating for improved service delivery.

Priority Areas for Domain 3

- 1** Accessibility
- 2** Advocacy and supports
- 3** Information sharing
- 4** Family and carer support
- 5** Programs

Domain 4: Health and Wellbeing

We are committed to supporting the lifelong health and wellbeing of people with disability through inclusive and responsive health initiatives.

Objective: Enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of people with disabilities by promoting inclusive community programs and environments that support their health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life.

Priority Areas for Domain 4

- 1** Inclusive infrastructure
- 2** Targeted knowledge, understanding and support
- 3** Supports and interventions

Domain 5: Safety, Rights and Justice

We uphold the rights of people with disability to feel safe, be treated fairly, and have equal access to justice under the law.

Objective: To promote and uphold the human rights of people with disabilities by ensuring equal access to justice, safeguarding them from violence and abuse, and fostering an inclusive society where dignity, respect, and equality are guaranteed for all.

Priority Areas for Domain 5

- 1** Targeted knowledge, understanding and support
- 2** Responding to emergencies
- 3** Support and navigating the justice system
- 4** Consultation and collaboration
- 5** Safeguarding

OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure people with disability have equitable access to Council buildings, facilities, and public spaces by fostering inclusive community attitudes, eliminating discrimination, and recognising the value of diversity and the contributions of people with disability.

Priority Area 3: Universal Design

Outcome: Everyone in South Australia can access and enjoy inclusive and accessible natural and built environments.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Upgrade one community playground to include accessible/inclusive play equipment by End of Financial Year, 2028	• 100% of Council buildings have basic accessibility compliance by 2029 • Annual accessibility improvement budget allocated and spent • All new projects meet accessibility standards	• Playground by End of Financial Year, 2028 • Other actions ongoing	• Manager Property Development Services, • Director Infrastructure Services
2.	Ensure all major community events include accessible facilities and parking			
3.	Work with community groups to improve accessibility of community halls and facilities			
4.	Advocate for accessible public transport options in our region			

OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure people with disability have equitable access to Council buildings, facilities, and public spaces by fostering inclusive community attitudes, eliminating discrimination, and recognising the value of diversity and the contributions of people with disability.

Priority Area 4: Accessible Facilities

Outcome: People with disability can access public toilet facilities that meet their needs when out in the community.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Conduct annual accessibility audits of all Council buildings and prioritize improvements.	• One fully accessible playground operational by End of Financial Year 2028 • All major community events include accessibility provisions • Community facilities progressively improved	Ongoing with annual audit and improvements	• Manager Property Development Services, • Director Infrastructure Services
2.	Allocate a minimum of \$15,000 annually for accessibility upgrades			
3.	Ensure all new Council infrastructure incorporates universal design principles			
4.	Install accessible parking spaces at key community facilities (minimum 2 new spaces annually for the life of this plan)			
5.	Maintain clear, accessible pathways to all public buildings			

OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure people with disability have equitable access to Council buildings, facilities, and public spaces by fostering inclusive community attitudes, eliminating discrimination, and recognising the value of diversity and the contributions of people with disability.

Priority Area 5: Communications and Information

Outcome: People with disability can find the informaiton they need in the format(s) they need it in.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Ensure Council website meets WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards by end of financial year 2027	• Website accessibility compliance achieved and maintained • Alternative formats available within 5 working days of request • Easy read versions of priority documents	Website compliance by end of Financial yard 2027, other actions ongoing	• Coordinator Executive Services • CEO
2.	Provide key Council informaiton in Easy read format			
3.	Offer alternative formats (Large print, Audio) for Council documents upon request.			
4.	Use plain English in all Council communications			

OBJECTIVE 2: To foster an inclusive community by creating and supporting opportunities for people with disabilities to actively participate in employment, community leadership, volunteering, and civic life.

Priority Area 3: Targeted Transitional Supports

Outcome: People with disability have supportive environments to learn, grow, and transition throughout their life.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Encourage people with a disability to be active members of Council committees and working groups and events	Ensure Council events and activities are accessible and welcoming	Actions ongoing	CEO

OBJECTIVE 2: To foster an inclusive community by creating and supporting opportunities for people with disabilities to actively participate in employment, community leadership, volunteering, and civic life.

Priority Area 4: Access to Employment Opportunities

Outcome: People with disability have opportunities to achieve, develop and succeed in their chosen fields.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Review and improve Council recruitment practices to ensure accessibility and inclusion	• Council recruitment process documented as accessible and inclusive • Annual work experience placement provided • Local business engagement on disability employment undertaken	• Recruitment review by 2026 • Other actions ongoing	• HR Coordinator
2.	Support local businesses through information and resources on inclusive employment			
3.	Consider accessibility in all Council procurement decisions			

State DIP Domain 3 - Personal and Community Support

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure that people with disabilities in our rural region can access the support and services they need by facilitating connections to appropriate resources and advocating for improved service delivery.

Priority Area 1: Accessibility

Outcome: People with disability are active participants in accessible and inclusive communities.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Maintain comprehensive information about local and regional disability services	• Current Service information maintained and regularly updated • Partnerships with service providers established and maintained	Ongoing	• Coordinator Executive Services • CEO
2.	Connect people with a disability to appropriate services and supports			

State DIP Domain 3 - Personal and Community Support

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure that people with disabilities in our rural region can access the support and services they need by facilitating connections to appropriate resources and advocating for improved service delivery.

Priority Area 2: Advocacy and Supports

Outcome: People with disability are supported to make their own choices and use advocacy when needed to protect and promote their rights.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Ensure emergency management plans include people with disability	• Emergency management plans include disability considerations • Accessible emergency communication systems in place	• Emergency plans updated by End of Financial year, 2026 • Other actions ongoing	• Manager Property Development Services
2.	Provide accessible emergency information and warnings			
3.	Identifying and support people with a disability who may need additional assistance during emergencies			
4.	Develop partnerships with disability for emergency response			

State DIP Domain 3 - Personal and Community Support

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensure that people with disabilities in our rural region can access the support and services they need by facilitating connections to appropriate resources and advocating for improved service delivery.

Priority Area 4: Family and Carer Support

Outcome: Carers and families, including siblings of people with disability are provided with dedicated supports and services.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Promote peer support and networking opportunities for families in Southern Mallee District Council by offering in-kind assistance to these support organisations	• Family and carer support information readily available • Carers recognized and supported in community	• Ongoing	• Manager Property Development Services • Coordinator Executive Services
2.	Advocate for respite and support services in our region			
3.	Recognize and support the role of carers in our community			

OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of people with disabilities by promoting inclusive community programs and environments that support their health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life.

Priority Area 2: Targeted knowledge, understanding and support

Outcome: People with disability can access healthcare that is inclusive and responsive to the intersectionality and diversity of disability, recognising the important role of carers.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Promote mental health awareness and support services	• Health programs accessible to people with disability • Mental health resources promoted and available • Community connection programs supported	Ongoing	• Coordinator Executive Services • Manager Property Development Services
2.	Support community programs that enhance social connections			
3.	Advocate for improved healthcare accessibility in rural areas			

OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance the social and emotional well-being of people with disabilities by promoting inclusive community programs and environments that support their health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

Priority Area 3: Support and Interventions

Outcome: People with disability can access healthcare that is inclusive and responsive to the intersectionality and diversity of disability, recognising the important role of carers.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Address accessibility barriers that impact participation and well being	• Safe, accessible spaces available for community use • Number of community awareness campaigns that focus on inclusion and anti discrimination	Ongoing	• CEO
2.	Create safe, welcoming spaces for people with disability			
3.	Promote positive community attitudes toward disability			

OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of people with disabilities by promoting inclusive community programs and environments that support their health, wellbeing, and overall quality of life.

Priority Area 3: Supports and Interventions

Outcome: People with disability can access healthcare that is inclusive and responsive to the intersectionality and diversity of disability, recognising the important role of carers.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	In-kind support to social groups and activities that welcome people with a disability	• Social programs available and accessible to people with disability • Community events celebrate diversity and inclusion	Ongoing	• Property Development Services • Library Services
2.	Support inter-generational programs that promote understanding and inclusion			
3.	Celebrate diversity and promote positive images of disability			
4.	Create opportunities for people with a disability to contribute to community life			

OBJECTIVE 5: To promote and uphold the human rights of people with disabilities by ensuring equal access to justice, safeguarding them from violence and abuse, and fostering an inclusive society where dignity, respect, and equality are guaranteed for all.

Priority Area 1: Targeted Knowledge, Understanding and support

Outcome: People with disability are understood. supported, and have their rights upheld, including wihtin the justice system.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Promote awareness of disability rights in our community	• All staff trained on disability rights and respectful service • Community awareness of disability rights promoted annually • Complaint handling procedures include disability considerations	• Staff training by 2026 • Other actions ongoing	• CEO • HR Coordinator
2.	Ensure Council policies and practices respect the rights of people with disability			
3.	Provide information about advocacy services and rights protection			
4.	Address complaints about disability discrimination promptly and fairly			
5.	Train staff on disability rights and respectful service delivery			

OBJECTIVE 5: To promote and uphold the human rights of people with disabilities by ensuring equal access to justice, safeguarding them from violence and abuse, and fostering an inclusive society where dignity, respect, and equality are guaranteed for all.

Priority Area 2: Responding to Emergencies

Outcome: People with disability are kept safe during emergencies, with their needs planned for and prioritised.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	promote awareness of family violence services that are accessible to people with disability	• Community safety programs include disability considerations • Accessible family violence support services promoted • Public spaces maintained as safe and accessible	• Ongoing	
2.	Support safety programs that include people with disability			
3.	Ensure public spaces are safe and well-maintained			

OBJECTIVE 5: To promote and uphold the human rights of people with disabilities by ensuring equal access to justice, safeguarding them from violence and abuse, and fostering an inclusive society where dignity, respect, and equality are guaranteed for all.

Priority Area 4: Consultation and Collaboration

Outcome: People with disability are involved in the design and delivery of policies, Programs and laws.

Action No.	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1.	Review and amend anti-discrimination policies and procedures	• Anti-discrimination policies reviewed and amended • Equal access to Council services demonstrated • Council recognized as a leader in disability inclusion	• Ongoing	• CEO • All Staff
2.	Provide equal access to council services regardless of disability			
3.	Promote inclusive practices in all Council operations			
4.	Model best practice in disability inclusion for the community			

Implementation of the Plan

Southern Mallee District Council's disability access plan project team will oversee the implementation of the Council's Disability access plan.

Council will be responsible for the implementation of actions contained within the plan.

The continued engagement of key stakeholders is fundamental to the successful implementation of this plan.

Plan Review and Reporting

Southern Mallee District Council's Disability Access plan project team will meet annually to monitor the progress.

This plan is a working document and can be reviewed at any time. The plan may be reviewed in line with changing legislation.

The timeframe for evaluation and review of the plan is four years unless otherwise legislated.



Southern Mallee District Council

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