



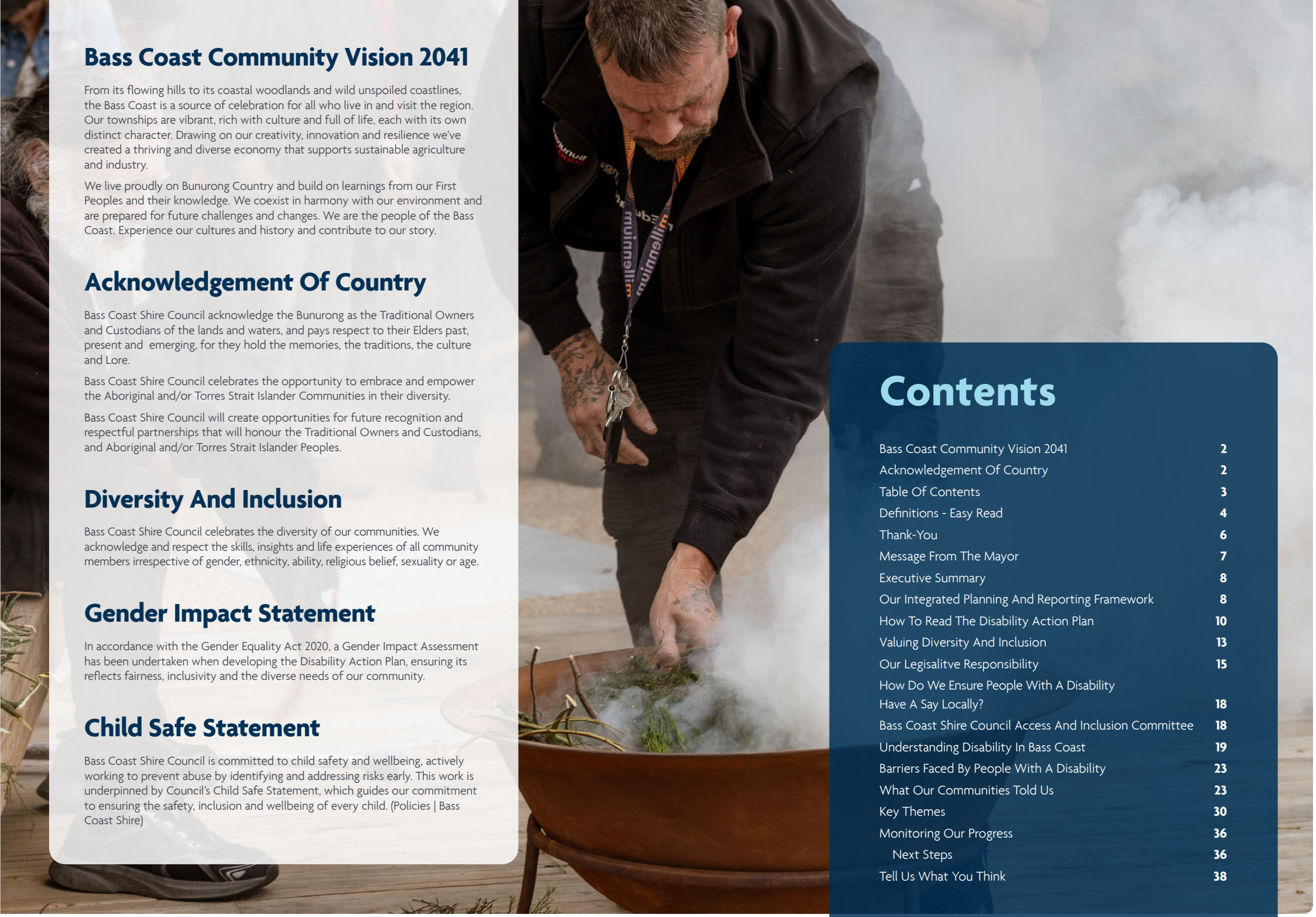




Disability Action Plan

2025-2029

BASS COAST



Bass Coast Community Vision 2041

From its flowing hills to its coastal woodlands and wild unspoiled coastlines, the Bass Coast is a source of celebration for all who live in and visit the region. Our townships are vibrant, rich with culture and full of life, each with its own distinct character. Drawing on our creativity, innovation and resilience we've created a thriving and diverse economy that supports sustainable agriculture and industry.

We live proudly on Bunurong Country and build on learnings from our First Peoples and their knowledge. We coexist in harmony with our environment and are prepared for future challenges and changes. We are the people of the Bass Coast. Experience our cultures and history and contribute to our story.

Acknowledgement Of Country

Bass Coast Shire Council acknowledge the Bunurong as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and Lore.

Bass Coast Shire Council celebrates the opportunity to embrace and empower the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities in their diversity.

Bass Coast Shire Council will create opportunities for future recognition and respectful partnerships that will honour the Traditional Owners and Custodians, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Diversity And Inclusion

Bass Coast Shire Council celebrates the diversity of our communities. We acknowledge and respect the skills, insights and life experiences of all community members irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability, religious belief, sexuality or age.

Gender Impact Statement

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken when developing the Disability Action Plan, ensuring its reflects fairness, inclusivity and the diverse needs of our community.

Child Safe Statement

Bass Coast Shire Council is committed to child safety and wellbeing, actively working to prevent abuse by identifying and addressing risks early. This work is underpinned by Council's Child Safe Statement, which guides our commitment to ensuring the safety, inclusion and wellbeing of every child. (Policies | Bass Coast Shire)

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EASY READ

Definitions

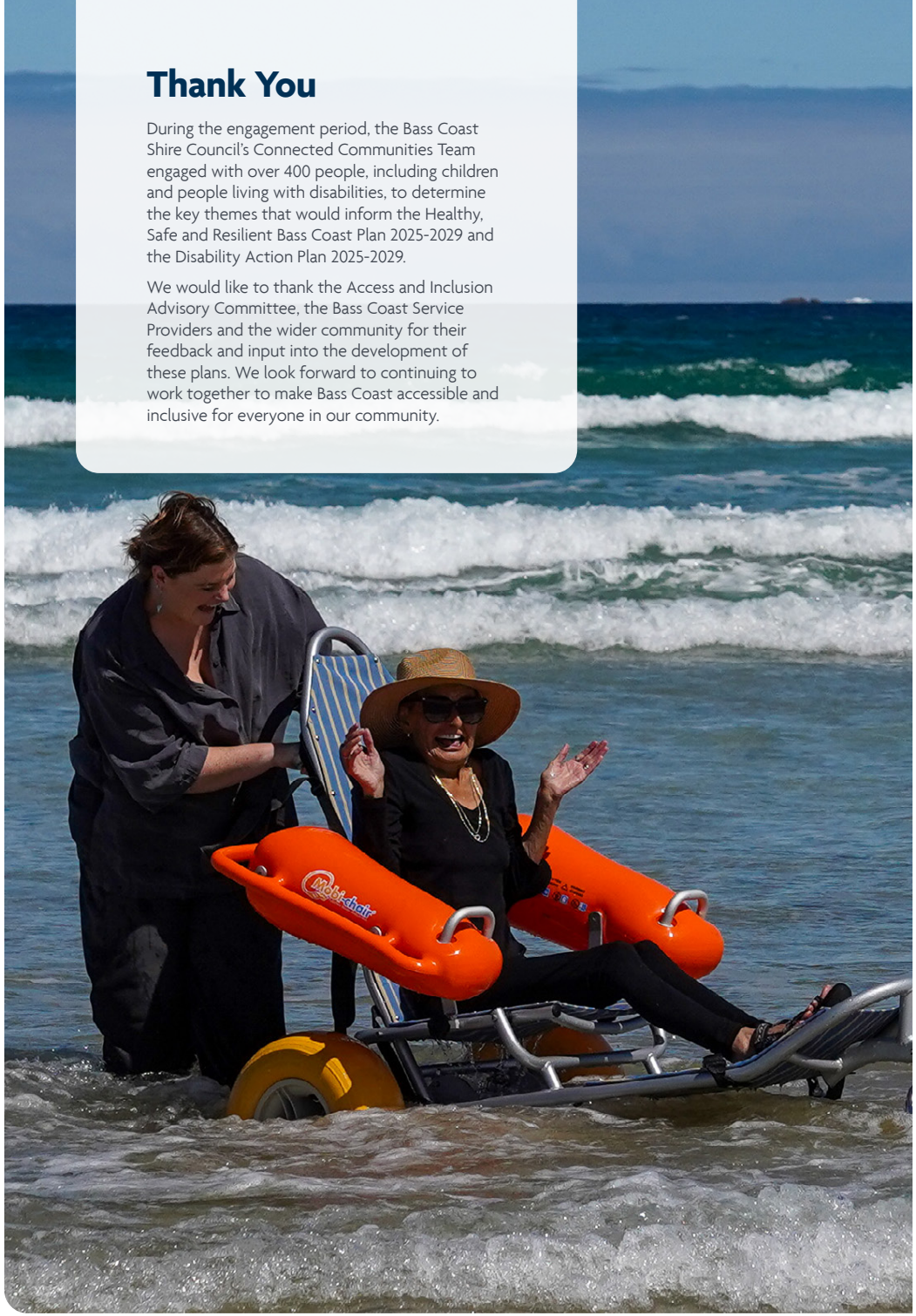
Role	What this looks like
Advocator	A person who speaks up or acts to support or protect the rights of others
Barriers	Things that make it hard for someone to take part, move around, or access something
Community engagement	Working together with people in a local area to listen, share ideas, and make decisions together
Council	A team from local government that works to improve the community
Collaborate	A person or group you work with to achieve a goal together
Co-design	Working together with people (especially those with lived experience) to create or improve something, from the start
Discrimination	Unfair treatment of someone because of their disability, race, gender, age, or other differences
DDA Compliance	Following the rules in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), which make sure people living with disabilities are treated fairly
Diversity	Having many kinds of people in a group – with different backgrounds, cultures, identities, or abilities
Employment	Having a job or work that earns money
Enable	To help make something happen more easily – like a meeting, program, or activity

Role	What this looks like
Inclusion	Making sure everyone can join in and be part of things, regardless of their background or abilities
Intersectionality	Understanding how different parts of a person's identity (like disability, race, gender) combine to affect their experiences
Lived experience	Personal knowledge or understanding that comes from going through something yourself
LGBTQIA+	People with diverse sexualities and gender identities: including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and others
Promoter	To share and spread helpful information, or to encourage people to learn about something
Regulator	To set and check rules to make sure things are safe, fair, or working properly
Sensory friendly	Environments that are calm and comfortable for people who are sensitive to noise, lights, smells, or touch
Service provider	A person or group that gives support or services, like health care, education or transport
The missing middle	People who don't need full-time support but still need some help – and often don't get enough services
Universal design	Design buildings, products, or services so that they work for everyone

Thank You

During the engagement period, the Bass Coast Shire Council's Connected Communities Team engaged with over 400 people, including children and people living with disabilities, to determine the key themes that would inform the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029 and the Disability Action Plan 2025-2029.

We would like to thank the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee, the Bass Coast Service Providers and the wider community for their feedback and input into the development of these plans. We look forward to continuing to work together to make Bass Coast accessible and inclusive for everyone in our community.



Message From Our Mayor



I am proud to present Bass Coast Shire Council's Disability Action Plan 2025-2029.

This Plan reflects the voices of more than 400 people in our community who shared their experiences, insights, and aspirations. Their contributions have been at the heart of shaping a vision for a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable Bass Coast.

Our community told us what matters most: safe and welcoming public spaces, better access to services, opportunities for genuine connection, and recognition that disability does not exist in isolation but intersects with all aspects of identity and daily life. This Plan takes those priorities and transforms them into clear, practical actions.

This Plan builds on the strong foundation of our Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025 and aligns closely with the Council Plan 2025-2029 and the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029. Together, these documents form a united approach to ensuring that inclusion and equity are at the centre of everything we do.

Council has an important role to play as an advocate, partner, and leader in removing barriers and creating opportunities. We know that true inclusion cannot be achieved by Council alone, it requires ongoing collaboration with community, service providers, and sector partners.

This Plan is a commitment to listen, to act, and to ensure that every person in Bass Coast has the chance to participate fully in communitay life.

On behalf of my fellow Councillors, I thank everyone who has contributed their voice to this Plan. Together, we will continue working towards a Bass Coast that is fairer, healthier, and more connected for all.

Cr Rochelle Halstead
Mayor, Bass Coast Shire Council

Executive Summary

The Disability Action Plan 2025 - 2029 (DAP) outlines Bass Coast Shire Council's commitment to creating an inclusive, accessible, and equitable community for all people living with and supporting disability. Shaped through engagement with over 400 community members, including carers, families, young people, and service providers, the DAP places lived experience at the centre of planning and action.

Aligned with the Council Plan 2025-2029 and the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029, the DAP supports a whole-of-Council approach to inclusion across services, programs, and infrastructure. It focuses on improving access to health and wellbeing services, ensuring welcoming public spaces, and fostering inclusive participation and community connection. The DAP also emphasises intersectionality and includes climate resilience to ensure people with disability are considered in emergency and environmental planning.

The DAP is also grounded in key legislative and human rights frameworks, including the Disability Act 2006 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). These frameworks affirm that inclusion is not only a matter of good practice but also a legislated human right, recognising the equal dignity, rights, and full participation of people with disability in society.

Council will act as an enabler, collaborator, advocate, and promoter to reduce barriers and support a community where all people can thrive. Progress will be tracked through Annual Action Plans and reporting, with ongoing opportunities for community feedback and review.

Community will be able to access the Annual Action Plans and reporting via the Access for All Bass Coast Shire Council Website.

We recognise the importance of being flexible and responsive to funding and community needs, so a new action summary will be released each year to reflect current priorities and opportunities.

Our Integrated Planning And Reporting Framework

Bass Coast Shire Council takes an integrated approach to strategic planning, one that connects community needs, long-term priorities and service delivery across all levels of the organisation. At the centre of this approach is the Bass Coast Shire Council Plan 2025-2029 (Council Plan), which sets the overarching direction and guides how resources are allocated, how advocacy is prioritised, and how outcomes are delivered through a network of aligned strategies.

This includes:

- The Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029 (Healthy, Safe and Resilient Plan), which delivers on Council's legislative obligations and local priorities for community health and wellbeing
- The Disability Action Plan 2025-2029 (DAP), which drives equity, access and inclusion across Council's policies, services and built environment.
- A suite of supporting documents, including the Long-Term Financial Plan, Asset Plan, and Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030 which provide the tools and frameworks to implement and resource Council's strategic intent.

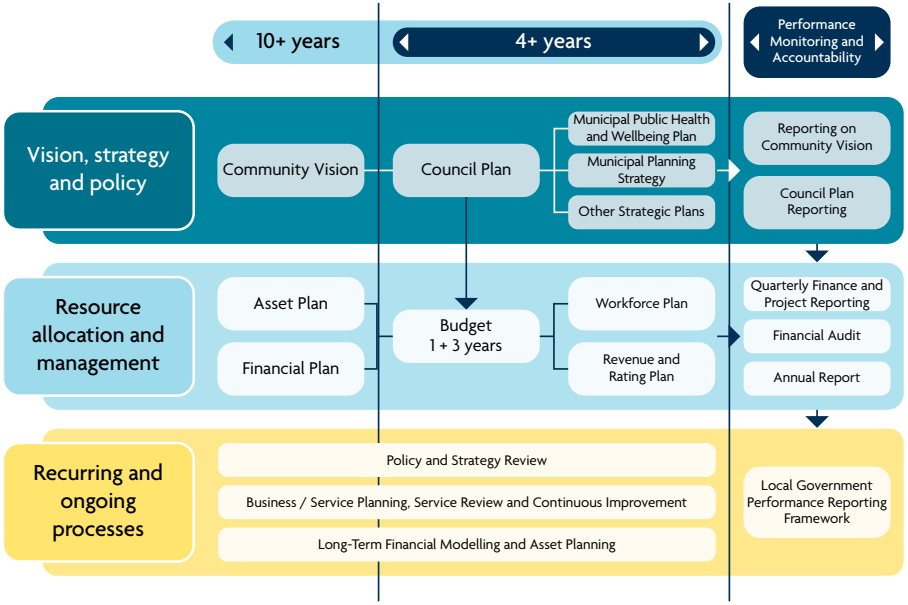
These plans are not developed in isolation. They are connected through shared objectives, monitoring and evaluation tools, and a unified delivery framework that ensures collective impact. Each plan aligns directly to one or more priorities within the Council Plan, enabling a whole-of-Council approach that is focused, measurable and community-driven.

Under the *Disability Act 2006*, each Victorian council will prepare a four-year Disability Action Plan within 12 months of Council elections. Local Councils' have legal obligations to ensure their services, facilities and employment practices are free from discrimination and accessible to all community members.

Council's responsibilities are:

- Ensuring access to public spaces and services
- Prevent both direct and indirect discrimination
- Provide reasonable adjustment to support carers, assistance animals and disability aids
- Provide information in accessible formats
- Manage complaints and support advocacy
- Ensure non-discriminatory practices in Council recruitment and employment processes

Integrated Planning Reporting Framework



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EASY READ

Bass Coast Shire Council works with community to make plans to help everyone.

The Main Plan – Council Plan

The Council Plan is the big plan. It shows:

- What is most important
- Where money goes
- What Council will work on

Council also has other plans to support the big plan:

Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan

- Helps people stay well and safe

Disability Action Plan (DAP)

- Helps make things fair for people with disability

Other Support Plans

- Plans for money, buildings and the environment



SUPPORTED READ

How To Read The Disability Action Plan

The DAP has been developed for people living with disability, their families, friends, support providers and carers.

Guided by Accessible Design principles, this Plan is designed to be easy to read, navigate and understand for everyone. It outlines key facts, emerging trends and clear goals to improve the experiences of people living with disability in our communities.

We encourage individuals, families, carers and service providers to download or print the DAP and share it within their networks.

To support accessibility, **Easy Read** sections are embedded throughout. These are shown in the shaded light purple sections throughout the DAP. They provide helpful summaries and ensure that everyone can engage with the DAP.

Have a question or suggestion for how we can improve accessibility in the Bass Coast?

Get in touch via the contact information found in the Easy Read section here.



EASY READ

EASY READ PAGES

How To Read This Document

This document is designed to be readable by all people.

The shaded light purple sections throughout the Plan are in Easy Read.

In sections where there is no shaded text, refer to pictures and icons.

We have met with a large sample of the community to get these findings.

We thank all the communities for their feedback and contributions to this Plan.

We want you to be part of this Plan. You can:

- Download or print the Plan
- Write or draw your ideas on the pages at the back
- Talk to us about your ideas to make things better

Contact

Contact us here:

(03) 5671 2211
basscoast@basscoast.vic.gov.au

Speak to Listen users:

Call 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 226 278

National Feedback Service:

Follow the prompts on the Bass Coast Shire Council website

Introduction

Bass Coast Shire Council's Access and Inclusion Plan 2021 – 2025 built a strong base for inclusion through collaboration and community partnerships. It identified key themes in accessibility, inclusion, equity, and participation, that reflected the needs and aspirations of our communities.

The Disability Action Plan 2025-2029 builds on this progress. It outlines how we will continue working to make Bass Coast more accessible, inclusive, and fair for people living with disability. The DAP will guide decision-making and prioritise roles that reduce barriers, through clear policy direction and a strong sense of purpose.

Council aims to foster connection and equity ensuring people living with disability have real choice and the opportunity to participate in community life.

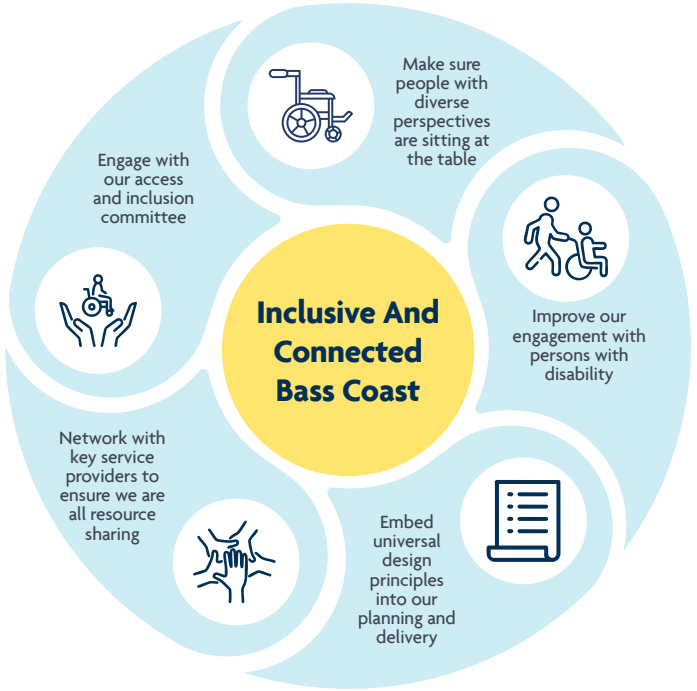


Valuing Diversity And Inclusion

People's lives are enriched by a wide range of experiences, identities, and backgrounds including gender identity, age, and culture. This diversity is one of Bass Coast's greatest strengths, we proudly celebrate the unique contributions, stories, and perspectives of everyone who lives, works, plays and visits our community. It is this intersectionality, that prompts us to embed a holistic, person-centred approach when planning.

Disability is a natural part of human diversity. It can influence how someone moves, communicates, thinks, or interacts with others. When we acknowledge this diversity, we help build healthier, and more connected communities.

Recognising the connections between disability, mental health, neurodiversity, and LGBTQIA+ identities is key to fostering meaningful inclusion. By actively listening to people with lived experience, we can co-design actions that are inclusive, responsive, and reflective of the rich diversity across Bass Coast.





To support people with disability as our community grows and changes, Council will:

- **Listen to and work alongside people with disability**, recognising the many different identities and life experiences people bring
- **Plan with diversity in mind**, ensuring our services, spaces, programs and information are accessible to everyone, not just the majority
- **Use a person-centred approach** in our decision making, putting fairness, dignity and equity at the centre
- **Improve how we collect and use community feedback**, so our planning better reflects the real needs and strengths of all people in Bass Coast
- **Partner with groups and organisations** that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTQIA+ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, older people, young people and others who may experience additional barriers.

EASY READ

The DAP helps make our community more fair, inclusive, and welcoming for people with disability, so everyone can take part and feel supported.

Council will:

- Listen to you
- Plan with you
- Make fair and respectful decisions
- Work with groups that support people who may face extra challenges
- Ask you for your feedback
- Report back to you with outcomes



Our Legislative Responsibility

In Australia

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031 (ADS) is a framework that guides all Australian governments. It sets out a plan for continuing to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia over 10 years.

In Victoria

The *Disability Act 2006* sets out what councils and other public organisations need to do to make sure people with disability can fully take part in community life. Actions to enable full participation include:

- Making it easier for people with disability to access spaces and facilities
- Create fair opportunities for employment
- Support being active in community life
- Changing attitudes and practices that can discriminate against a person with disability.

The law recognises that disability includes physical and sensory disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health conditions and more. Supporting inclusion in Victoria, the Disability Inclusion Bill acts to make sure there is better coordination accountability across government. We are also guided by Inclusive Victoria, a plan which sets out a vision for a fairer Victoria.

The plan promotes big picture reforms with a focus on:

- Building inclusive communities
- Improving health, wellbeing and housing
- Creating fairness and safety for all
- Providing opportunities for people with disability to lead and be recognised.

In Bass Coast

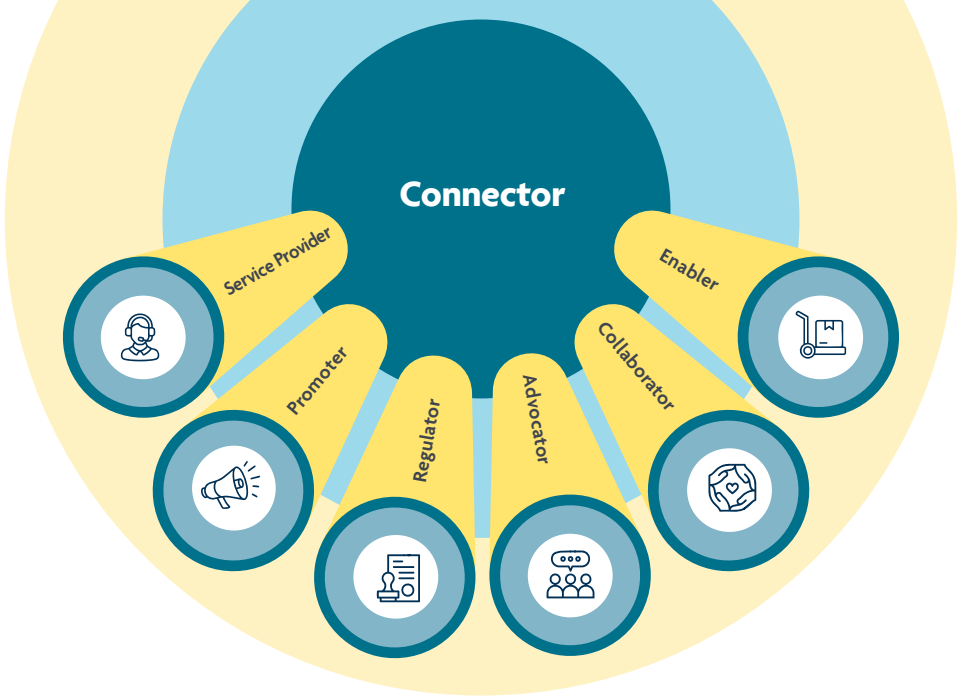
Advocating for practices that make people feel safe, confident and included is a vital role for local government. We have a direct connection to people living in the community and we can shape the places where people live, work, play and connect.

As part of the regulatory and legislative framework we work to include everyone by:

- Reducing barriers
- Designing service, programs and spaces that include everyone
- Listen and partner with people in the community living with disability
- Create a community where people feel safe, valued and connected.

This framework ensures people with disability have a say in planning and decision making.





Our Role

We play a role in supporting inclusion by developing a Plan to:

Enabler: We bring people together to identify and resolve challenges, spark ideas and lead actions that make our community more inclusive and welcoming.

Collaborator: We work with people with lived experience, community groups, services and businesses to create solutions that improve access and inclusion.

Advocator: We speak up for the needs and rights of people living with disability, making sure their voices are heard.

Regulator: We help make local spaces, services and events are safe and accessible so that everyone can be a part of community life.

Promoter: We share information, raises awareness and encourage community participation to improve knowledge, engagement and positive health outcomes.

Service Provider: We deliver services and programs for everyone that celebrate and promote wellbeing, connection and being part of our community.

EASY READ

Local Councils Help Make The Community Safe, Welcoming, And Fair For Everyone

As part of our role, we work to include people with disability by:

- Removing barriers that make life harder
- Designing services, programs, and spaces that work for everyone
- Listening to people living with disability and working together
- Creating a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and included

We want people living with disability to have a say in planning and decisions about our community.



How Do We Ensure People With A Disability Have A Say Locally?

Bass Coast Shire Council Access And Inclusion Committee

The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC) plays a vital role in ensuring our Council remains responsive, inclusive, and equitable for all members in our communities. By providing informed advice, lived experience, and a diverse range of perspectives, the AIAC helps guide policies and initiatives that break down barriers to participation and foster a more accessible and welcoming environment.

Some projects that the AIAC has consulted in 2024-2025 are listed below:

- Collaborated with as key stakeholders during the Accessible Beaches Audit
- Advocated for improved footpaths and accessible parking
- Contributed to road safety advocacy and consultation.
- Provided accessibility advice to support the improvement of parks and community spaces

EASY READ

The Access And Inclusion Committee

The Access and Inclusion Committee helps Council include everyone in the community.

The Committee gives advice to help Council make better choices and plans.

They talk about how to:

- Make things fair
- Include more people
- Remove barriers that make it hard for people to join in

The Committee worked on many projects; here are some examples:

- Beach access
- Better footpaths and parking
- Safer roads
- Better parks and community spaces

Understanding Disability In Bass Coast

People with disability contribute valuable knowledge, insights, and experiences to our communities. However, they can encounter barriers caused by attitudes, design, or limited access to services and supports.

As our population grows and changes, alongside rising living costs, climate challenges, and an ageing demographic, it's increasingly important to ensure our places, services, and systems are accessible and adaptable for all.

While population data helps us understand broader trends, it doesn't always capture the full picture. Many people living with disability are underrepresented in the data, and access to current, detailed information can be limited. That's why listening to people with local, lived experience is essential to shaping inclusive policies, services, and spaces that reflect real community needs.



Living With Different Abilities

Disability looks different for everyone. It can affect how people move, think, feel, communicate, or take part in community life. This includes areas such as work, study, recreation, and caring for themselves or others. Disability can also impact social roles, such as being a parent, friend, employee, volunteer, or community member. These roles may be harder to take on or maintain if environments, attitudes, or systems are not inclusive or accessible.

5.1%

Speak a language other than English at home

1%

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

26%

Report they have a disability

7.1%

Have a disability that requires assistance



Understanding disability in Bass Coast:

- 26% of people report having a disability
- 7.1% of people live with a disability that requires assistance

Understanding disability in Gippsland

- 50% of people aged 65+ live with disability
- 7.8% of people living with severe or profound disability

Understanding other demographic data in Bass Coast

- 1.1% of people in Bass Coast say they are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 29.6% of people in Bass Coast are aged 65 or older
- The average income in Bass Coast is lower than in the rest of Victoria and Australia

In regional Victoria:

- 6.9% of people in regional Victoria need support with everyday tasks
- 15% of adults and 23% of children live below the poverty line
- Many people face extra challenges because they live long distances from services. This can result in people experiencing more serious disadvantage

In Australia:

- 77% of people with a disability have a physical disability
- 23% of people with a disability have a mental health or behavioural disability
- Other common disabilities include blindness, hearing loss, deafness and autism
- Nearly 1 in 4 people aged 80-84 need help with daily activities
- 32% of people with disability feel high or very high levels of stress or distress, only 8% of people without disability feel the same

Barriers Faced By People With A Disability In Bass Coast



People living with disability in Bass Coast have told us about the things that make it harder for them to live healthy, active and connected lives. These barriers exist in many parts of daily life from getting around, finding work, staying healthy, and accessing safe and inclusive spaces.

These issues matter because they prevent people from fully participating in our communities. Working towards removing these barriers will help create a Bass Coast where everyone belongs.

Health And Wellbeing

People shared that it is not always easy to stay healthy and well in Bass Coast.

Some of the key barriers include:

- Long wait times to access health specialists, especially for mental health and paediatric services
- The cost of health care can make it harder to get support when needed
- A lack of accessible activities that support physical and mental wellbeing

Access To Spaces And Places

Being able to move freely and safely around our community is essential.

People told us:

- Some parks, beaches and other public spaces are not accessible for people with mobility devices
- Footpaths and roads are not always safe or easy to use
- Poor lighting and unsafe pathways make people feel less safe

Housing, Work And Volunteering

People with disability face challenges when trying to:

- Find housing that is affordable, accessible and close to services
- Secure jobs and volunteering opportunities that are inclusive and flexible
- Engage with workplaces and activities that understand and support their needs



Transport And Getting Around

Access to transport was a common concern.

People told us:

- Public transport timetables don't always meet people's needs
- Infrequent or inaccessible transport makes it harder to get to shops, work, health care and activities
- Getting around safely with mobility aids is often difficult

Inclusion And Community Connection

People want to feel welcome, included and connected to others.

However:

- Some activities and community places are not designed with disability in mind
- Everyday activities, like visiting a café, can be difficult if the space isn't accessible
- Neurodivergent people experience misunderstanding and a lack of local support
- Families, friends and carers need more support, especially while waiting for assessments or services

These barriers limit people's independence, wellbeing and connection to community life. The stories shared by our communities help us understand what needs to change so we can build a more connected Bass Coast. Using data and information from diverse communities, can assist Council in determining what role is required to improve supports to areas of Bass Coast that have more people living with disability.

EASY READ

People with disability in **Bass Coast** have told us about the things that make life harder for them.

These things are called **barriers.**

Barriers can make it harder to:

- Stay healthy
- Get around
- Find work or a place to live
- Feel safe and included

When people face barriers, they may not be able to:

- Take part in everyday life
- Be active in their community
- Feel connected and supported

What Our Communities Told Us



To help shape this Plan, we spoke directly with people living with disability and their family members. Through our Engage Bass Coast website, we invited the broader community to share their personal experiences of health and wellbeing in the region. People attended targeted sessions and pop-up events, while others contributed through focus groups.

These conversations gave valuable insight into how living in Bass Coast impacts the health and wellbeing of people living with disability and people supporting a disability in the home and workplace.

We were guided by the insights shared by:

- LGBTQIA+ youth (16-25) focus group
- Disability Service Providers focus group
- Families and carers with disabilities engaged on the key themes of this Plan and the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029 via in-person sessions
- The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- A stakeholders workshop which included a diverse range of local health and support organisations

These groups included neurodiverse people, non-binary people, and young people living in and out of home.

The ideas and experiences shared by the communities have played a key role in shaping this Plan. We're committed to continuing the conversation, seeking feedback, listening to new perspectives, and working together to design future actions.



EASY READ

How We Listened To Communities

We listened to people in different ways:

- People shared their feedback on **Engage Bass Coast**, our community engagement website
- People came to **focus groups and workshops** to share their ideas
- We held **pop-up events** in the community

People told us how living in Bass Coast affects their **health and wellbeing.**



Who We Spoke With

We listened to a range of people with disability and those who support them, including:

- **LGBTQIA+ young people** (ages 16-25) This group included: neurodivergent people, non-binary people, and young people living in and out of home
- **Disability service providers** shared their views
- **The Access and Inclusion Committee**
- We held a **workshop** with local partners

The feedback from these sessions helped us with this Plan and the Safe, Healthy and Resilient Bass Coast Plan.

What We Heard

> *"I'm a carer of my adult disabled daughter... We moved to this community in order to give her a better adult life.*

- Getting around our community can be challenging with a disability (e.g. paths, roads, access to the beach and the infrequent public transport)
- People want fair access to services that support a healthy and active life
- Intersectionality influences how easy it is to access services
- People in our community want to be involved in the planning of spaces and places (e.g. parkland design)
- A gender and diversity lens should be applied to achieve meaningful consultation
- People in our community want better resources and services to improve mental health
- People in our community want preventative actions to reduce violence as people living with disability have a higher risk of experiencing violence. Violence can include intimate partner violence and emotional and economic abuse
- People recognised that gender impact needs to be considered in how people access the community
- People want greater community connection
- People in our community want increased opportunities to be active

Active Lives, Connected Communities

Participants were asked about their views and experience being active in Bass Coast. We asked about participation in activities that help people look after their mental health and feel connected in the community. We asked about being able to eat healthy food, being able to move from education or volunteering into work and about managing climate change. It was identified that it was important to offer programs that allow people to be physically active. Additionally, having limited activities available within a radius of the home, lack of community awareness of invisible disabilities and past negative experiences can also be barriers to participation, especially when trying something new.



> *I have mental health issues, so I find it really hard. I have to make myself get out and do stuff, because otherwise I would just sit at home. So that was one of the reasons I took up volunteering, was to make sure I get out.*

Some people in Bass Coast find technology a barrier when trying to get active, whether it's looking up information or making a booking to join in. As we look to the future, we see digital tools like telehealth, online platforms, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) playing a bigger role in how people access services, connect with others, and stay healthy. By supporting the community to use these innovations, we can make sure our work keeps up with changing needs and continues to support the community effectively.

> *"It was a big thing for me this year to make myself get out and do something. But I do feel better for it. Sometimes, you know, you just think, I just want to curl up in a cocoon and not do anything. But I guess we will have days like that.*



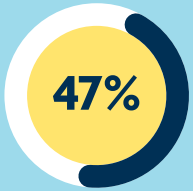


Abuse before age 15: **20%** of people with a disability compared to **10%** without





Sexual and intimate partner violence in women: **25%** of women with a disability compared to **15%** without





47% of adults living with a disability have experienced violence after the age of 15 years

Safe Spaces

Everyone deserves to feel safe at home, in public and in relationships. However, research shows that people living with disability in Australia are more likely to experience violence, abuse and harassment than people without disability. This includes physical harm, sexual violence, and emotional or financial abuse. These experiences can have a lasting impact on a person's safety, wellbeing and ability to live freely.

Abuse and violence take many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional violence and economic abuse. Women aged 18 and over living with disability are more likely to have recent experiences of violence, abuse and harassment than women without disability. Both men and women living with disability report having experienced more physical violence compared with people without disability.

Women with psychosocial disability have experienced more physical violence than other women with disability. Violence, discrimination and exclusion can be linked.

Council is committed to making Bass Coast a safer and more inclusive place for all.

Towards A Climate-Ready Community

> *"A venue would be great to open up if you knew you were going to have a few days of over 30 degrees.*

Changes to our climate can severely affect people in the community. Council declared a climate emergency and developed the **Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2030.** Foreshore erosion and increased risk of bushfire are two examples of the impact that the climate change is having on our community. These events can be especially hard for people living with disability.

Emergencies can increase risks to people living with disability, including physical barriers like, extreme heat, fire and flooding that make it harder to leave their location safely. Additionally, stress and anxiety can increase during and after emergencies and delay time in accessing support.

Accessing accurate information, planning and being able to reach safe places quickly are important, particularly in more rural or remote areas of the Shire. Council is actively working to reduce local emissions, support community resilience and include people living with disability in emergency and climate planning.

Helping our community accept the effects of climate change and adapt to the changes s important. We want to help people to stay safe, informed and supported.

Parks, Reserves And The Natural Environment

> *"There is a real lack of accessible services... especially mental health and disability supports.*

The coastal and outdoor environments are valued greatly by the people of Bass Coast. Fresh air, physical activity, relaxation and activity are essential for our health and wellbeing. Some of our community told us that improving facilities and more inclusive designs could allow more people to experience the benefits of outdoor life.

Linking paths and roads to increase accessibility for people who are less mobile will enable increased participation in community life.



Support When and Where It Is Needed

Accessing services to assist with diagnosis, treatment and ongoing support can be challenging in Bass Coast. Community members can experience long wait times to access health professionals. Often the services that they need to access are outside the Shire. Limited public transport can mean, that their one appointment can take up most of a day.

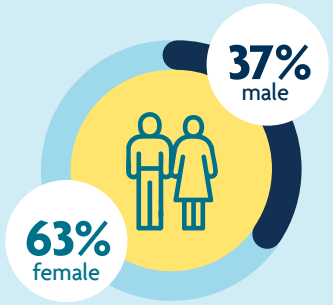
Finding the right home can be hard for people living with disability. If housing is in the wrong location, it can make it harder for people to independently get to the shops, services and take part in community life. Council has been working with government to improve housing availability through the **Bass Coast Housing Strategy 2024.**

It is important that we continue to work together and advocate for more housing options that meet the diverse needs of our community, including people with disability.

When people have access to housing close to services, friends, family, and the things they enjoy, they are more likely to feel connected, supported, and less isolated.



15% of Bass Coast adults sought help for a mental health issue vs 20% in Victoria



3% aged between 10-19
22% aged between 60-89

Recognising Carers

Not everyone living with disability has carers supporting them, however, many do. In Bass Coast, 5,048 people provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition or old age, this represents 14.6% of the population aged 15 years and over. Carers in Bass Coast range in age from 10 to 89 years, with the majority (63%) identifying as female, and 37% identifying as male.

Many parents, siblings and spouses provide care. The role that carers play as supporters, advocates and enablers is vital. Sometimes, carer responsibilities can reduce people's ability to work or participate in other activities. When carers are well, they can provide better supports to their family member, spouse or friend. Supporting carers is important to ensure the wellbeing of carers and the people they care for.



EASY READ

The Disability Action Plan

What it is, where we have come from, where we are going.

What we heard from communities

Being Active and Connected

- People want to stay active and feel part of the community
- People are experiencing barriers, such as not enough local programs, technology issues, and invisible disabilities
- We need safe, inclusive spaces for all ages, abilities, and genders

Feeling Safe

- People with disability face more risk of violence and abuse.
- This includes emotional, physical, and financial abuse

Climate Change

- Climate change is already affecting Bass Coast (like erosion and bushfire risk)
- People with disability face more challenges during emergencies
- We need better plans, safe places, and clear information

Nature and Parks

- People value parks and beaches, but not all can access them
- We need better paths, roads, and inclusive designs so everyone can enjoy nature
- Access to Support
- It can be hard to get medical help or support nearby
- Transport and long waits make this harder

Housing

- Finding an accessible, affordable home near services is difficult.
- Council is working with others to improve housing options.

Supporting Carers

- Many people in Bass Coast care for a family member with disability.
- Carers need support too, so they can stay well and continue helping others

Key Themes

The Disability Action Plan and the Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029 are key documents driving Council and the community's pursuit for increased positive health outcomes for people living in and visiting the Bass Coast. The key areas include:



Together, the key themes recognise both the strengths and needs of our community. They reflect our priorities for action and acknowledge the barriers people face in living well, whether that's accessing services, feeling safe and connected, or maintaining health and wellbeing. These themes are designed to work together, supporting our vision of a healthy, safe and resilient Bass Coast.

While each has a distinct focus, they all contribute to improving equity, strengthening connection, and creating environments where communities can thrive.

Our success measures are practical and reflect Council's unique role in each area. Not every key theme requires Council to act in the same way, sometimes we enable, sometimes we facilitate or advocate, and in some areas, we deliver services directly. These roles vary depending on the nature of the challenge and the partnerships already in place. Our monitoring focuses on what Council can realistically influence through our policies, services, partnerships and advocacy.

Disability, Safety, Health and Resilience

Here's how the key themes from Healthy, Safe and Resilient Bass Coast Plan 2025-2029 link to this plan.

Healthy And Active Living

Council contributes to healthy, active living by creating environments and opportunities that make it easier for people to stay active, access nutritious food, and support their mental wellbeing. Through partnerships, programs, infrastructure and advocacy, we help make healthy choices part of everyday life, supporting long-term community wellbeing and reducing preventable health issues.

Role	What This Looks Like In Action	How We Monitor Change	Easy Read
Promoter	Elevate the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee as a key stakeholder to engage on relevant projects.	Number of projects per year that formally engaged the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee.	Making sure there is a voice from people with disabilities in Council planning and delivery.
Promoter	Promote accessible spaces, services and activities across the community.	Number of accessible spaces, services and activities across the community promoted across council marketing platforms.	Support sharing knowledge and resources from services and programs to reach a wider audience.
Collaborator	Partner with service providers to collaborate on programs, projects and services to improve health outcomes for people living with disability and their Carers.	Number of collaborative projects delivered each year that focus on improving health outcomes.	Work with service providers to make sure programs and services meet people's needs today.
Advocator	Champion for investment with service providers and community organisations to enable healthier choices.	Number of increased advocacy submissions made and delivery of new or improved projects.	Speak up and ask for financial support so people can make healthier choices.



Safe And Inclusive Communities

Helping people feel safe, welcome and connected where they live, work and play. Council contributes to safe, inclusive communities by shaping environments that promote belonging, prevent harm and support connection. Through partnerships, programs and advocacy, we create opportunities for people to participate, feel valued and strengthen their wellbeing through social connection.

Role	What This Looks Like In Action	How We Monitor Change	Easy Read
Promoter	Lead and support initiatives to promote community activities and education that build connection and visibility.	Number of community members attended, and number of community events supported by Council.	Support organisations to lead educational activities, bringing people together.
Enabler	Apply a disability, neurodiversity and gender lens to relevant projects to ensure accessibility is improved, not reduced.	Number of projects where accessibility features were added or improved.	Create safe and welcoming spaces where everyone can take part.
Advocator	Advocate for Universal Design principles to be embedded in businesses, community spaces and places.	Number of projects and/or businesssness improved through Universal Design intiatives.	Speak up to improve existing community spaces and businesses so that everyone can use them easily.



Equitable Access & Social Infrastructure

Making it easier for everyone to access services, spaces and opportunities to live well. Council contributes to equitable access through planning, infrastructure, advocacy and partnerships that reduce barriers to participation and ensure services and facilities meet diverse community needs.

Role	What This Looks Like In Action	How We Monitor Change	Easy Read
Enabler	Implement practical initiatives that reduce participation barriers.	Number of new accessibility initatives delivered.	Work together within Council to help reduce barriers in the community.
Collaborator	Support the Integrated Transport Strategy in the delivery of improved road and pathway accessibility around the Shire.	Track how many transport projects include improved accessibility features, and collect feedback from community members about their experience.	Support the improvement of roads and pathways.
Advocator	Advocate to State Government and other supporting bodies for grant funding to improve accessibility that goes beyond minimum standards.	Number of successful grants or advocacy outcomes that improve accessibility.	Support changes in the community that go beyond what is expected by law.
Advocator	Advocate for the removal of physical barriers to movement in public spaces.	Number of physical barriers removed in public spaces.	Removing obsticles from places where people move.



Thriving Children And Young People

Creating opportunities for children and young people to grow, belong and lead. Council contributes by embedding the needs of children and young people in planning, fostering partnerships and supporting services that enable strong foundations for health, learning, connection and wellbeing.

Role	What This Looks Like In Action	How We Monitor Change	Easy Read
Collaborator	Collaborate with schools, sports clubs and community groups to reduce barriers and to support service linkage.	Number of schools, community groups and sports clubs engaged.	Connect with school and sport club leaders to better outcomes for everyone.
Facilitator	Support programs that are co-designed and empower young people with disabilities to thrive.	Number of increased co-designed projects that partner with youth living with disabilities.	Support giving youth living with disabilities a voice on decision making.



Country, Connection And Climate

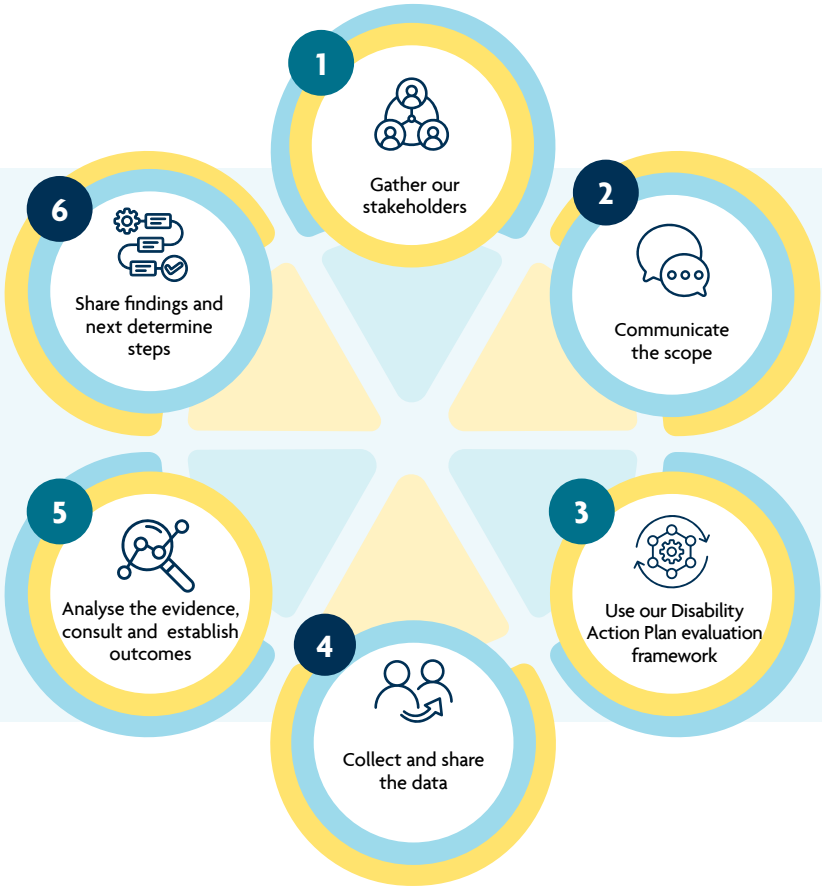
Strengthening connection to Country, protecting our environment, and building resilience for a sustainable future. Council contributes by embedding sustainability, resilience and cultural connection in planning and action. We walk alongside Traditional Owners and partners to create sustainable, climate-ready communities connected to place and culture.

Role	What This Looks Like In Action	How We Monitor Change	Easy Read
Collaborator	Collaborate with people with a disability, LGBTQIA+, First Nations persons and strengthen relationships between service providers and Council to create better resources for community.	Number of partnership-based approaches with First Nations persons, LGBTQIA+ and people living with disability.	Work with First Nations people, people living with disability, and LGBTQIA+ people. We know that some people belong to more than one of these groups.
Promoter	Promote co-designed initiatives for climate change and emergency planning for people living with disabilities and Carers.	Number of increased initiatives directed at carers and people living with disability.	We will listen to older adults, share ideas, and learn from each other to be better prepared for emergencies.
Enabler	Embed better accessibility measures to relief and recovery sites and activities.	Number of improved measures to support good access at relief and recovery sites.	Make planning for an emergency for accessible for everyone.

Monitoring Our Progress

Next Steps

Each year, we will review the work delivered in Bass Coast and check the outcomes against this Plan. As we move through the next 4 years, we'll work closely with our partners and community groups to see what is working and what needs to improve.





We will share a progress report each year showing what we have achieved and what we plan to do next. We will make the report accessible to everyone in the community by providing it:

- Online on the **Access for All** page on Council's website
- in hard copy at libraries
- at Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee meetings
- at Service Provider Network meetings

We will also share social stories and demonstrate good practice throughout the year.

We will use clear indicators from the Action Plan to track our progress.

The yearly check in will help us:

- ✓ see what goals we've reached
- ✓ understand what we've delivered to the community
- ✓ earn and make changes if needed
- ✓ plan for the years ahead.

This review will be done together with our partners and the community to see what is working well and what we might need to do differently. Council will use the outcomes of this to identify barriers in systems and processes. Our Social Planner and people with disability will be key people in evaluating the outcomes of the plan.

Want To Improve Accessibility In Bass Coast? Tell Us Here:

Draw Here:

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Drop Off Your Ideas To Us At:

Access and Equity
Social Planner
Bass Coast Shire Council
76 McBride Ave,
Wonthaggi. 3995

Berninneit, Cowes
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Cowes 3922

Grantville Transaction Centre
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Grantville 3984

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