



Living a Life.....Local Government

2006 has been another great year for Local Government in addressing access issues both internally, across its own services and facilities, as well as within the broader community.

Victoria has again led the way in the 'access for all' stakes with a total of 62 of the 72 municipal Councils within the state having Disability Actions Plans registered on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website. NSW follows with 47, SA with 21 with the other States generally in planning or development stages.

Since AAA began working with Local Government many years ago, huge improvements have occurred in this sector. The influence of the Rural and Metro Access positions in Councils within Victoria has made a significant contribution to access improvements and AAA has been privileged to work with most of these dedicated, innovative and smart operators. Smart being the operative word, as many of these staff are often required to work within very limited resources across very large geographic areas.

AAA has provided hundreds of training sessions and presentations into Local Councils and can attest to how they are changing the way that services and facilities are planned, developed and managed at a local level as well as the influence they have had on the broader public agenda to support access for all. Local Government staff have the knowledge, the know how and the 'nouse to get the job done effectively, in line with the needs of their local communities.

As with all Australians, we live a life in a Local Government municipality. Our quality of life as well as our ability to participate in a wide range of activities and use many services is significantly impacted upon by the positive or negative responses of Local Councils. In terms of access, many local Council staff are leading the way in ensuring that everyone can be involved and experience the benefits and opportunities provided by an accessible municipality. Congratulations and keep up the good work in 2007.

Some of the achievements of Local Government are highlighted in this edition of Access News, in recognition of the International Day of People with a disAbility celebrated each year on December 3rd.

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Access Audits Australia

provides a wide range of services including access audits, training and advice.



The AAA team thanks you for your support during 2006 and extends our warmest wishes to all for the Festive Season.

We will be closing for holidays on Friday 22nd December and re opening on Monday 22nd January 2007.

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Scoot Wheel 'n' Move.....

'Maintaining your Mobility in Maroondah Booklet' has been developed by the Maroondah Scoot Wheel 'n' Move initiative, a group of local people who are passionate and dedicated to improving access in their local community for everyone. The initiative demonstrates how local people can get involved in local issues and make a difference. It is aimed at increasing the community's awareness of motorised scooters and electronic wheelchairs, as well as to assist people to make an informed choice when buying a motorised scooter and how to manage it responsibly.



Access Initiatives Hobsons Bay

Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to enhancing equal opportunities for inclusion and participation in community life for people with a disability.

During the past 12 months, Council has worked towards enhancing community life for people with disability in a number of ways including:

- Launching a *Services and Information for People with Disabilities Directory* and the *Hobsons Bay Mobility Map*.
- Providing disability awareness training on a regular basis to promote staff members' understanding of issues surrounding disability.
- Providing training focused specifically on disability access issues such as the redevelopment of the foyer at the Hobsons Bay Civic Centre, improving access in parks, playgrounds and outdoor areas, and understanding barrier free access for statutory planners.
- Developing strategies to increase access and inclusion for people with a disability at local festivals.

To the Bush...

- Towong Shire allocates funds annually to community groups to improve access for people with a disability in the community.
- Indigo Shire implemented the 'trading places', footpath policy, which informs traders in regard to providing safe unhindered travel for community members on public footpaths.
- City of Wodonga has allocated funds to upgrade toilets in Council buildings as well as re-visiting their signage policy to comply with the DDA.
- The City of Greater Shepparton is reviewing its CBD areas to identify access improvements
- Murrindindi Shire Council is undertaking an Inclusiveness Planning Project to identify access issues and plan improvements across the municipality.
- Gannawarra Shire Council is implementing a **Good Access is Good Business**® Program to raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities to traders of providing an accessible environment for all customers.



Memories at Monash

A digital storytelling project involving people from the City of Monash and City of Whitehorse, documenting their individual experience of civic participation has been produced. This DVD aims to raise awareness of the valuable contribution people with disabilities can and do make in their community. It also aims to encourage organisations to consider how they provide more meaningful opportunities that reflect our diverse community and include people with a disability.



Mobility Centre making our City more accessible

The Melbourne Mobility Centre is located on the first floor, lower level of Federation Square car park. It is a unique service dedicated to improving access in the heart of Melbourne. People with disabilities, older people and anyone needing a little extra help can access a range of services which make getting around the City both easy and enjoyable.

Features of the centre include:

- Equipment for hire, including motorised wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs, scooters, walking frames, crutches and canes for the vision impaired
- Two fully accessible toilets
- Proximity to accessible car parking and/or a drop-off point
- Discounted parking fees at Federation Square
- Information for people with mobility and sensory disabilities
- Information about city attractions, events and facilities
- TTY telephone and accessible web access
- Scooter battery re-charge facilities
- Accessible tea, coffee and water facilities
- Volunteer commissioner services, including companion services, transfer services and 'meet and greet' services
- Keys (MLAK) provide for 24 hour access to toilets located in seven parks in the City
- Delivery and pick up of mobility equipment to and from hotels can be negotiated for a fee.

Banyule Access Awards

As Banyule City Council celebrates International Day of People with a DisAbility, sporting identity Jason McCartney, one of the faces of the Bali bombings, will present the 2006 Banyule Access Awards to individuals, organisations, and services nominated by the community that:

- Improve services, premises, fittings, or equipment to become more accessible and inclusive of people of all disabilities.
- Provide information in accessible formats or easy English.
- Install induction hearing loops or tactile surface indicators.
- Educate, train, or resource the community to include people with disabilities, or; Support community inclusion of people with disabilities.

Classy Calendar 2007

Nillumbik Shire Council is in the final planning stages of its 2007 ***Celebrating Diversity and Promoting Inclusion Calendar***. Sponsorship opportunities have been provided to local businesses to support the production of the Calendar. The aim is to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of diversity in the community. The beautifully designed calendar with great photos from around Nillumbik Shire, will be available in December. **AAA is proud to be a Gold Sponsor and will have a number of copies to give away.** Contact AAA if you would like a copy.

Footpath Trading - Moving Through the Maze

Throughout 2006 AAA has worked with many Councils on the development of a variety of Footpath Trading Policies. These projects have involved consultation with the community, education session to traders identifying why ***Good Access is Good Business***® and supporting the implementation process to ensure that everyone benefits from improved access throughout shopping precincts. Initially some traders can be wary of the changes required, however overwhelming feedback from many traders, once they understand the benefits and opportunities available when the new arrangements are in place, is very positive. They are seeing people coming into their businesses that would never come before. Why? Because they could not get along the footpath easily and get into their premises.

In The Drivers Seat 2007



March 2007 will see another opportunity for people who are blind or have a vision impairment to drive a motor vehicle!!!! ***In the Drivers Seat 2007*** is to be held on Sunday 25th March at Sandown Motor Circuit. Driving Instructors from Independent Driving Schools will be offering their time and vehicles free of charge. The Driving Instructor sits beside the driver and talks him/her around the circuit. Contact Peter Watts on 9844 3903

Did you know ?

- Local Councils are more likely to face budgetary pressures from the population ageing than from traditional activities such as road and infrastructure provision and maintenance.
- There are 150 local government Disability Action Plans registered with HREOC. Victoria leads the way with 62.
- In the UK only 17% of people with a disability were born with their disability
- In the USA over the next ten years, the Baby Boomer workforce is predicted to spark a 37% increase in the incidence of disability.
- It is estimated that there are 610 million people in the world with a disability.

MAV Policy Advisor Access and Inclusion

Nicola Wood has recently joined the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) as their new Policy Adviser, Disability Access and Inclusion. Nicola will be working with local Councils across Victoria, to facilitate the development of policies, planning and practice which promote access and inclusion for people with disabilities. This will include continuing to support Councils in access improvements.

MAV 2006 Survey

A recent survey by the MAV with all local Councils in Victoria, identified a range of initiatives including implementing their Disability Action Plans, integration of Whole of Council planning on disability access issues, training and induction, establishment of Disability Advisory Councils, involvement of management teams and participation of people with disabilities in service planning. The full report will be published in December, but some headline findings are:

AAA Web site

Details about services provided by Access Audits Australia can be found on our website at www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au

Our site is designed to be accessible for all users. It has AAA W3C level compliance and is AAA Bobby approved. Earlier Access News editions can be downloaded and there are also links to other relevant access related web sites.

- The majority Councils are now using a 'Whole of Council' approach
- Most Councils have adopted a Disability Policy
- Metropolitan Councils have funding needs, not just with infrastructure, but also for training for management, planners and community partners
- Regional Councils seeking funding mentioned giving a heavier weighting to access and inclusion within budget processes as well as seeking potential external funding
- Most Councils encourage participation of people with a disability

For further information on the MAVs Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy or any other related issues, please contact Nicola Wood on 9857 0830/ 0438 591820 or email nwood@mav.asn.au

Contributions

Contributions to Access News are welcome and can be emailed to AAA at any time.

Information contained in **Access News** is intended to highlight the importance of improving access for every person

Disclaimer: Whilst every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, Access Audits Australia does not accept any responsibility for inaccuracies, omissions, incorrect information or action taken as a result of any advice given or information conveyed in this publication.