

Institute for
Public Policy
and Governance



How local governments can increase the social and economic participation of people with disability

Build collaborative
networks and partnerships



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Overview

Many local governments do not directly provide disability services to people with disability so, to increase social and economic participation, they need to develop ongoing collaborative networks and partnerships with other organisations. These organisations may be at a local, regional or national level and the relationships benefit from local government knowledge about community needs and wants.

Local governments with strong partnerships which endure over time have organisation-based rather than individual-based collaboration. This is especially the case where partnerships involve an exchange of expertise and resources between businesses, NGOs and other levels of government.

This section provides information about how local governments work with a range of government and non-government organisations to increase the social and economic participation of people with disability.

Build strong networks

Local governments appear to increase social and economic participation when they build effective, collaborative networks with non-government organisations (nationally or locally based). These relationships establish local governments as leaders in their communities and help develop better understandings of and responses to the needs of people with disability. They also increase the reach and impact of local government's strategies, policies and programs and ensure a more joined-up approach to create inclusive communities.

Networks generally start when disability service providers are invited onto a disability advisory committee, and the national survey showed that the majority of these committees include representatives from one or more provider. Having this knowledge on the committee helps staff members engage with the local disability sector during planning processes. It can also provide a direct source of information about the needs of people with disability, identify ways to drive inclusion outside local government and highlight opportunities

to pool resources for collective impact.

Some local governments go further and coordinate local networks of disability service providers for ongoing disability planning or specific issues such as the roll out of the NDIS.



GLENORCHY CITY COUNCIL, TASMANIA – LINKING AGEING AND DISABILITY NETWORKS (Urban Fringe)

Due to increasingly overlapping cohorts with similar needs, Council's Access Officer is responsible for both disability access and inclusion and positive ageing. To help facilitate cooperation between the two sectors, the Access Officer convenes an Aged and Disability Service Provider Network, which meets five times per year to discuss service provision, gaps, community programs, upcoming events and opportunities and issues to advocate to Council and other levels of government.

This network has been particularly active in driving more and better accessible parking at the local retail centre and has provided input into the master plan for the Glenorchy Main Street redevelopment.



MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL, VICTORIA – PREPARING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NDIS (Rural and Remote)

Council is a partner in the Mount Alexander Health & Communities Services Alliance together with Castlemaine Health, Castlemaine District Community Health and Windarrang (a disability services and support organisation). The purpose of the Alliance is to work together to provide effective and accessible primary community health and wellbeing services which meet the needs of the community.

The Alliance collaborates on local service planning, service integration, systems change development and implementation. The Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership (CVPCP) facilitates quarterly meetings; and in the context of NDIS, the Alliance has recently asked the CVPCP to investigate potential vulnerable community members, any possible market failure and the opportunities for local services. These findings will be reported back to the Alliance to determine what is needed to support people with disability.

In relation to the NDIS roll out, various officers within the Community Wellbeing unit are providing information to and actively advising people who may be eligible for the NDIS to learn about their options and make their planning experiences as successful as possible.

Partner with state government

State and territory government partnerships mainly focus on grant funding but some local governments also consult with state and territory governments during the development of disability action plans. Funding is often around capacity building, for example, to assist local governments to develop processes to develop disability action plans, or for infrastructure improvements. Although funding is usually one-off and over a relatively short time frame, it can either kick start or enhance an already established project.



CITY OF WHITTLESEA, VICTORIA – NETWORKS FOR SPECIFIC ISSUES (Urban Fringe)

Council convenes the Whittlesea Disability Network which has over 700 members from the community and non-government organisations. The network is chaired by the Team Leader-Access but is independent from Council. It advocates on issues such as state government infrastructure projects, Council and state government development plans, and Australian Government initiatives such as the NDIS. Working groups consider specific issues such as the new Mernda Rail extension project, to ensure that access for people with disability is considered in the planning process.

Council also established the Whittlesea Community Futures program which set up networks of organisations around specific social issues. This included a Disability Cluster to focus on the implementation of the NDIS. In addition, Council also established an 18-month NDIS Preparation Project which included a disability expo to connect community members with NDIS providers.



MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL, VICTORIA – CHANGING PLACES FUNDING (Urban Developed)

In Australia, accessible toilets that meet national building standards do not meet the needs of all people with severe or profound disabilities and their carers. The lack of suitable toilets results in social isolation. In 2012, the Disability Access Officer initiated a relationship with Changing Places UK to commence a Changing Places consortium in Victoria.

With the assistance of an architect, occupational therapist and access consultant, a National Design and specifications for Changing Places was developed and the first official Changing Places toilet was opened by the Council in 2014 at Ringwood Lake.

Council also built the first mobile Changing Places facility, known as Marveloo, used for outdoor events and festivals.

Changing Places Australia is now led by the Association for Children with a Disability. The Victorian State Government recently committed \$2 million for Local Councils to apply for funding to build a Changing Places toilet. The Government of Western Australia also has \$2 million in funding to establish a network of Changing Places through local councils. Council won the National Award for Local Government in 2015 for Disability Access and Inclusion for its role in establishing Changing Places Australia.

See: changingplaces.org.au



WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL, VICTORIA – SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES IN COUNCIL BUILDINGS (Urban Regional)

A local not-for-profit organisation established a catering business staffed entirely by people with disability which has grown significantly and is now widely regarded as one of the best hospitality businesses in the area. The food and wait service is considered high quality and supports large events in Warrnambool, including major civic events and weddings.

Recently, the business became too big for its existing premises. To address this, and ensure the organisation could continue to provide local employment opportunities for people with disability, Council made a larger space in its major community hub building available.

Collaborate with NGOs

In addition to forming networks, the national survey showed that about two-thirds of local governments directly fund NGOs to deliver programs and services and over half subsidise the use of recreation and aquatic centres, community halls, and libraries.



DISTRICT COUNCIL OF THE COPPER COAST, SOUTH AUSTRALIA – PROVIDING SECURITY FOR LOCAL CLUBS TO UPGRADE FACILITIES (Rural and Remote)

The local sailing club wanted to upgrade their clubhouse to make it more accessible for older members and other community members with low mobility. The club unsuccessfully tried to secure a loan from several lenders due to the short-term lease on the building (five years) and lack of security. To help secure funding, Council offered the club a 20-year lease and acted as guarantor on the loan.

Some local governments also fund local NGOs to directly deliver services to increase the social and economic participation of people with disability.

a frequent destination for people with disability and their carers from Australia and overseas, the City recognised the need and importance of such a service.

Travellers Aid provides free access to travel-related information and mobility aids which help people move through the city independently and confidently. This includes assistance buggy rides at Southern Cross Station, mobility equipment hire, the supported use of accessible toilets and personal companions who escort people to medical appointments.

Following the undertaking of research and an unmet need, the companion service has been expanded to support people who are blind and deaf and blind navigate through the city.

To ensure the sustainability of the NGO, the City provides annual funding to supplement funding from other government, corporate and philanthropic sources.

See: Travellers Aid (www.travellersaid.org.au)



CITY OF MELBOURNE, VICTORIA – MOBILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (Capital City)

Traveller's Aid Australia is an NGO which has been in operation for over 100 years and is located at the two major rail hubs in the Melbourne CBD, Flinders Street and Southern Cross Stations. As

In addition, most local governments also promote the services and programs offered by NGOs in their areas, often in an accessible format.



CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL, SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL, VICTORIA – PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT NGO SERVICES

(Urban Developed)

These councils provide online directories with details of services for people with disability, activities and community groups, and other information.

See: Disability Guide (www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=2098 and www.maroonдах.vic.gov.au/DisabilityGuide.aspx)

Council offers a free pick-up and delivery service through several disability service providers rather than Council dropping off and picking up the toys directly from each individual family.

Many local governments provide a range of community grants for community groups and NGOs to deliver art and recreation programs. Whilst these are rarely targeted specifically for people with disability, local governments such as the City of Melbourne include provisions for universal inclusion in the weighted evaluation criteria for applications. The City of Melbourne partners with Arts Access Victoria to promote their grants to organisations which support people with disability and to help people with disability complete applications for arts grants. In addition, just over half of local governments in Australia support event organisers to make their events more accessible.

NGOs also often directly support local governments by delivering their services where it is more efficient for the NGO to do so or where the NGO has more direct access to people needing the service.



PENRITH CITY COUNCIL, NEW SOUTH WALES – COLLABORATION WITH NGOS ON THE TOY LIBRARY SERVICE

(Urban Fringe)

Council's Toy Library has some loans which are specifically designed to support the cognitive and motor skill development of children with disability.



CITY OF HOBART COUNCIL, TASMANIA AND CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL, NEW SOUTH WALES – EVENT PLANNING GUIDES

(Capital City and Urban Fringe)

The City of Hobart is a focal point for festivals and major events in the

Hobart Region. This includes events delivered by Council and external event organisers. To ensure that events are properly organised, Council developed an Event Development Guide which includes assistance with:

- Choosing venues which allow for equal access to, from and within the event
- Dedicated seating in strategic areas for people with disability
- Ensuring infrastructure at festivals and events is accessible
- Providing hearing loops if necessary
- Parking provisions for people with disability.

Council distributes the guide to internal and external groups who apply to hold a festival or event.

See: Event Development Guide (www.hobartcity.com.au/files/88099a58-f516-4088.../event_development_guide.pdf)

The Central Coast Council (formerly Gosford City Council) has a Planning Accessible Events guide for both internal and external distribution. The online guide provides information on:

- Choosing an appropriate venue
- Accessible parking and drop off/pick-up zones
- Accessible toilets
- Formats of advertising and invitations including providing information about accessibility provisions
- Tips for communication

- Guide, hearing and assistance dogs
- Venue set up.

See: Planning Accessible Events (www.gosford.nsw.gov.au/docs/default-source/Community/gosford-city-council-planning-accessible-events-2014-rtf-version.rtf?sfvrsn=2)



Institute for Public Policy and Governance

University of Technology Sydney

15 Broadway, Ultimo

PO Box 123

Broadway NSW 2007

Australia

+61 2 9514 7884

ippg@uts.edu.au

ippg.uts.edu.au