Disability Access & Inclusion Plan

2026-2030

Large Print Version

CITY OF MITCHAM

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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Kaurna People as the Traditional Custodians of the council area. We pay respect to Kaurna Elders past, present, and emerging and value the contribution that First Nations people make to the community.

We also recognise and honour the resilience and lived experiences of people with disability, appreciate the value they add to our community and acknowledge their right to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

Welcome to the City of Mitcham 2026-2030 DAIP

It is with great pleasure that I present the City of Mitcham's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2026-2030.

One in five South Australians lives with disability. Disability is part of the diversity and strength of our community, and while some disabilities are visible, many are not.

As a community, we all have a role to play in shaping a more inclusive future through the choices we make, the conversations we have, and the way we design our services, facilities and public spaces.

Local government can have a significant influence on the everyday experiences of people with disability.

From accessible footpaths, buildings and community facilities to inclusive events, information and services, our decisions help shape how people can participate in their community, connect with others and access opportunities with confidence.

This plan has been informed by the voices of our community. I extend my sincere thanks to the members of our Disability Advisory Network for sharing their lived experience, insights and passion for a universally liveable, accessible, connected and healthy Mitcham. I also thank the school students, library and community centre visitors, and many residents who contributed their ideas and experiences throughout the consultation process.

We are proud of the progress achieved through our previous plans. A highlight was the opening of the City of Mitcham's first Changing Places facility at the Pasadena Community Centre, delivered with the support of the Commonwealth Accessible Australia Initiative.

More than accessible infrastructure, it represented the fundamental right of every person to dignity, safety and participation.

Building on this foundation, the 2026-2030 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan outlines the next steps in our journey. Contributing to broader state directions, it sets out how Council can continue to improve access, inclusion and participation so that all residents can connect with people and places with ease, have a voice in their community, and participate fully in community life.

Dr Heather Holmes-Ross

Mayor, City of Mitcham

City of Mitcham Profile

The City of Mitcham was founded in 1853 in the foothills of southern Adelaide, making it one of the oldest councils in South Australia. Council is located six kilometres from the CBD and covers 75.7 square kilometres with a mix of landscape types. The Kaurna people are the original inhabitants of the City of Mitcham area with Europeans settlement beginning as early as 1837. Our Council is one of the few local government regions which extends over both the Adelaide Hills and the Plains.

Our 68 000+ residents live in a mix of urban, suburban and semi-rural communities. The City is known for its tree-lined streets, parks, reserves and natural landscapes, as well as its strong sense of community and local identity.

The diversity within the Mitcham area is unique with our suburbs including State Heritage listed Colonel Light Gardens, and historic Belair surrounded by South Australia's oldest National Park, to newer housing developments at Blackwood and Craigburn Farm.

Residents have told us they like to live in Mitcham for the schools and universities, hospitals, services and the foothills setting; whilst the Belair train line allows people to easily commute to the city and beyond.

The abundance of natural settings within our Hills face and extensive trail network draws visitors from all over Adelaide to places like Belair National Park, Craigburn Farm, Windy Point and Carrick Hill for scenic hiking, mountain biking, picnics and scenic views.

Significant local heritage sites significant are open to the public including Carrick Hill, Mitcham Cultural Village, Waite Arboretum, Waite Conservation Reserve and the Urrbrae House Historic Precinct.

As well as residential living, Council is home to 5,265 registered businesses in our city that provide over 30,607 local jobs and $4.05 billion in Gross Regional Product.

The City of Mitcham delivers a wide range of services that support daily life, including waste and recycling, roads and footpaths, parks and reserves, libraries, community centres, community grants, public health services and community support programs.

Disability in the City of Mitcham

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which recognises the fundamental human rights of people with disability. It states that:

‘Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others’. (Article 1 UNCRPD, 2006)

Disability is experienced by people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures. Causes of disability are complex and can be the result of genetic disorders, illnesses, accidents, ageing, or a combination of these factors.

In the Australian legal system and government agencies it is conceptualised as the interaction between a health condition and:

- Factors including physical barriers, access to services, community attitudes
- Personal factors, such as a person's age, sex and cultural background.
-

These factors have positive or negative influences on a person's ability to perform everyday activities and participate in community life (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2022). People with similar health conditions can have quite different experiences of disability. Some conditions can flare or recede over time (sometimes known as a 'dynamic disability') leading to different degrees of impairment, activity limitation or participation restriction at different times.

The City of Mitcham's topography can influence access to services and participation in community life for some people with disability.

Hilly terrain can make active travel and independent mobility difficult, particularly without private transport. This has implications for emergency situations, reinforcing the need for accessible emergency planning information and communication.

Language

The City of Mitcham recognises that people have individual preferences for terminology and language. In line with the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025-2029, this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan has adopted ‘person-first’ language throughout the document.

Census Data

Population surveys such as the Australian Census are one way to measure the rate of disability experience in our community. This data is a guide only as it is limited by subjective self-reporting. The most recent Census (2021) identified more than 3500 residents requiring assistance due to a severe or profound disability.

Comparison with previous Census data indicates the need for assistance is increasing.

What Guides Our Plan?

The City of Mitcham DAIP fits within a state-wide network of planning for access and inclusion. The *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* (SA) requires councils to develop and deliver DAIPs to foster equitable participation and reduce barriers for people with disabilities across South Australia. DAIPs are part of a broader set of international, Australian and South Australian strategies including the South Australian Disability Inclusion Plan and the South Australian Autism Strategy.

Through these plans, all levels of government outline their commitment to making significant and meaningful progress towards achieving an accessible and inclusive South Australia, where people with disability can actively participate in the world around them, without barriers or exclusion.

While mandated by the State Government, the DAIP also fits within a suite of plans that provide strategic direction and accountability at the City of Mitcham.

The City of Mitcham Strategic Management Plan *Mitcham 2030* sets the vision and strategic direction for Council for 10 years. It provides four goals and twelve themes, outlining the high-level outcomes Council seeks to achieve through its services and projects. Actions within the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2026 – 2030 contribute to achieving the goals and outcomes of *Mitcham 2030*.

Engaging with our community

Developing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan that reflects the priorities and expectations of our community starts with listening to the people who live, work, volunteer and participate in Mitcham.

In late 2025, Council undertook a broad community engagement process under the banner *Living Well in Mitcham – Help Shape a Healthy and Inclusive Community*. The engagement sought to understand what helps people feel welcome, safe, connected and able to participate in community life, with a particular focus on the experiences of people with disability, their families and carers.

Community and stakeholder feedback was gathered through online and hardcopy surveys, collaborative workshops, a lived experience focus group, a school student postcard initiative, and community centre drop-in sessions. These opportunities provided both quantitative data and valuable lived experience insights.

The feedback highlighted a strong desire for a more accessible, inclusive and connected City of Mitcham.

Key themes that emerged included improving access to footpaths, crossings, lighting and public spaces; providing information in clear and accessible formats;

creating affordable and inclusive opportunities to participate in community life; and applying universal design more consistently across Council facilities, services and infrastructure.

Participants also identified the importance of accessible transport options, welcoming and climate-resilient public spaces, and ongoing opportunities for people with disability to contribute to Council decision-making through consultation, co-design and lived experience involvement.

These insights have directly informed the development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2030, helping to shape the focus areas, actions and priorities that will guide Council's efforts to improve access, inclusion and participation for people with disability over the next four years.

Focus Area 1: Inclusive Spaces and Places

Our Goal

Experiences in our outdoor spaces and public places are accessible, safe, welcoming, and inclusive for all community members.

What We Will Do

We will create and maintain places and spaces that are accessible, safe and welcoming by embedding universal design, improving public infrastructure and facilities, supporting accessible transport and active travel, enhancing inclusive recreation opportunities, and ensuring our environments and facility emergency procedures meet the needs of people with disability.

Inclusive Spaces & Places Actions 2026-2030

1.1 Improve the accessibility and safety of pedestrian travel routes through upgrades to footpaths, kerb ramps, crossings and supporting infrastructure delivered through Council renewal programs. **Status**: Funded. Ongoing.

1.2 Improve the accessibility of playgrounds through the design of new play spaces and the renewal of existing playgrounds to support inclusive play opportunities for children of all abilities. **Status**: Funded. Ongoing.

1.3 Embed Universal Design principles in the planning, design, renewal, procurement and delivery of Council buildings, facilities and public spaces. **Status.** Funded, Ongoing.

1.4 Conduct an audit of accessible parking bays attached to Council owned buildings to identify all current locations, compliance with accessibility standards, gaps, and recommendations including opportunities for additional senior-friendly parking. **Status**. Unfunded. 2027 – 2030.

1.5 Improve access to public amenities by providing accessible and ambulant toilets, including Changing Places facilities, and enhancing wayfinding within Council facilities where opportunities arise through renewal programs. **Status.** Partially Funded. Ongoing.

1.6 Review Council Workplace Evacuation & Emergency Procedures (WEEPs) and associated alert systems in Council facilities to ensure they support people with disability in emergencies and evacuations. **Status.** Partially Funded. 2027 – 2028.

Focus Area 2: Engagement and Active Participation

Our Goal

People with disability have opportunities to be actively involved in shaping Council decisions and they can participate in community life, programs, activities and opportunities on an equal basis with others.

What We Will Do

We will provide accessible and inclusive opportunities for people with disability to participate in community life and contribute to Council decision-making. We will listen to and learn from lived experience, use accessible engagement methods, support co-design, strengthen partnerships and advisory networks, and promote inclusive programs, events and community initiatives that reduce barriers to participation.

Engagement and Active Participation Actions 2026-2030

2.1 Deliver inclusive Council run activities, programs, and community events across Council open spaces, libraries and community centres. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

2.2 Introduce sensory-friendly quiet spaces at Council events, libraries and community centres to support participation by people with diverse sensory needs where possible. **Status.** Partially Funded. Ongoing.

2.3 Identify and implement opportunities to co-design programs, activities and communications with people with disability. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

2.4 Investigate and pilot an inclusive civic participation activity in partnership with a school and/or disability organisation to increase opportunities for people with disability to learn about decision-making in local government. **Status.** Funded. 2027.

2.5 Continue to work on Actions in Council's Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and support development of an Innovate RAP. **Status.** Partially Funded. Ongoing.

2.6 Use accessible engagement methods in public consultations and community engagement activities. **Status.** Partially Funded. 2028.

2.7 Strengthen understanding of the experiences, barriers, priorities and opportunities identified by people with disability through advisory groups, community networks and sector partnerships. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

2.8 Investigate the inclusion of a dedicated category within the Mitcham Community Grants Program to support projects that improve access and inclusion for people with disability. **Status.** Unfunded. 2028-2030.

Focus Area 3: Communication and Access to Services

Our Goal

People with disability can access information about their community, services, and supports in ways that meet their needs, helping them to stay informed, connected, safe and included.

What We Will Do

We will make Council information, services, programs and facilities easier to find and access. This includes improving accessible communications, offering different information formats, supporting service connections, strengthening partnerships, and clearly communicating accessible emergency information. People who are transport disadvantaged will have an opportunity to access Council services and programs.

Communication and Access to Services Actions 2026-2030

3.1 Promote programs using inclusive and accessible communication methods across digital and print channels. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

3.2 Conduct a project to review and improve information available on the website regarding accessibility of Council facilities and playgrounds. **Status.** Unfunded. 2029.

3.3 Review the accessibility of Council communications and information across digital and print platforms, including alternative formats and inclusive representation of people with disability. **Status.** Unfunded. 2029-2030.

3.4 Review Council's Community Bus Service to identify future development opportunities for increased reach, accessibility, sustainability, community participation, and connection of residents to services in a service model

not replicated within the City of Mitcham. **Status.** Unfunded. 2027-2030.

3.5 Strengthen partnerships with service providers, agencies and community organisations to support information sharing, referral pathways and coordinated responses to community needs. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

3.6 During emergencies and extreme weather events, provide timely and accessible information about refuge options, service changes, community support locations and other emergency arrangements through Council communication channels. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

3.7 Maintain and regularly review accessible emergency preparedness information and resources across Council communication channels, including alternative formats where appropriate.
Status. Funded. Ongoing.

Focus Area 4: Volunteering, Learning and Employment

Our Goal

People with disability can access meaningful volunteering, learning and employment opportunities and are supported to participate, develop and succeed.

What We Will Do

We will create inclusive volunteering, learning and employment opportunities by improving recruitment pathways, supporting workplace inclusion, providing reasonable adjustments and fostering an environment where people with disability can participate, contribute and grow with confidence.

Volunteering, Learning and Employment Actions 2026-2030

4.1 Develop and pilot inclusive volunteering opportunities through Council programs and community partnerships. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

4.2 Improve access to employment through inclusive recruitment and onboarding practices. **Status.** Funded. 2026-2030.

4.3 Explore traineeships, work experience and employment pathway opportunities for people with disability and other identified priority groups. **Status.** Unfunded. 2026-2030.

4.4 Provide inclusive workplace practices, including reasonable adjustments, flexible work arrangements, disability awareness training and workplace supports that enable employees with disability to participate and succeed. **Status.** Funded. Ongoing.

Highlights from previous plans

Pasadena Community Centre

Reopened in August 2024, the Pasadena Community Centre was transformed from the former Sea Scout Hall into a welcoming community hub; an accessible and inclusive space where people of all ages and abilities can connect, learn and participate. The inclusion of Mitcham's first Changing Places facility has improved access for people with high support needs and enabled greater participation in community life.

Making toilets more accessible

The introduction of the Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK) system at selected public toilets has improved access for people with disability, particularly outside standard opening hours. This supports greater independence, dignity and confidence when accessing community spaces.

Volunteering to employment

In 2023, a student on the autism spectrum began volunteering at Blackwood Library through a partnership between Autism SA and Council. The experience led to further study in library services, a casual library role in 2025, and additional paid contract work after graduation. Their journey highlights how volunteering can provide a pathway to meaningful employment and career development for people with disability.

Opening of Tiwu Kumangka

Opened in 2023, Tiwu Kumangka brings together library, community and learning services in a modern, purpose-built and accessible facility. Designed to be welcoming for all, it offers flexible spaces, expanded programs and more than 1,000 community and library activities each year, including programs co-designed and delivered by people with disability.

MT Push Trike at Belair National Park

The City of Mitcham partnered in the Opening the Door to Nature project, helping improve access to natural environments for people with disability through all-terrain wheelchairs. Led by the District Council of Yankalilla and other partners, the project was recognised as a finalist in the 2025 LG Professionals SA Leadership Excellence Awards. The continued availability of the MT Push all-terrain wheelchair at Belair National Park enables more people to experience and enjoy outdoor recreation and nature-based activities.

Council’s Community Bus Service

Council’s community bus service helps people who experience transport barriers to access shopping, community activities and social connections. By providing affordable, door-to door transport and support for mobility aids, the service promotes independence, wellbeing and inclusion.

Monitoring and Progress

Monitoring and progress of the DAIP 2026 - 2030 will occur using the measures outlined above to report annually to the South Australian Government in line with the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018*. Updates and/or achievements will be communicated to Council and the community via Council's communication platforms.

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