



MANSFIELD SHIRE

Mansfield Shire

Access and Inclusion Charter



Building an Inclusive, Accessible Community

"We should acknowledge differences; we should greet differences, until difference makes no difference anymore." Dr. Adela A. Allen (African American M.D. and musician)



Our Principles

- ***Inherent dignity*** – all people are born free and equal and are treated respectfully with the freedom to make their own choices and decisions.
- ***Non-discrimination*** – we are all responsible to proactively ensure that people should not be disadvantaged because of their disability, culture or language.
- ***Participation and inclusion*** – all people have an opportunity to be involved in the life of their community.
- ***Respect for difference*** – acceptance of all people as important to our community regardless of their similarity or difference in all areas including disability, ethnicity, language, sexuality, age, religious or cultural beliefs.
- ***Equality of opportunity*** – all people are given the same opportunities for education, training, employment, housing, travel, sport, recreation and cultural pursuits within their community.
- ***Accessibility*** – all people have a right to move around and participate fully within their community, in a way that is independent, equitable and dignified.
- ***Safety*** – all people have a right to social, emotional, physical and economic security and equitable and respectful relationships



Our Goals

The Mansfield Shire community will collectively work towards:

- ***Reducing barriers for access*** to all goods, services and facilities for all community members and visitors.
- ***Actively promoting inclusion and participation*** for all community members.
- ***Reducing the barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment*** for all community members.
- ***Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate*** against community members.



Our Responsibilities

Council

Mansfield Shire Council accepts the following responsibilities as fundamental to its planning, decision making and operations.

Mansfield Shire Council:

- Recognises the responsibility we all have to accept and respect the dignity in all people, and to protect their rights and freedoms;
- Recognises the broad diversity of groups within the Mansfield community and strives to embed the principles of inclusion, respect and equity in a 'whole of Council approach';
- Aims to ensure that its services, facilities, practices and planning strategies are inclusive, accessible and affordable to all;
- Seeks to partner with organisations and agencies who share our commitment to an inclusive community.

"We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same". Anne Frank



Community

The Mansfield Shire Community will be encouraged and supported to work towards building and maintaining:

- ***A respectful community*** that upholds the rights of all community members whilst recognising and celebrating diversity;
- ***An inclusive community*** where all members are encouraged and able to participate, are valued, consulted and have the opportunity to have a voice in decisions which affect their interests;
- ***A community of opportunity*** where all members have equal and expanding opportunities; and
- ***An accessible community*** where barriers to full participation for all members are proactively removed.



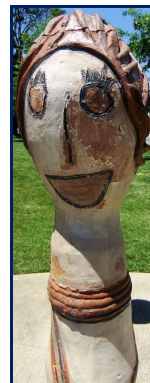
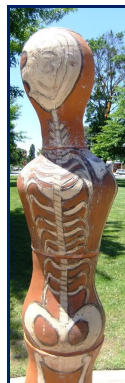
Council and Community

Together we will work towards an accessible and inclusive community for all.

We all share the same desires in our community...to live in a place that is welcoming and inclusive, where we are all treated as equals with the same rights and opportunities irrespective of where we come from, what we believe in and what our abilities may be.

We all expect to be treated with respect and consideration... and to be valued as a human being.

By valuing our diversity and creating an accessible and inclusive community for all who live and visit here, we strengthen our community and enable it to face the challenges of the future whatever they may be.



"We all have abilities, the difference is in the way we use them." Stevie Wonder

What is the Access and Inclusion Charter?

The Mansfield Shire Access and Inclusion Charter is a set of principles, goals and responsibilities that outlines the way in which Council commits to work in order to remove barriers and provide equity of access to Council services, facilities and employment for all community members.

This Charter is based on the 'social model of disability' which identifies that many of the difficulties that occur for people living with a disability are the direct result of barriers imposed by the environment not the disability itself. For example, a person who relies on a wheelchair for mobility will be unable to participate in a meeting if there are steps into the building. Remove the steps, and the barrier to participation is also removed. This approach places the process of inclusion as the responsibility of the whole community.

While there is some focus on the removal of barriers to people with disabilities, the intent of the Charter is towards a fully inclusive community that considers all potential and actual barriers to inclusion. By valuing every community member and considering any barriers that may exist to their participation, the Charter can guide inclusion of all community members in all aspects of community life.

Why have a Charter?

The Access and Inclusion Charter is based on key documents that recognise the rights of all people. These documents include: *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)*; *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (2006)*; *The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*; *The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995*; *The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *The Victorian Disability Act 2006*.

The Mansfield Shire community is made up of people from diverse backgrounds, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and abilities. Each person has the inherent right to be heard, to participate, to be respected and to have the same opportunities as others. Some community members face barriers to physical access, information and communication as a result of a disability, whilst others may experience cultural or language barriers.

By adopting this Charter, Council is acknowledging its commitment to compliance with all of the key documents, together with its commitment to ensuring that its services, facilities and planning strategies are inclusive and accessible to all.

How does the Access and Inclusion Charter link with other Council documents?

The Charter will guide the development of an annually updated Access and Inclusion Plan that will include strategies which will be linked to the Council Plan, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and other strategic documents. Responsibility for implementation of the action plan will be across the organisation in order to achieve a 'whole of Council', 'whole of community' approach to addressing accessibility and inclusion issues.

"Give me a choice: I have an opinion". Talking Disability (DHS)