



Disability Action Plan

2026-2027



Mildura Rural City Council

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land which now comprises the Mildura Rural City municipality. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures and acknowledge the memories of their ancestors.





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Alternative Formats:

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Background

Under the Disability Act 2006, all public authorities, including state government departments and local councils, are required to prepare Disability Action Plans. These plans outline how agencies will address barriers to access and inclusion for people with disability—as both service users and employees.

Disability Action Plans must align with the outcomes framework of the State Disability Plan, ensuring they contribute to statewide goals for inclusion and equity. A new State Plan is expected in 2027.

Mildura Rural City Council's Disability Action Plan is a one-year, action-oriented plan that sets out clear objectives, projects, and outcomes. It provides focus and flexibility for both the Council staff and Council's Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee as we work to improve access and inclusion across the municipality.

The plan has been developed in collaboration with the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee, which includes people with lived experience of disability, carers, and representatives from local service organisations.

At its core, the plan is grounded in a commitment to place, people and communities at the centre of Council's work. It includes practical actions that Council can take to remove barriers and improve outcomes for people with disability in our region.



Our Commitment Statement

Mildura Rural City Council is committed to building a more inclusive and accessible community where people with disability are supported, respected, and empowered.

Our 12-month Disability Action Plan outlines practical actions to remove barriers and improve access and inclusion across our services and community spaces. It reflects our determination to take proactive steps towards building a society where everyone — regardless of ability — can live safely, access opportunities equitably, and shape their own future.

We recognise the diversity of disabilities and the uniqueness of individual experiences. Council upholds a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and exclusion and acknowledges that meaningful inclusion requires more than just awareness — it requires action.

Through this plan, we aim to foster respect, raise awareness, and ensure that people with disability can participate fully in all areas of life. By working together, we can build a community that is not only more inclusive, but safer and stronger for everyone.

Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee

Established in 2001, the Mildura Rural City Council's Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee plays a vital role in improving access and inclusion for people with disability across the municipality. Meeting monthly, the committee provides advice and feedback to Council on issues impacting people with disability and helps shape inclusive policies, services, and infrastructure.

The committee is comprised of community members with lived experience of disability, carers, and representatives from local disability service organisations, alongside relevant Council officers from various teams. This diverse representation ensures that decisions are informed by real-life experiences and grounded in the needs of the community.

The committee provides an important platform for people with a disability to raise concerns, share ideas, and participate in meaningful dialogue with Council. It fosters trust and empowers local voices to influence change.

As one committee member shared:

“In my relatively short time with the committee, I have seen many accessibility issues within our community addressed by a team of committed individuals.”

Council values the expertise and lived experience of the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee and recognises its essential role in building a more inclusive Mildura.





Disability Action Network

The Disability Action Network (DAN) is a long-standing local network committed to improving access and inclusion for people with disability across Mildura and surrounding towns.

Established in 1993 — originally known as the Regional Disability Planning Group for Service Providers — DAN brings together professionals from disability service agencies who share a commitment to promoting a whole-of-life approach to inclusion and participation.

Membership is open to individuals working in disability agencies who have a responsibility or

interest in advancing access, equity, and inclusion for people with disability.

The network meets bi-monthly to share information, collaborate on local issues, and coordinate community initiatives. A key annual highlight is the planning and delivery of Mildura's International Day of People with Disability event each December, which celebrates achievements, raises awareness, and brings the community together.

Legislative and Policy Framework

Mildura Rural City Council's Disability Action Plan 2026–2027 is grounded in a strong legislative and strategic framework that upholds the rights of people with disability and reinforces our commitment to access, inclusion, and equity.

This plan is informed by the *Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* — two key pieces of legislation that protect the rights of individuals regardless of ability and prohibits discrimination in areas such as employment, education, and access to services.

In addition, under the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, all local governments in Victoria are required to

prepare a Disability Action Plan to address and remove barriers for people with a disability in accessing goods, services, facilities, employment, and public premises. These plans also support the state's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ensuring that the principles of dignity, autonomy, non-discrimination, and full participation are embedded in Council's operations and planning.

Victorian councils are required to embed the principles outlined in the Carers' Recognition Act 2012 to ensure that Carers' are respected, recognised, and that their needs are supported.

State and National Strategy Alignment



This Disability Action Plan aligns with the Victorian State Disability Plan 2022–2026, “Inclusive Victoria”, which sets out the Victorian Government's goals and priorities for building a more inclusive state over four years. It is guided by the plan's outcome areas, including inclusive communities, inclusive workforces, and responsive systems and services.

We have aligned the Disability Action Plan to the state's key outcomes and to show how Council will address access and inclusion barriers for people with disability. It also aligns with the key priorities from the State Disability Plan which are Inclusive Communities, Health, Housing and Wellbeing, and Fairness and Safety.



Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 is a national framework that all Australian governments have signed up to. It sets out a plan for continuing to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia over 10 years. This strategy replaces and builds on the first National Disability Strategy 2010–2020.

The Strategy's vision is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community.

This document is our response to achieving outcomes under Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031.

Alignment with Council Strategy



Mildura Rural City Council's Community Vision 2021–2040 reflects the community's aspiration for fairness, inclusion, and opportunity:

"Inclusion and participation remain the key to building a strong community. We value the need to preserve a person's dignity, while ensuring our community remains open, inviting and accessible to everyone."

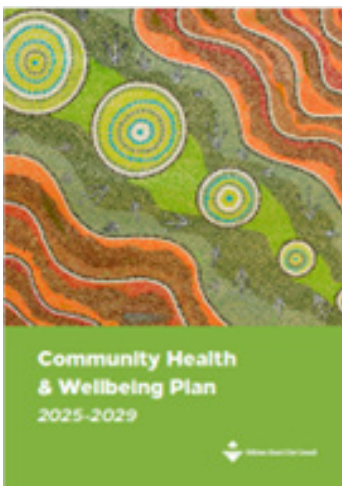
This vision provides a long-term roadmap and guides all of Council's planning, decision-making, services, and advocacy efforts.



In alignment with the Community Vision, the Council Plan 2025-2029, under the theme of Community, Council will:

"Partner with others to champion inclusivity, equity, accessibility and support actions to ensure our community is healthy, safe and nurturing."

This reflects Council's commitment to creating a more inclusive municipality where people of all abilities can fully participate in civic, social and economic life.



This Disability Action Plan also supports the objectives of the Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029, particularly:

'Domain 3 – Our community members have the capabilities to participate'. This priority recognises that meaningful participation in community life is essential for health, wellbeing and a sense of belonging in the Mildura municipality.

The Community Health and Wellbeing Plan highlights the importance of ensuring that people of all abilities have equitable opportunities to engage and connect socially, environmentally and intergenerationally.

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Buslink
Route To
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Timetable
Phone
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Map



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Community snapshot

Disability



5.5m Australians

(21.4%) with disability as of 2022, up from 17.7% in 2018.



52.3% of people aged 65 years and over had a disability, compared to 15% of people aged 0-64 years.

7.9% of all Australians had a profound or severe disability.



Disability prevalence was similar for males **21.0%** and females **21.8%**.

Older people



17.1% of Australians were aged 65 years and over (up from 15.9% in 2018).

95.9% of older Australians were living in households, while 4.1% lived in Residential Aged Care Facilities.



52.3% of older Australians had disability, and 86.6% had one or more long term health conditions.

39.8% of older Australians living at home needed some assistance with everyday activities. ¹



Carers



3m carers

representing 11.9% of all Australians living in households (up from 10.8% in 2018).

12.8% of all females were carers, compared with **11.1%** of all males.



There were **1.2m primary carers in Australia**, and of these, 43.8% had disability themselves. ¹



391,300 young carers

(under the age of 25), up from 235,300 in 2018.

Younger people



5.7% of children aged 0-4 years had disability in 2022.

The largest difference between males and females was for **children aged 5-14 years** (16.4% of boys with disability compared to 10.7% of girls).



Disability prevalence has increased in the younger **aged groups 0-4 with an increase from 3.7% in 2018 to 5% in 2022.**

13.9% people aged 15-24 have disability. An increase from 9.3% in 2018.



¹ Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings from 2022. Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Our Region

The diversity of disabilities

There is a diversity of disabilities within our community, with many individuals experiencing a range of physical, sensory, intellectual, and neurodivergent disabilities.

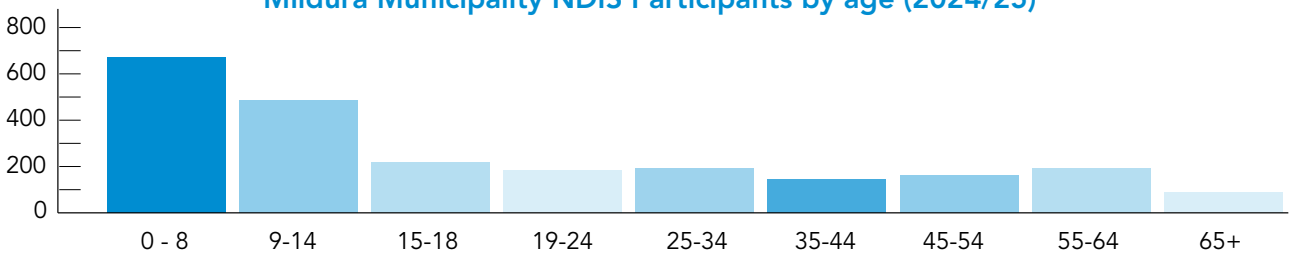
Among these, there is an increasing recognition of hidden disabilities, such as Autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This highlights the evolving understanding of disability in society, particularly regarding conditions that may not be visible yet still have profound impacts on daily functioning and quality of life.

Neurodiversity recognises and celebrates the natural variation in how individuals think, learn, and interact with the world around them. It challenges the conventional idea that there is a "right" way of thinking or behaving and acknowledges that neurological differences, including those associated with conditions like autism, ADHD, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and dyslexia, should not be viewed as deficits but as part of the human experience.

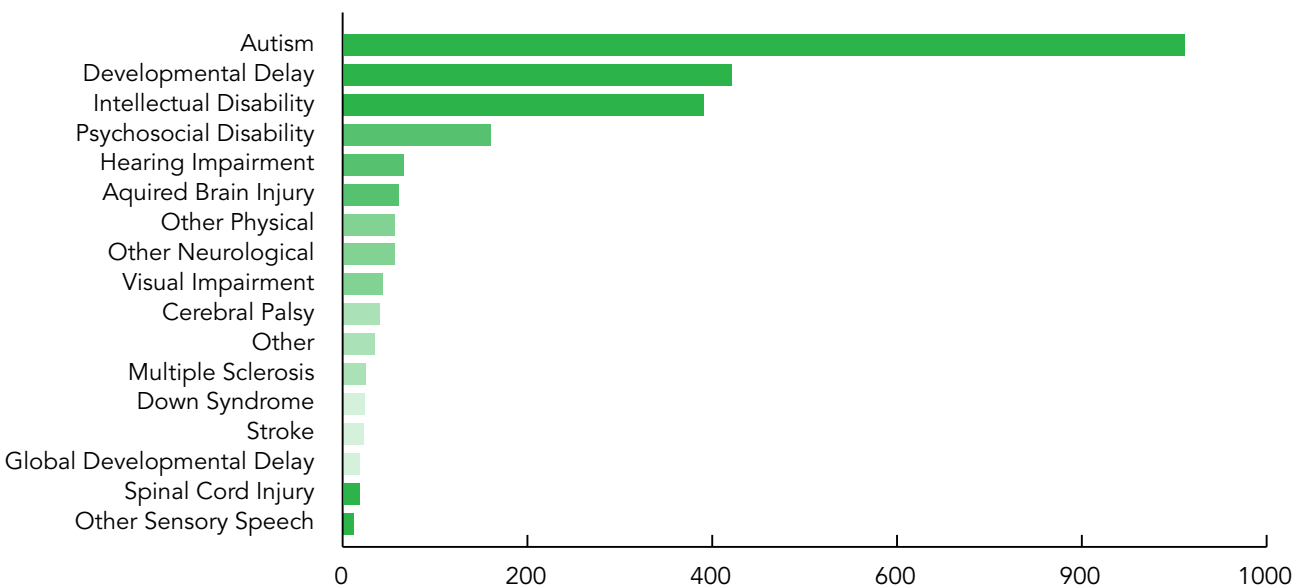
The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a key Australian government initiative, designed to provide financial support for individuals under the age of 65 with significant and permanent disabilities. According to NDIS data collected for the 2024-2025 period, the following highlights the key disabilities and number of active participants in our region. This highlights the high percentage of hidden disabilities in the municipality.

This information also highlights the diversity of disability within our local community and underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive society. It emphasizes that all individuals, regardless of their disability, must be considered in all our programs, services, and initiatives.

Mildura Municipality NDIS Participants by age (2024/25)



Percentage of total NDIS Participants in Mildura Municipality (2024/25)



<https://dataresearch.ndis.gov.au/explore-data>

Our Strategic Objectives – Priority areas

Mildura Rural City Council has identified three key strategic objectives that align with the Victorian State Disability Plan and reflect the needs and aspirations of our local community. These priority areas will guide our actions to remove barriers, promote equity, and ensure that people with disability are supported to participate fully in community life.

- **Our communities are inclusive for all**
We are committed to creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, respected and able to participate — regardless of ability. Through accessible information and inclusive spaces, we will work to ensure equal opportunities for all.
- **Our community is mentally healthy and well**
Mental health is fundamental to wellbeing. Council will prioritise prevention, inclusive support systems, and community connection to improve mental health outcomes for people with disability and carers across our municipality.
- **Our community is safe, supported and resilient**
We will strengthen inclusion in emergency planning, build strong service partnerships, and ensure people with disability are considered and empowered before, during and after emergencies. This includes fostering safer communities and supporting rural and isolated areas to stay connected.

Timeframes

To support accountability and track progress, each action in this plan is assigned a timeframe that reflects when the work will begin or be completed. These timeframes help prioritise actions and ensure a balance of quick wins and longer-term change.

- **(I) Immediate**
Actions that will be initiated or completed within the first 3 months. These are often foundational steps or quick improvements.
- **(S) Short Term**
Actions planned for delivery within 6 months. These may require more planning, resourcing or collaboration.
- **(O) Ongoing**
Actions that require continuous effort or regular review throughout the life of the plan. These reflect long-term commitments embedded into Council's everyday work.

This structure ensures a clear pathway for implementation, while allowing flexibility to respond to emerging needs and opportunities.

Our communities are inclusive for all

Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC) is committed to building a community where everyone can participate fully. We recognise that barriers—physical, communication, and attitudinal—limit inclusion, and we are actively working to remove them.

We will ensure information is clear and accessible, design spaces that are inclusive for all abilities, and create more opportunities for meaningful participation in community life.

By embedding inclusive practices across all areas of Council, we are working towards a community where diversity is embraced and everyone feels they belong.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Community attitudes towards people with a disability are positive	Work with community partners to organise, promote and participate in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Day for People with Disability (IDPWD) • RU OK Day • Carer’s Day • White Cane Walk • Mental Health Awareness Week 	No of events completed No of participants	(I)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee • Disability Action Network
Council Communications are provided in multiple formats	Undertake a review of Council’s website, social media and other platforms against the Accessibility Guidelines for Government Communications, and implement improvements as required	Identify gaps in accessibility of Councils platforms Implement identified changes	(S) (S)	Communications* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Partnerships* • Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee

Our places, roads and facilities are accessible	Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee advocate across Council to improve accessibility of places, roads and facilities	No of items identified and actioned in the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Action Table	(I) (O)	Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Partnerships*
	Implement road improvements identified in the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Action Table	No of items actioned and completed in the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Action Table	(I) (O)	Engineering Development* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee
	Implement improvements to Council facilities as identified in the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Action Table	No of items actioned and completed in the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Action Table	(I) (O)	Facilities and Assets* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee
	Implement improvements to Council open spaces as identified in the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Action Table	No of items actioned and completed in the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Action Table	(I) (O)	Parks and Recreation* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee
Inclusive sport and recreation activities are available for people	Support the pilot and evaluation of Wheelchair Basketball in Mildura to determine future opportunities	Evidence of demand and sustainability identified in evaluation	(S) (O)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks and Recreation* Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Intereach Basketball Victoria Mildura Basketball WeKare Lime Therapy Mallee Sports Assembly Country Care Group
Local businesses and services are accessible	Continue supporting Access at a Glance project being rolled out across the business sector and Council-run facilities	Number of businesses involved with Access at a Glance	(S)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee Intereach Facilities and Assets* Recreation*
	Information regarding accessibility features of Council Services to be included on Council's website and venue booking platform	Information published	(O)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks and Recreation* Arts and Culture* Libraries*

* Mildura Rural City Council team

Our communities are mentally healthy and well

People with disability have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health and wellbeing. Yet, systemic barriers can create inequities in health outcomes. Council is committed to addressing these challenges by fostering inclusive, accessible environments that promote positive mental health for all.

Our municipality has consistently reported higher rates of mental health concerns than the Victorian average. In response, mental health and wellbeing will be a key focus area of this Action Plan, with a strong emphasis on early support, connection, and community-based approaches.

We also recognise and celebrate the vital role of carers in our community. Council will continue to ensure carers are supported, socially connected, and valued across all services and initiatives.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
Community awareness of mental health is increased	Work with community partners to hold an annual Mental Health Forum	Event completed	(I)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Mallee Leaders Mental Health and Wellbeing Local
People are socially connected, and barriers are removed to social isolation	Implement the Social Inclusion Action Group and Local Social Inclusion Investment Fund	No of initiatives undertaken	(S)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Inclusion Action Group
Carers are socially connected	Carer Walks promoted for carers of people with a disability	No of attendees and walks completed	(O)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood House Vic
Council services are welcoming of carers	Use Carers Week as a catalyst for capacity building and awareness raising for Council services to plan for and support the needs of carers	Training/event undertaken	(S) (O)	Community Partnerships* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation* Arts Culture & Venues* Libraries*

* Mildura Rural City Council team



Our community is safe, supported and resilient

Feeling safe and being included are fundamental rights for everyone. People with disability often face greater risks during emergencies and are disproportionately affected by violence and exclusion — this is unacceptable.

Council is committed to working across the organisation and with partners to ensure people with disability are actively included in how we prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. We will foster strong partnerships, support best practice models of inclusion through our advisory groups, and strengthen connections between rural communities and the broader disability sector.

These actions align with priority areas in the State Disability Plan, which focus on inclusive emergency management and building a strong, thriving disability advocacy sector that is led by and for people with disability.

Outcome	Action	Measure	Time frame	Action owner • Partner
People with a disability are included in how we prepare, respond and recover from emergencies	Complete the Organisational Emergency Preparedness Profile	Profile completed	(S)	Community Partnerships* • Governance* • Community Care*
	Review Council communications messaging during emergencies to ensure this is accessible	Emergency Communications Plan template developed	(S)	Community Partnerships* • Communications*
	Investigate opportunities to support people with a disability and their preparedness for emergencies	Plan developed	(O)	Community Partnerships* • Disability Action Network
Strong partnerships between service providers exist	Facilitate Disability Action Network for disability service providers to network and collaborate	No of partnership opportunities undertaken	(O)	Community Partnerships* • Disability Action Network
Council Advisory Groups utilise best practice model for inclusion	Disability Inclusion Terms of Reference to guide inclusive language for best practice and shared with other Council Advisory Groups	Intersectional inclusive language guide developed and shared	(S)	Community Partnerships* • Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee
Rural towns in the municipality are connected to the wider disability sector	Facilitate connections with rural towns and the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee	No of opportunities undertaken to connect with rural towns	(S) (O)	Community Partnerships* • Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee

* Mildura Rural City Council team







Measurement and Evaluation

The Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee will oversee the monitoring and implementation of the Disability Action Plan.

The strategic priorities and actions identified in this Plan will be implemented across 2026 and 2027 and are aligned with the Victorian State Disability Plan. We will track the actions based on the measures listed for each action and monitor progress accordingly.

Our goals and priorities progress will be tracked to include immediate, short term and ongoing actions. We will track the actions based on the measures listed for each action and monitor progress accordingly. This structure will allow us flexibility to respond to emerging needs and opportunities.

Future plans will be developed and informed by the evaluation of this plan as well as the next State Disability Plan, expected in 2027. This will ensure alignment of outcomes and State priorities, as well as local priorities.



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