

What we heard summary report

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2030



Background

Community engagement and consultation was undertaken to inform the development of the new City of Marion Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2026-2030 (DAIP). Community members with disability, people who care-for or support someone with disability, and the wider community were asked to share their experiences and suggestions to help make the City of Marion more accessible and inclusive.

The DAIP helps the City of Marion bring its vision for an inclusive city to life and influences all aspects of the council, including buildings, information, activities and more. Under the Disability Inclusion Act 2018, councils are required to maintain a Disability Action and Inclusion Plan, which is reviewed every 4 years.

Engagement Summary

Community Engagement lasted for 8 weeks between 1 July to 30 August 2025. A variety of methods were used such as:

- Paper based and online surveys,
- Written submissions,
- Face-to-face opportunities including focus groups, drop-ins and community group conversations.
- Some questions were included in City of Marion's volunteer survey.
- Easy read options were available for the survey and pictures were used in some face-to-face focus groups.

A summary of overall participation is as follows:

- 244 responses received across all engagement types
- 65 survey responses,
- 77 responses through the City of Marion Volunteer survey,
- 2 written submissions,
- 100 people participated in face-to-face conversations

Conversations with specific groups included:

- 4 community groups who use Council facilities
- 2 committees supported by Council
- 4 organisations
- 3 drop-in sessions, were held across Westfield Marion, Cove Civic Centre, and Glandore Community Centre
- People

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Council also heard from people who may face additional challenges to access and inclusion including:

- Young and older people
- Aboriginal people
- LGBTIQ+
- Migrant communities
- People with significant disability

What we heard

Key themes included:

Understanding & Awareness

Community members shared differing personal definitions of disability but consistently expressed that all disabilities are different and many are invisible. People with disability and their carers face many varied barriers to inclusion and participation. Finding solutions that support people with disability like Universal Design, will help everyone who lives with disability as well as those who don't. Understanding and awareness, recognition and support is needed for all people with disability and carers as well as people who experience additional challenges to access and inclusion.

Community attitudes

We heard that community attitudes towards disability are varied. Of those surveyed, 48% agreed that the City of Marion council area is a welcoming community, while 26% disagree. People have many positive experiences with council staff but in the community - stereotyping, assumptions and discrimination still occur. Respect towards people living with disability is needed including patience, kindness, consent and letting people speak for themselves.

Accessible information & inclusive communication

People with some disability might benefit from communication supports to help understand information. Many of the support options are easy to do.

The most helpful communication supports were:

- Talking to someone (22% of survey respondents)
- Video (22% of survey respondents)
- Easy Read (10% of survey respondents)
- Plain English (10% of survey respondents)

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- Big print (9% of survey respondents)
- Audio description (9% of survey respondents)

Communication technologies were frequently mentioned as useful, particularly for deaf or hard of hearing people, and people who don't speak English well.

Active participation (activities, groups, events)

Community members shared a lot of barriers to active participation. The most common concerns were:

- Being misunderstood
- Lack of a support person
- Travel/disability parking
- Cost

Of the opportunities and initiatives that lessen these barriers, quiet spaces and times were the most frequent request. People also said routines would also help make spaces and programs more inclusive for people who are older, neurodiverse or have dementia.

Activities and programs at City of Marion's community centres, especially those that support creativity, social connection, and inclusion, are valued. There is however a call for more funding or support for some volunteer led programs, more focus on friendship-building in group activities and quiet spaces. Some concerns were raised about the need for support workers and carers to be more hands-on during group programs.

Community members want events to be more equitable and comfortable, with easier access (particularly at grassy locations) and quiet spaces. Disability and multicultural organisations are willing to partner to support inclusion at events.

People with disability want to be physically active and participate in accessible sport, recreation, and swimming at the pool. This would be easier with cheaper options (pool particularly), quiet times and easier access to dignified supportive equipment.

Key Theme – Voice, contribution, leadership

People living with disability want to be consulted and involved in decisions about council facilities, infrastructure and services. There was strong support for a disability reference group to support this. Council is encouraged to actively listen and respond to people with disability, and to demonstrate flexibility in its processes to accommodate individuals who may face challenges in meeting strict council requirements. People living with disability want visibility in council communications and meaningful volunteering and leadership pathways that matter.

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Accessible & useable places and spaces

People want to be able to get out and about safely in built and natural environments and highlighted some infrastructure they consider essential including:

- Toilets with useable features including space to move in a wheelchair, easy to use toilet paper dispensers, suitable locks that are easy to use and electronic doors that are not too slow to activate, adult change tables, and for some hoists that feature in Changing Places toilets. It was noted that having a useable toilet can be the difference between going out or not.
- Seating with arms to assist sitting and standing
- Quiet rooms
- Closer and better marked disability parking
- Even footpaths not made from pavers
- Tactiles and or contrast markings for blind or vision impaired people
- Safe path and or road crossings
- Clear and easy to read signage

We heard that some City of Marion spaces were accessible, safe and valued. These included libraries, community centres, Oaklands Wetland board walk and parks.

People would like to have more accessible playground options particularly for people in wheelchairs and for a variety of age ranges. Communication boards were also highlighted as important.

Overall, people called for design that is supportive, useable and meets diverse needs - these are principles that define a Universal Design approach.

Suggested focus areas for Council

- Build understanding of disability, and the skills and knowledge needed to improve access and inclusion for a wide range of needs
- Partner with people with disability and specialty organisations to achieve our goals
- Share positive stories of people with disability and their achievements, and make it easier for people with disability to have a say
- Communicate in a variety of accessible and supportive ways
- Provide good information about accessibility at council's events, places and venues so people can plan ahead

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- Design buildings, toilets and outdoor spaces to be 'useable' for people with a broad range of needs
- Make Council's processes easier and more flexible to support people with disability to participate in Council's services

Next steps

We are currently using your feedback to guide the development of our DAIP.

We will release the draft DAIP for community consultation in early 2026 before endorsement by Council and submission to Department of Human Services.

Register to receive project updates at <https://www.makingmarion.com.au/daip>.

Contact the project team

Call **8375 6600** or email communityengagement@marion.sa.gov.au

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