

Inclusive Melbourne Strategy Implementation Plan 2022–2024 – end of plan report

The Inclusive Melbourne Strategy 2022-2032 was endorsed in February 2022 and provides a framework to advance inclusion and equality for all. The first implementation plan focused on the period 2022-2024.

The strategy and plan have three overarching priorities:

- Organisation, services, programs, and places for all – a diverse and inclusive workforce underpins our delivery of services, programs and places that are accessible and meet the needs of our diverse communities.
- Sustainable and fair recovery – the city’s recovery and regeneration from COVID-19 provides an opportunity to build back better for all. A diverse and resilient community is at the centre of a liveable city.
- Empowered, participatory communities – we want to encourage participation from all community members, ensuring that people feel heard and their needs are addressed.

Effectiveness of the plan

- Across the 33 actions within the plan, there was strong progress against 22 actions and some progress against 11 actions, contributing to a solid foundation for future work on achieving the strategy’s vision of an inclusive Melbourne. The most progress was made in priority three – empowered, participatory communities – with strong progress against four of the five actions.
- The plan’s actions were delivered by multiple branches and a wide spectrum of community groups and organisations. The internal Inclusion Avengers team, senior officers from across the organisation who help steward and champion inclusion plans, were instrumental to this achievement. The leadership of the newly formed Community Development Branch, coupled with the significant focus on the strategy by the Executive and Councillors also provided a strong authorising environment for the plan.
- There has been notable progress in understanding and implementing actions using an intersectional approach. A reflection of this maturity is the decision to consolidate this plan, the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, and the Women’s Safety and Empowerment Action Plan into one integrated Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan.

Challenges

- The existence of three separate inclusion-related plans (this plan plus the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and the Women’s Safety and Empowerment Action Plan) caused challenges with reporting on all actions across the plans. The three plans were developed at different times, which meant they were structured differently, there was wide variation in the number of commitments, and there was duplication across the plans. A review of the plans in 2023 recommended one action plan moving forward, with fewer actions. This will improve focus and the ability to track and report on progress.
- The plan did not clearly articulate actions to support LGBTIQ+ communities, which in some cases caused a perception that these communities were not a priority for City of Melbourne (CoM).
- Some of the actions were not able to be completed within the two-year timeframe. Work was done to scope or initiate these, and they have been included in the Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan to continue and complete them.

Key achievements over the life of the plan

Inclusive recreation and sport programs and services

There has been a key focus on improving access and inclusion within CoM recreation facilities. Highlights include the employment of 13 local young people in recreation facilities through The **Huddle’s Game Changers** program, and an increase in diverse programming. This includes programs such as a women’s only gym program at North Melbourne Community Centre, **Swimm(h)er**, a women’s only swimming

program at Melbourne City Baths covering water safety education and swimming lessons, **Ramadan events** including soccer programs, a gym program for adults with Down Syndrome, **Pride Party** at Carlton Baths, and a sport program for rough sleepers. Many of these programs were **co-designed** with their target communities. In addition, all recreation staff were trained in hidden disabilities, and a partnership with **RecLink Australia** supports community members experiencing disadvantage to access gym and swim programs.

Supporting employment and entrepreneurs

CoM has collaborated with various industries, offering funding and programs to support employment and entrepreneurial endeavours. There were several partnerships established through grants during the plan, including:

- A program run by **Sisterworks** supported migrant and refugee women with education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- **Keeping it in the Family**, led by iGen, provided mentoring and business coaching to migrant families who have a small business. The program was run in Spanish, Mandarin, English and Arabic.
- A Trans Jobseekers Support and Capacity Building Program led by **Transgender Victoria**, supported trans, gender diverse, and non-binary job seekers find and navigate pathways to employment.

In 2024, CoM is partnering with **Catalysr X** to launch the Melbourne Migrapreneurs program aimed at supporting migrants and international students in launching startups, fostering future innovation and change-makers.

The neighbourhood model and Knowledge Bank

The neighbourhood model was a new approach for CoM, encompassing neighbourhood partners, neighbourhood portals and neighbourhood grants. The model has successfully **enabled community-led action** through neighbourhood grants. The model has also gathered and synthesised input from community to understand what the neighbourhood priorities are, including neighbourhood survey in early 2024 that was completed by over 4400 people. Another component of the model, the **internal 'Knowledge Bank'**, is a critical way that CoM now captures community voice and utilises this data to inform decision-making. As at 30 June 2024 there are 93,000 pieces of feedback from 30,000 contributors within the database, and in the last financial year **45 reports were generated** from the database on specific topics or themes, enabling existing community insights to inform policies, action plans and community engagement.

Inclusive communications

A multifaceted approach to inclusive communications was implemented, including a focus on **building staff capability** through training on accessible communications and working with interpreters and translators, and updating the internal Editorial style guide with changes for inclusive language. New images were taken that reflect CoM's diverse communities, and community networks have been leveraged more effectively to provide relevant information. The new website is being built with increased levels of accessibility, will comply with WCAG 2.2 AA standards, and Google Translate will be implemented across the site. A new **translation function** was implemented on Participate Melbourne, enabling online engagement material to be translated into the top 10 languages other than English that are spoken in the municipality.

Embedded change

Over the life of the plan, many activities have become embedded in the way the City of Melbourne does things. These include:

- Collecting a consistent set of demographic data during every online community engagement activity enabling the establishment of baseline data and ability to better plan and track inclusive engagement.
- Sustainable Procurement practices and social inclusion outcomes are embedded into tender processes and the new COMBUY procurement system. This includes targets regarding employment

of young people from local communities at recreation facilities that are embedded into contracts with the YMCA, supported by The Huddle and the Game Changers Program.

- A focus on gender equality within the workplace supported by the Gender Equality Act 2020 and the ongoing requirement to develop and deliver a Gender Equality Action Plan.

Reporting against actions



● Strong Progress

● Some Progress




Priority 1: Organisation, services, programs and places for all	
1.1 Increase inclusivity of our facilities and diversity of participation within City of Melbourne recreation and community services facilities, starting with a pilot at North Melbourne Community Centre.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation sites have introduced sensory hours and over 14 inclusive programs, including Pride Party, Q Fit, sporting program for rough sleepers, learn-to-skate with young people with disabilities, a Ramadan soccer program, and swimming for older adults. A partnership with Reclink Australia supports community members experiencing disadvantage to access gym and swim programs. The Game Changers program has supported 13 local young people into employment within recreation facilities. All recreation facility staff were trained in Hidden Disabilities, enhancing their ability to make facilities and programs more inclusive. A new role specifically for a person with a disability, commenced in March through a partnership with Sports4All, to support sporting clubs and schools to increase participation for people with disabilities.
1.2 Implement a Gender Equality Action Plan for the City of Melbourne workplace.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Gender Equality Action plan has been developed and seventy five per cent of all actions have commenced. The plan is on track for full completion by June 2025. A wide range of teams and expertise are engaged in delivering the Gender Equality Action Plan. Major projects include deepening understanding of the gender pay gap, refresh of the Peer Support Program, increasing reporting options for staff around behaviours of concern, increasing diversity data of workers, and increased staff engagement through staff reference groups.
1.3 Review and refresh the City of Melbourne's internal workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of an internal diversity, equity and inclusion strategy has commenced, with the establishment of Steering and Project Groups. A request for quote process is underway to source consultancy expertise to assist the drafting of the strategy.
1.4 Implement a range of actions within City of Melbourne recruitment policies and processes to increase diversity of the workforce.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last financial year, CoM subscribed to the Field, which is an online job portal specially designed for people with a disability. The platform has been configured and will go live in the first quarter of the 2024-2025 financial year with all roles (approximately 400-500 per year) being advertised on the platform. In addition to this, there will be training provided to staff on employing and supporting people with disability. A new recruitment platform enables candidates to disclose upfront any adjustments needed for interviews, with complementary changes in process such as providing interview questions in advance and adjusting interview locations to meet candidate needs.

1.5 Explore, test and implement actions that support improved access to information for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community members.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a focus on building staff capability through interpreter and translation workshops and training sessions on accessible information and writing in plain English. • New images were taken to ensure representation of diverse community members in communications, information was translated for both printed collateral and social media, and community organisations were used to communicate with multicultural communities. • WeChat has been tested and used effectively for communicating with CoM's Mandarin speaking audience, including visitors, businesses and international students. • Access to information for new migrants and refugees is a focus area within the Multicultural Hub agreement with AMES Australia, with 277 students from 31 countries participating in 12 English conversation programs and five Welcome to Melbourne information sessions held with 82 people.
1.6 Update the Editorial Style Guide with easy-to-understand guidelines for inclusive written and verbal communication across the organisation.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The editorial style guide has been updated to improve inclusive language for written and verbal communication. The latest updates include advice on strength-based language and individual preferences for descriptions including neurodivergence, and providing clarity between 'person-first' and 'identity-first' language. • Quarterly training sessions were led by an internal subject matter expert focusing on clear writing with inclusive language components, and targeted training was provided for key internal stakeholders. • The development of an Inclusive Communication Guide is included in the Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan 2024-26
1.7 Implement changes and upgrades to the City of Melbourne website to improve accessibility (e.g. through system capability, plain English, visuals, audio and translations).	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new website is being built with increased levels of accessibility. The content strategy includes guidelines, training, and quality assurance processes to ensure all content complies with accessibility standards. Vision Australia have been engaged to complete an audit of the website to ensure compliance with WCAG 2.2 AA standards and Google Translate is being implemented across the website. Accessible alternatives will be provided for all documents not able to comply with WCAG 2.2AA standards.
1.8 Implement approaches to make City of Melbourne communications more inclusive and reach broader and more diverse audiences (e.g. through diverse imagery, accessible language, and leveraging community networks).	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a focus on building staff capability through interpreter and translation workshops and training sessions on accessible information and writing in plain English. New images were taken to ensure representation of diverse community members in communications, and diverse communities were celebrated through front cover images on Melbourne magazine, in media opportunities and in social media posts. • Community networks have been leveraged more effectively through the community development branch to provide relevant information to diverse communities.

1.9 Implement a centralised data repository (Knowledge Bank) that collates data (including direct community input) on community needs and knowledge and support the organisation to use this resource to respond to emerging trends and priorities.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Knowledge Bank was launched in November 2023 following an earlier pilot. Since launch, 62 staff have undertaken detailed training on the platform. As at 30 June 2024, there are 93,979 pieces of feedback from 30,465 contributors within the database. In the last financial year, 45 Knowledge Bank reports were generated on specific topics or themes, enabling existing community insights to inform policies, action plans and community engagement. Highlights include informing the Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan, providing insights on what community has told CoM about factors that impact their personal mental health and understanding community sentiment on bike lanes by neighbourhood and niche street locations.
1.10 Develop systems and processes to gather data on City of Melbourne's workforce where it's not currently available.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internal system now allows voluntary submission of diversity and equity data for staff, which will improve understanding of workforce diversity over time. In addition, CoM participated in the Australian Workplace Equality Index Survey, with 569 staff completing the survey in 2024. The results are currently being analysed.
1.11 Build a baseline understanding of our varied customers and their use of our facilities, services and programs by piloting different data collection mechanisms.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping revealed multiple systems for collecting participant information across facilities, services, and programs. Data is managed in various formats, from Excel spreadsheets to customer management systems. This action will continue to progress under the Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan 2024-26 with an action to pilot the collection of consistent demographic information from service users.
1.12 Develop and implement an Inclusive Impact Assessment Toolkit to be used in the development and review of policy, programs and services.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final year's focus has been on embedding Gender Impact Assessments through staff training, development of tools and an online 'hub', and establishment of an internal Community of Practice. These tools also encourage staff to take a broad, intersectional approach to conducting impact assessments. The process and tools will inform the development of an Inclusive Design Guide, which is an action within the Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan 2024-26.
1.13 Develop an Inclusive Design Framework to inform development of infrastructure and places, including open spaces and other built form.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A draft Inclusive Design Guide to ensure access, safety, and inclusion are considered early in the design of the built environment was scoped and will be delivered under the new Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan 2024-26. The guide will be published and embedded in CoM projects and showcased across industry and educational institutions.
1.14 Continue to pilot, test and roll out actions to reduce barriers to participation (e.g. physical, sensory, mobility, cultural, economic and attitudinal) at City of Melbourne supported events.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CoM major events provided a suite of access and inclusion measures such as quiet spaces, social stories, hearing loops, accessible pathways and drop off points, Auslan interpreters, mobility support services, and website information in accessible formats with image description.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events were also provided free where possible and included a diverse range of artists and programming.
1.15 Implement the national Child Safe Standards and the reportable conduct scheme.	
Activities undertaken: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An organisational Child Safety Policy has been developed including an updated Child Safety Commitment Statement documenting how CoM implements child safety processes and outlining child safety responsibilities.
1.16 Map existing all-gender and accessible toilets (including Changing Places toilets) and develop a policy to ensure that all-gender and accessible toilets are available in Council administration buildings and community facilities.	
Activities undertaken: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-gender and accessible toilets, including Changing Places toilets, were mapped identifying 42 'unisex' toilets, 47 accessible toilets and 1 Changing Places toilets across CoM facilities. A policy on all-gender toilets was scoped, however was put on hold to await the outcome of the consultation on the inclusion of all-gender facilities in the National Construction Code 2025.

Priority 2: Sustainable and fair recovery

2.1 Partner with industry and government to support the entrepreneurial efforts of people from diverse ages, backgrounds and identities, with a focus on international students, new migrants and female entrepreneurs. This will include undertaking research to understand the barriers faced by diverse business owners in the City of Melbourne and piloting a business support and development program to reduce the barriers identified through the research.	
Activities undertaken: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CoM has collaborated with various industries, offering funding and programs to support diverse entrepreneurial endeavours, emphasising international students, new migrants, and female entrepreneurs. There were several partnerships established through the Social Investment Partnership grants program in August 2023 that support entrepreneurship and employment, such as a project with Sisterworks supporting migrant and refugee women with education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. In 2024, CoM is partnering with Catalysr X to launch the Melbourne Migrapreneurs program aimed at supporting migrants, refugees, and international students in launching startups, fostering future innovation and change-makers.
2.2 Pilot and test the inclusion of social procurement outcomes within at least one high value contract and use the findings to inform future actions to embed these outcomes in other high-value contracts.	
Activities undertaken: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two high value contracts embedded social procurement outcomes, with strong results. Greenline includes a joint venture with an Aboriginal business, worth \$2 million for the Aboriginal business. The Active Melbourne Recreation Facilities contract includes targets to employ local young people, with 13 young people employed to date. It also includes targets to increase participation from identified cohorts (such as people with disability, LGBTIQ+, women and girls and international students), with a minimum of 20 new programs or initiatives piloted for targeted cohorts per year.
2.3 Apply social procurement principles to targeted high volume, low spend supplier categories to increase social procurement outcomes (e.g. catering spend).	
Activities undertaken: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In year one the office milk supply contract, was awarded to a Social Enterprise, Fruit2Work, who provide employment for people impacted through the justice system.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action will continue to be progressed through the new Procurement Policy.
2.4	Enhance the Community Grants and Partnerships program to increase participation from a broader range of organisations, by focusing on the pre-application phase (e.g. flexible application processes, strategic partnerships to increase reach and awareness and targeted communication strategies).
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the 2023-24 Community Grants program 175 applications were from first time organisations applying for CoM funding. Promotion was tailored and occurred through staff and community networks, social media, and newsletters. A new free self-serve community learning library was made available for local organisations to build their capability, and training was offered in governance, finance, grant writing, marketing and social media.
2.5	Implement a volunteering program for City of Melbourne employees to use their volunteering leave to provide skilled volunteering support for eligible community organisations and small businesses.
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a Community Volunteering Program was scoped, however it was not recommended for implementation.
2.6	Develop and apply a social value framework to relevant Council projects that identifies, maximises and measures outcomes across a range of social, environmental and economic domains.
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The original intention was achieved through the roll out of the Sustainable Development Goals across CoM.
2.7	Prioritise six Council Plan Major Initiatives for integrated action across social, environmental and economic outcomes: Greenline (MI 12), Neighbourhood Model (MI 37), Economic Development Strategy (MI 3), Sustainable Development Goals (MI 11), Community Disaster Resilience (MI 52), and Food Organics, Green Organics (MI 32).
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CoM Major Initiatives are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with 27% achieving outcomes across social, environmental and economic domains.
2.8	Align actions in this implementation plan to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets and indicators as outlined in City of Melbourne's Voluntary Local Review (VLR).
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All actions outlined in the plan were aligned to seven Sustainable Development Goals and 11 corresponding targets.
2.9	Establish baseline and determine data collection method for socially responsible businesses, and those owned by people who experience barriers to establishing business in the City of Melbourne.
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action was scoped, however it was not possible to measure the number of socially responsible businesses and minority-owned businesses receiving support from CoM, as there is not an accurate or reliable way to define, identify and monitor these businesses. Certified social enterprises remain the most accurate way to measure this.
2.10	Implement procurement system that will collect social procurement-related data and use analytics to drive social procurement activities.
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new COMBUY procurement system has been implemented, enabling capturing and reporting on social outcomes within contracts. In the last financial year, there were 57 contracts that included social outcomes. Spend with Aboriginal businesses was \$4.19 million and spend with social enterprises was \$3.82 million.

2.11 Establish an internal Executive Leadership Team governance mechanism to provide oversight and support to embed inclusion across City of Melbourne.	
Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last financial year the focus with ELT was on the review of CoM's approach to inclusion planning, and the new Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan 2024-26. Governance arrangements for the Inclusive Melbourne Action Plan 2024-2026 will be established

Priority 3. Empowered, participatory communities

3.1 Implement a place-based model to enable communities (residents, students, businesses, workers and visitors) to identify local priorities in their neighbourhoods and activate community-led responses. This includes ongoing engagement and support through Neighbourhood Partner roles, development of interactive online Neighbourhood Portals and implementing neighbourhood grants.

Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Neighbourhood Model was implemented encompassing Neighbourhood Partners, Neighbourhood Portals (270,000 page views from 110,000 users at May 2024); and Neighbourhood Grants. 7,000 residents, business owners, students and visitors (82% engaging with CoM for the first time) informed community priorities and the Neighbourhood portals. In early 2024, a neighbourhood survey was completed by over 4,400 people making it the largest ever engagement recorded on the Participate Melbourne platform. The survey was supported by 130 in-person events and a strong social media campaign.
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3.2 Work with the State Government to deliver Recommendation 15 under the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, the establishment of 'community collectives' in every municipality to bring together community members and leaders to guide and lead local social connection and inclusion activities



Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CoM has not yet been included in the Victoria Government rollout of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals but is preparing to work with the Victorian Government on this project in the future. A Wellbeing and Connection Map highlighting social connection programs was developed, which is a proactive step to action Recommendation 15.
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3.3 Design and deliver inclusive, accessible and timely community engagement programs across 40 projects (per annum) that inform planning, design and decision-making at City of Melbourne.

Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each community engagement project has been supported by a Community Engagement and Impact Advisor, with the development of comprehensive engagement plans that outline the purpose, objectives, negotiables, and level of community influence over decisions. Between 2022 - 2024, 137 formal engagement projects were conducted, involving 21,264 contributors on the Participate Melbourne platform, with additional participation from people through workshops, drop-in sessions and pop-ups.
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3.4 Establish baseline demographics of people involved in public consultation and improve representation of target cohorts.

Activities undertaken: ●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A demographic baseline has been established for public consultation participants. A comparison between 2023 and 2024 shows an increased proportion of people born overseas who were involved in public consultation. Other target cohorts remained the same, although there were increases in the number of each target cohort due to an overall increase in the number of people involved in public consultation.
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3.5 Increase diverse community participation at community-located Future Melbourne Committee meetings.	
Activities undertaken: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Melbourne Committee meetings in neighbourhoods commenced in 2022 and were an effective way to strengthen understanding of and participation from community members, with over 500 community members attended the community-located meetings. Since December 2023, meetings moved back to Melbourne Town Hall.
3.6 Explore industry and sector partnerships to support community-led action.	
Activities undertaken: 	<p>Several partnerships supported community-led action, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlton Collaboration Partnership between CoM, University of Melbourne and the Carlton Community Network (made up of 50 local organisations). In the first half of 2024, and based on feedback from young people, this partnership focused on co-designing and delivering activities with young people.. • Partnerships with the four neighbourhood houses within CoM that support them to identify and respond to local needs, as well as convening agency networks that respond to emerging needs. • Festival at Boyd Southbank, which was a partnership with the Active Southbank Community Association and CoM, to design and deliver a new festival at Boyd Community Centre. CoM staff actively worked with the association to build their capacity to run future events independently and source independent sponsorship.