



## WDN Community Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 17 June 2025

Great Hall, Civic Centre, 10.30am – 1pm

### Item

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| 1. | <p><a href="#">Acknowledgement, Welcome &amp; Housekeeping</a><br/>Kimberley Richardson, Unit Manager Healthy &amp; Inclusive Communities</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2. | <p><a href="#">Council Update – WDN March &amp; April Community Catch Ups</a><br/>Presenter – Jafar Hussein, Community Strengthening Officer</p> <p>Insights shared from four WDN community catchups held in March–April 2025 across Doreen, Thomastown, Whittlesea Township, and South Morang. Around 20 participants attended, including carers, people with disabilities, support workers, and service providers.</p> <p><b><u>Key Themes</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Support Coordination &amp; System Navigation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing issues with unclear communication, service disruptions, and difficulty navigating NDIS.</li> <li>Suggested: accessible resources and local workshops.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Carer Strain</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carers reported strain and limited support.</li> <li>Suggested: Peer support groups and stronger links to formal services.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Employment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited post-school pathways for young people with disability.</li> <li>Suggested: School-to-work programs and inclusive employment pilots.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Safety and Engagement with Victoria Police</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about unsafe roads, vandalism, and poor public transport access.</li> <li>Suggested: Infrastructure improvements and better safety reporting channels, as well as engagement with Victoria Police</li> <li>Desire for stronger visibility and connection with Disability Liaison Officers.</li> <li>Suggested: Ongoing DLO promotion and participation in WDN events.</li> <li>Presentation on the DLO role delivered by Acting Senior Sergeant Cameron and Inspector Kate O’Neil</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Community Inclusion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited access to culturally inclusive and sensory-friendly programs.</li> <li>Suggested: More inclusive social events and multicultural engagement in recreation planning.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |

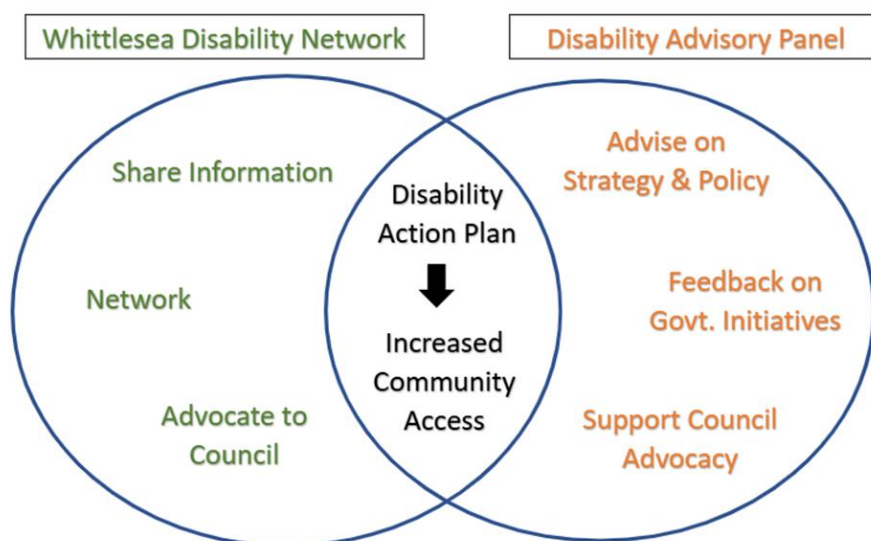
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### Whittlesea Disability Advisory Panel & Disability Action Plan Projects

Presenters: Kimberley Richardson & Rosie Beaumont, Community Strengthening Officer

#### Disability Advisory Panel

- Advise on strategy and policy
- Feedback on government initiatives
- Support council advocacy
- A disability lens is to be applied to everything we do.
- Information will be fed up with Councils Executive Leadership Team (ELT) team – just under Councillors.
- This group will help inform and operationalise what this DAP will look like. This will ensure all this is informed by Community.
- Councillor Gunn will be represented at WDN
- EOI will be circulated and up on Whittlesea's website via the Engage page.



#### Memberships

| Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Disability Advisory Panel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Whittlesea residents with disability</li> <li>• Supporters (carers, family members)</li> <li>• Key stakeholders in the disability sector (disability advocates, organisations and services)</li> <li>• Councillor (designated)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 9 community members (people with disability, carers, family members)</li> <li>• At least 4 organisational representatives from local organisations, agencies, or service providers that work with or support people with disability.</li> <li>• Councillor (designated)</li> </ul> |

#### Activities and relationships

| Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN)                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Disability Advisory Panel                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly community meetings</li> <li>Special events</li> <li>WDN online Hub and Access Point newsletter</li> <li>Administered by Healthy &amp; Inclusive Communities Team (City of Whittlesea)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly meetings</li> <li>Reports annually to Executive Leadership Team (City of Whittlesea)</li> <li>Reports to WDN?</li> </ul> |

#### Council Projects - New Disability Projects

**Accessible Precinct Project:** supporting children with complex needs with access to safe spaces, accessible amenities.

- Site is yet to be determined – factors to be considered i.e., proximity to specialist schools
- This will be a pilot project and will inform future infrastructure.

**Work experience for students with Autism** – opportunities for those with Autism.

- Working with Northern School for Autism to adapt work experience opportunities for all young people living with Autism.
- Different work environments will be trialled including Council. Different streams will be trialled i.e., horticulture, public administration stream, sports, and recreation etc.
- The idea is to strengthen local employers by connecting and advocating for more job opportunities. This is to help address the lack of job opportunities available.

**NDIA CALD Engagement Partnership** – supporting those from CALD backgrounds navigating this complex system – NDIS.

- Working with Council and Meriang Specialist School to help many families who are having issues accessing services.
- Starting with Arabic speaking families first, other cultural backgrounds will be explored. Bridging the gap between families and the NDIS.

**4.**

#### Question & Answer

Presenters: Stephen McKay – Manager, Community Wellbeing, Kimberley Richardson & Rosie Beaumont

**Question: Morang Drive all accessibility play space – why not build something on that? It was designed for all abilities – have you considered that space, it is underutilised as it is only an outdoor space**

- Number of options we are looking at, there is a lot of factoring in, the existing structure, precinct needs etc
- The families that we were building for in the first place can't use the space as it is too chaotic and noisy for their kids

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One size doesn't suit everyone – need different spaces for different groups within a proximity</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: Have you looked at the Concord Model for work experience, not in the city of Whittlesea but they do it well</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Northern School for Autism</li> <li>Special development schools have different approaches</li> <li>Yes, we are looking to learn from the model</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: Most employers say what is in it for them – have you looked at Traineeships?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Businesses need to be honest about making money</li> <li>We hope the engagement we do with them will allow them to ask honest questions about money and profit to get people onboard</li> <li>Need to involve disability employment services (for subsidies such as reasonable adjustment) and Centrelink etc to then work with employers to provide subsidies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: How many people with disability do we employ at Council and what adjustments have we made, and can we use this as an example to other employers?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9% of employees that disclose living with a disability</li> <li>We have a disability employee reference group to ensure we can make reasonable adjustments for our workforce, but ultimately around individual conversations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: Is there anything for ageing parents looking after people with disability who aren't technologically proficient who are having their own disability issues?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spent decades building people with disabilities up to speak about their strengths whereas the NDIS is written in a deficit language.</li> <li>WDN can talk to projects that we can work on moving forward – so could look at this as an issue could be future project opportunities.</li> <li>In our next meeting, we can explore sharing information and case management. We need to hear this from families who are directly accessing support services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: Are there still service clubs in Whittlesea?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We always have to keep revisiting the relationships, who's out there, what can they do, what are the issues now as they keep changing.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Morning Tea Break</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>5.</b>                | <p><a href="#">Victoria Police Presentation &amp; Q/A – Disability Liaison Officer role</a><br/>Presenters – Inspector Kate O'NEILL &amp; Acting Senior Sergeant Cam ROFFEY</p> <p><b><u>Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) role</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve reporting to police by people with disability – major issue, can be daunting to go to a police station to report what they are there to report. Can look at working with organisations like Scope to better our communication</li> <li>Improve access and support services by referral pathways - When you come to a police station we can refer onto other agencies you may need such as legal aid.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve police understanding of the barriers in the justice system – can be very confusing just for police so it can be daunting for people with disability and general community</li> <li>• Reduce discriminatory behaviour and language and improve community's understanding of police - this is a portfolio added onto of regular duties.</li> <li>• Identify and support educational opportunities to raise awareness for frontline police (i.e., working with scope)</li> <li>• Improve communication between police and the disability community (i.e., coming to WDN)</li> <li>• Identify challenges and emerging issues or opportunities</li> </ul> <p>We have received feedback where those living with a disability, don't feel supported and/or feel intimidated by Vic Police.</p> <p>People with disability may encounter the legal system as a victim, witness, suspect or accused. Want to ensure every person with a disability is heard and understood.</p> <p><b>Question: Is the police station in Whittlesea going to be manned more than it currently is?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vic Police are 2500 members down, trying to do a lot more with a lot less. Trying to get it open 8 hours a day, and as it is not a 24hr station it is not mandated to be open.</li> <li>• Resources are currently being shared with Mernda.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: What are the inclusions and exclusion criteria to referrals to the DLO program? We want to be able to have a police officer who can speak to them and respect their special needs/circumstances.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Totally open to any ability – trying to recruit DLOs in all our stations</li> <li>• With more DLOs hoping to offer more services to the community</li> <li>• Working with case workers to support the client, to understand how to best communicate with the person with a disability.</li> <li>• It is just a call to the police station to speak to the DLO</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: What skills are the police taught in day-to-day activities to communicate / recognise the needs of people with disability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They get extra training from week one with people from different disabilities, different communities etc. Each training block has a different focus with people with lived experience (i.e., mental health, FV etc).</li> <li>• We've come a long way with how we train our recruits. We are teaching our members what to look for.</li> </ul> |
| 6. | <p><a href="#">Brotherhood of St Laurence Presentation &amp; Q/A – Community Listening Project</a></p> <p><b>Presenter – Kelly Bolton, Project Manager, BSL</b></p> <p>This project has just started in the municipality.</p> <p>BSL has the NDIS partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with community members and organisations to make the community more accessible</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted community consultations with targeted area of interest – what is important to make them feel included in the community</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted areas of interest: Thomastown, Lalor, Epping, Wollert, and Donnybrook</li> <li>In total, there were 55 conversations with people with disability and carers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attitude and mindset are that people don't feel welcome going out to the community</li> <li>Unsure where to get help or where to go to get information</li> <li>Individuals need a mixture of way to get information i.e., online vs flyers</li> <li>People like to stay connected and be active via groups, those that are engaged are happy with the activities provided.</li> </ul> <p>BSL is looking to get a project in Thomastown/Lalor - an activity around social inclusion. Seeking interest from community who would like to meet with likeminded people to do a workshop, key organisations/ partners in the area.</p> <p>If anyone is interested, please visit:</p> <div data-bbox="367 1079 544 1256">  </div> <p><b>Scan the QR code to subscribe!</b><br/> <a href="https://ndis.bsl.org.au/resources/subscribe">ndis.bsl.org.au/resources/subscribe</a></p> <p>If you are interested in finding out more on BSL, a quarterly newsletter is sent out.</p> |
| 7. | <p><b>Whittlesea Home &amp; Community Care Program for Young People &amp; Volunteer Program</b><br/> <b>Presenter – Mayuri Mehta</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live as independently as possible in their homes and communities</li> <li>Improve their health, wellbeing and safety</li> <li>Engage and connect in their communities</li> </ul> <p><b>Eligibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under 65yo (or under 50yo for Aboriginal &amp; Torres Straight Islanders)</li> <li>Lives in City of Whittlesea</li> <li>Not a NDIS participant</li> </ul> <p><b>Volunteer Coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer recruitment, training and supervision</li> <li>Program development</li> <li>Improve participation in community activities and capacity building</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



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|    | <p><b>Get in Touch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer Community Connector' position currently advertised<br/> <a href="https://govolunteer.com.au/volunteering/opportunity/226133/volunteer-community-connector">https://govolunteer.com.au/volunteering/opportunity/226133/volunteer-community-connector</a></li> <li>• Phone: 03 9217 2170 and press option 5 – ask for HACC PYP</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:HACCPYPvolunteering@whittlesea.vic.gov.au">HACCPYPvolunteering@whittlesea.vic.gov.au</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Question: Is this program only for Under 65, and if so, why?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with the HACC Guidelines, this program is for people who are not eligible for NDIS.</li> <li>• Anyone above 65 can access support through MyAged Care.</li> </ul> <p><b>Question: What about supporting people in transition from HACC to MyAged Care?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We help them transition if they are a currently client – we would normally give six weeks to support transition</li> <li>• If it is an essential service, we help support to transition and understand it can take longer than six weeks.</li> </ul> <p>We don't want to see anyone slip through the cracks; there is discretion for us to provide continuity of service</p> |
| 8. | <p><a href="#">Next Meeting and Close</a></p> <p>Tuesday 16 September 2025<br/> 10.00am – 12.30pm</p> <p>Agenda to be circulated.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |