

# The MAV Disability Work Experience Project

## Evaluation Report

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The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) received funding under an Information Linkages and Capacity-building (ILC) Grant Program formerly of the National Disability Insurance Scheme to implement a work experience project for people with disability in Victorian councils. The Project funded ten councils \$20,000 each to plan, implement and pilot work experience programs for people with disability with an overall aim of building disability-confidence in councils.

This report has been prepared by Katherine Wositzky from Katherine Wositzky Social Research. Katherine extends her thanks to the many people who contributed to the evaluation. Your experiences and insights are valuable contributions to the ongoing learnings of building disability confidence and employment of people with disability in local government.

In addition to this evaluation report, the evaluation findings are presented in a short video. The video will be available from the MAV website and is intended to further promote disability confidence in councils. [Link here](#)

Katherine Wositzky Social Research  
acknowledges the Traditional Owners  
of Country throughout Victoria and pays  
respect to their Elders past, present and future.

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## Foreword

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is the legislated peak body representing local government in Victoria. The MAV provides leadership, support and resources to 79 councils in Victoria as well as representation at Federal, State, regional and local levels.

The MAV's long-term commitment to inclusion of people with disability includes strategic resources and ongoing support to councils to systematically improve inclusion of people with disability.

Councils' work in building inclusive communities includes the development and implementation of Disability Action or Disability Inclusion Plans (DAPs). Enshrined in the *Disability Act 2006*, the DAPs provide a strategic focus for councils to address barriers to inclusion in council and in the community. DAPs demonstrate a strong whole-of-council commitment including strategic actions to improve economic participation of people with disability.

From 2019-2021 the MAV implemented a Disability Employment and Economic Participation Project with funds from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Disability. Under the scope of this project, the MAV applied for and successfully received funds for the MAV Disability Work Experience Project. This Project involved the participation of ten councils to pilot a work experience program for people with disability, utilising different models and approaches.

This evaluation report draws together the evaluation findings from each of the council's work experience pilot projects and aims to assist Victorian councils in their ongoing journey of building inclusive communities.

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*Victorians with disability can and want to work yet continue to face barriers and discrimination which leaves them significantly under-represented in the workforce, with very little positive change over the past 20 years. Employment rates – in both the public and private sectors remain static and well below those of people without disability.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> *Every Opportunity* Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018-2020, Victorian State Government

## Executive Summary

People with disability continue to report structural and perceived barriers that contribute to their under-representation in the workforce. Employment is considered pivotal to gaining independence and addressing inequity, yet latest statistics show the ongoing disparity in workforce participation between people that have disability and people who do not.

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*People with disability can face many barriers to employment, which prevents full social and economic participation. There has been significant government investment in support for people with disability to gain employment, and while this has worked for some, the employment and labour force participation rates of people with disability have not improved for over 20 years and remain significantly lower than for those without disability.<sup>2</sup>*

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Through the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and through individual councils' Disability Action Plans, local government in Victoria has demonstrated a commitment and responsibility to improve economic participation and inclusion of people with disability.

Councils have a history of providing pathways to employment and workforce opportunities through work experience and internships. Very few councils however have targeted or included people with disability in these pathways. Identifying this gap, the MAV through its Disability Employment and Economic Participation Project was successful in gaining funds to pilot work experience programs for people with disability in ten councils.

A key aim of the MAV Work Experience Disability Project was to explore and understand different models and approaches to implementing work experience. The ten participating councils were selected to ensure a diversity of settings (metropolitan, regional, rural) a range of prior experience around inclusion of people with disability in employment (establishment phase, review and improvement, and innovation and integration stage) and different target groups (school children, graduates, adults). Councils were given free range to design their individual pilot projects and were funded \$20,000 to undertake this work in a six-month timeframe, from January 2020-June 2020.

The rationale for this project approach was to create opportunities for 'learning and sharing' across the breadth and depth of councils with a key aim of increasing disability-confidence in work experience programs and employment. An independent evaluator was engaged to capture the experiences of the pilot projects and share these learnings across the sector. In particular, the evaluation was to report on the different approaches and models implemented, learnings and challenges of the pilot projects and outcomes for council, staff, stakeholders and work experience participants.

The commencement of the Project coincided with the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic which resulted in significant interruptions and adaptations to individual pilot projects and the evaluation. The Project timeframes were renegotiated over the next 18 months and the pilot projects were placed on hold, followed by several 'stop-start' conditions. None of the projects were able to implement their original project design, and, most significantly most council business was transferred to an online operation indefinitely. The impact on all projects was highly significant as all project models

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<sup>2</sup> Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 – Employment Targeted Action Plan

were designed to ‘immerse’ the participant across one or several areas of council and create ‘real’ working experiences.

With these challenging conditions, nine of the ten funded pilot projects adapted and redesigned their work experience project to be delivered either online or through a combination of online and onsite work experience. The remaining project was granted an extension to implement their project in 2022. The evaluation was adapted and modified to embrace new timelines and modifications to the pilot projects. The evaluation intent of sharing learnings, support and resources concurrently with participating councils was limited as councils did not implement their projects within the same timelines.

Despite these significant challenges, the evaluation findings based on interviews and surveys with 65 people, identified ‘significant returns for a relatively small investment’. Interviews with council staff related their enthusiasm and commitment to their projects and their disappointment at having to implement a somewhat modified program. Unanimously all staff said that they would like to do it again. Work experience participants reported many benefits including a life-changing experience, the building of self-confidence and for some, an entry into the workforce.

All projects applied an ‘immersive approach’. This was reported as key to successfully building disability-confidence. Council staff reported the benefits of learning in a ‘real’ working environment – being able to work through structural barriers as they were identified and building confidence and understanding through the personal and professional interactions that occurred with their work experience participant. Providing a ‘real’ work experience was reported as highly beneficial for building disability-confidence and achieving practical outcomes.

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*When someone is placed in an organisation, people working with people, that is when people start to engage. There is nothing like learning from actually implementing something. You just ‘have to’ do it. (Metropolitan council)*

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Work experience participants also reported significant benefits from the ‘immersive approach’. Developing self-confidence was one of the strongest and most significant outcomes for participants. A number of factors attributed to building this confidence, however, being immersed in ‘real’ work experiences for a period of time (not a one-off experience) along with having a planned, structured and welcoming environment were significant.

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*The most valuable part of this program was meeting new people in a workplace who were so friendly and so welcoming. Being at home during covid and coming into the centre for my last day was an amazing experience, which has been devastating to leave. (Metropolitan participant)*

*I think my change is in my mind. I left knowing that I would be able to hold down a full-time job without any problem. That was a big acceptance and realisation for not only myself but for my family as well. (Metropolitan participant)*

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The pilot projects identified a number of structural and perceived barriers for people with disability experience in accessing council work experience, employment, communication and information. In particular, the projects highlighted barriers in employment and recruitment policies and practices. Projects worked closely with human resources to apply a more flexible and inclusive approach to

recruitment and engaging people with disability. Learnings included difficulties with generic recruitment and position description templates and interview questions and processes. Interview questions, for example, tend to focus on prior work experience and can miss identifying a person's capacity or skills. Understanding barriers experienced by people with disability such as inaccessible communication, lived experience of discrimination, limited or no workplace experience and long-term unemployment were important learnings which projects considered in reviewing policy and practice. At the time of writing this evaluation report two councils reported that they had appointed inclusion positions to their human resources team following council's participation in the pilot project.

A key challenge for many projects involved working out administrative issues. Issues included understanding needs and adjustment and the most appropriate and legal way to manage this communication between staff and participant. Successful strategies to mitigate this included building a positive and comfortable relationship between participant and staff, staff gaining an education about a range of disabilities and seeking expert advice either internally in council or through a disability employment service. The evaluation concluded that the understanding of and the communication around disclosure and how best to support the person with disability is an area that requires further discussion.

A further administrative challenge in some councils was obtaining public liability insurance for participants. This situation arose, in the main, as participants were being paid for their work experience. The importance of paying participants was highlighted in the evaluation interviews and Project Coordinators worked hard at the outset to develop solutions. The resource section of the evaluation report provides examples of how this issue was resolved.

The pilot projects demonstrated the opportunities for, and benefits of, inclusion of people with disability across council business. The projects were successful in engaging a range of council areas and a range of staff, many who were not familiar with people with disability. Staff reported gaining a deeper understanding of disability, learning how to plan and design suitable work tasks and implementing adjustments to meet needs. Importantly staff reported a breaking down of fears and misconceptions about disability and gaining an understanding of the depth and breadth of skills, qualifications and capacity of their work experience participants.

Project outcomes for participating staff included increasing personal work satisfaction. Staff also reported the positive contribution that participants made for the team and the overall working environment, reinforcing the benefits of diversity within the workforce.

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*Staff were energised and excited to work with our students. Feedback from managers related how impressed they were with the students and how they had a positive impact on staff morale. (Metropolitan council)*

*Staff reported that they enjoyed having people with disability in their team. They were enthusiastic, wanted to work, wanted to do a good job. Staff appreciated the enthusiasm and motivation they brought to the team. (Rural council)*

*Our project reconfirmed my belief that people with disabilities are as good employees as any other able-bodied employee I have worked with. They have the same range of skills as anybody else I have worked with. (Metropolitan council)*

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The projects were described as a ‘win-win’ situation. The two-fold model of building council disability-confidence alongside providing opportunities for people with disability within a ‘real’ working environment was reported as significant for achieving the many outcomes already identified. In addition, key actions contributing to the success of the different models included allowing adequate time and resources for front-end planning and preparation, applying a flexible, informed and open approach and having tailored training focusing on the specific area of work.

The role of the Project Coordinators was highly valued in guiding the projects, providing expertise, advice and having a go-to person to discuss arising issues or needs. For the projects that partnered or utilized the services of a disability employment service, this approach was reported as highly beneficial. Through the Project many councils developed or strengthened their relationship with disability employment organisations and opened the door for increased opportunities between the sectors.

The work experience participants reported the difference that participating in the project had made to their daily lives and opportunities for employment. For most participants this was their first work experience opportunity or first internship. Alongside the success of developing personal confidence participants reported gaining confidence to apply for jobs and an increase in aspirations around employment and their future. Practical outcomes contributing to this included putting together a CV, gaining interview experience, gaining a range of skills including key enterprise skills such as communication, learning time management, having access to referees and benefiting from developing some contacts or networks with councils.

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*The internship was key in implementing my work ethic and all the approaches and skills that I took from the program have been so key to getting my future employment.  
(Metropolitan participant)*

*Students got ‘belief’ through the work experience and this will help them transition from year 12 with more confidence. (Rural stakeholder)*

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One of the original aims of the MAV Disability Work Experience Project was to provide pathways to employment for people with disability. This was anticipated through councils increasing disability-confidence and through participants’ exposure to possible follow-up employment and/or increased aspirations around employment. The adjustments made to each of the projects due to the COVID pandemic greatly impacted on this aim.

In the evaluation it has not been possible to accurately report on the number of participants who went on to obtain employment. Participants reported a change in aspirations along with a building of confidence and, anecdotally, council staff reported five students or interns who had been successful in obtaining employment. Many staff reported that they would have been more than happy to employ the work experience student if positions had been available. The evaluation findings reiterated the unique position of councils with a range of employment types and diverse areas of work, an ideal organisation for offering opportunities for inclusive employment.

The evaluation report presents outcomes and learnings from the pilot projects with the aim of building disability-confidence across all areas of council. The learnings and resources developed through the projects will assist councils to make a start or to continue to build inclusion of people



with disability particularly in the vital area of employment. Councils valued the opportunity that the pilot projects offered and hope to continue to build on project learnings as part of everyday business, not just as a one-off project.

The evaluation commends the role of the MAV in seeking funding to pilot different models and approaches to implement work experience for people with disability and the evaluation findings clearly present the value of resourcing councils to further their work in building disability-confidence around employment.

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*Our project was a great opportunity to feed back into council our learnings which I hope will assist council to keep moving forward. (Rural council)*

*We want to have employment of people with disability not just as a project but as part of what council does. (Metropolitan council)*

*Win, win style project. No one loses – everyone comes out better for it.  
(Metropolitan council)*

*As council we have a responsibility to make sure we are inclusive, this project helps fill this responsibility. (Metropolitan council)*

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# 1. Project background and context

## 1.1 About the MAV Disability Work Experience Project

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) received funding under an Information Linkages and Capacity-building (ILC) Grant Program of the National Disability Insurance Scheme<sup>3</sup> to implement a work experience project for people with disability in Victorian councils. The Project funded ten councils \$20,000 each to plan, implement and pilot work experience programs for people with disability with an overall aim of building disability-confidence in councils.

Through an expression of interest process, council applications were assessed by a Project Reference Group<sup>4</sup> and selected to ensure a diversity of approaches, models, geographic spread, size/type of council and target group/participant cohorts. The Project allowed applicants free choice about how they would use the funding to support their proposal, a departure from usual funding conditions. Councils could use their funding to contribute to staff costs, organisational training, participant payments, support from the disability employment sector and/or other relevant expenses. Successful applicants were selected to ensure a range of council experience of including people with disability across council business.

The pilot projects were funded for six months, commencing in January 2020 with a completion date of June 2020. Participating councils were supported through the MAV Disability Policy Adviser position who was responsible for overall project management. An independent consultant was employed to evaluate the Project and provide an evaluation report on Project outcomes.

A key aim of the evaluation was to capture the learnings from each of the council pilot projects and report strategies to strengthen disability-confidence in implementing work experience and employment for people with disability.

### **Project adjustments**

Soon after Project commencement, councils experienced a significant impact to normal council operations due to the Coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic. All projects had undertaken planning and had commenced (or were about to commence) delivering their pilot programs when restrictions to council operations were introduced. Given the nature of work experience, all projects were designed to be delivered face-to-face and to involve a range of council programs and settings.

From March 2020, all projects were 'on hold'. The period of restrictions continued beyond initial expectations and over the next 18 months projects experienced a number of attempts to re-start and/or implement a number of adjustments resulting in:

- one project was granted an extension until 2022
- nine projects were granted an extension until September 2021 with modified programs.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: from mid 2020 the responsibility for the ILC grants transferred to the Department of Social Services

<sup>4</sup> The existing Project Reference Group for the MAV Disability Employment and Participation Project agreed to extend its role to provide support and advice to the MAV Disability Work Experience Project

## Participating councils – overview

Location/ council type	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>Interface</b>	<b>Regional/Rural</b>
Disability experience assessment <sup>5</sup>	<p>Darebin, Greater Dandenong, Maribyrnong, Moreland, Port Phillip, Yarra</p> <p><b>Establishment phase</b> (addressing employment of people with disability for the first time)</p> <p>4 councils</p>	<p>Nillumbik*, Wyndham</p> <p><b>Review and Improvement</b> (addressing employment of people with disability but the actions to date are basic with limited outcomes)</p> <p>4 councils</p>	<p>Latrobe, Warrnambool,</p> <p><b>Innovation and Integration</b> (addressing employment of people with disability as a priority, and searching for opportunities into broader council plans, policies etc)</p> <p>2 councils</p>
Project approaches	<p><b>Diverse project approaches included</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive and integrated work experience placement for students utilising a ‘Work Inspiration Model’</li> <li>• Work experience placements across a range of departments supported by mentors, staff training and dedicated project lead</li> <li>• Internships providing placements across council departments supported by supervisors, professional development opportunities, dedicated project worker and staff training</li> <li>• Developing a partnership between council and a transitional educational program</li> <li>• Informing the development of the Disability Action Plan, council communications, front of house practices and other service areas through employing and supporting a person with lived experience to work alongside council</li> <li>• ‘Intense immersion’ of two people for 14 hours per week for 12 weeks to work across four different council units. Participants supported during placement and post placement, disability awareness training for council officers tailored to each council unit involved</li> <li>• A placement support approach including a ‘buddy system’, a ‘senior mentor’ and a dedicated success coach and training and development opportunities</li> </ul>		
Target audiences	<p><b>Project’s target groups included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people with autism and other disabilities</li> <li>• Women with psycho-social disability</li> <li>• Tertiary students with disability</li> <li>• Women with disabilities</li> <li>• Older people with disability</li> <li>• People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with disability</li> <li>• First Nations People with disability</li> <li>• Graduates with disability</li> </ul>		
Partnerships	<p><b>The range of project partnerships included</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tertiary Transitional Education Programs</li> <li>• Special schools and mainstream schools</li> <li>• Disability Employment Services</li> </ul>		

<sup>5</sup> See Attachment 1 for further detail of categories

\*Project extended until 2022

## 1.2 People with Disability

Approximately 18% of people in Australia (or 1 in 6) have disability. Of this population 32% have severe or profound disability.

People with disability are diverse — different types and levels of disability, different demographic and socio-economic groups and varying need for assistance. The prevalence of disability increases with age.

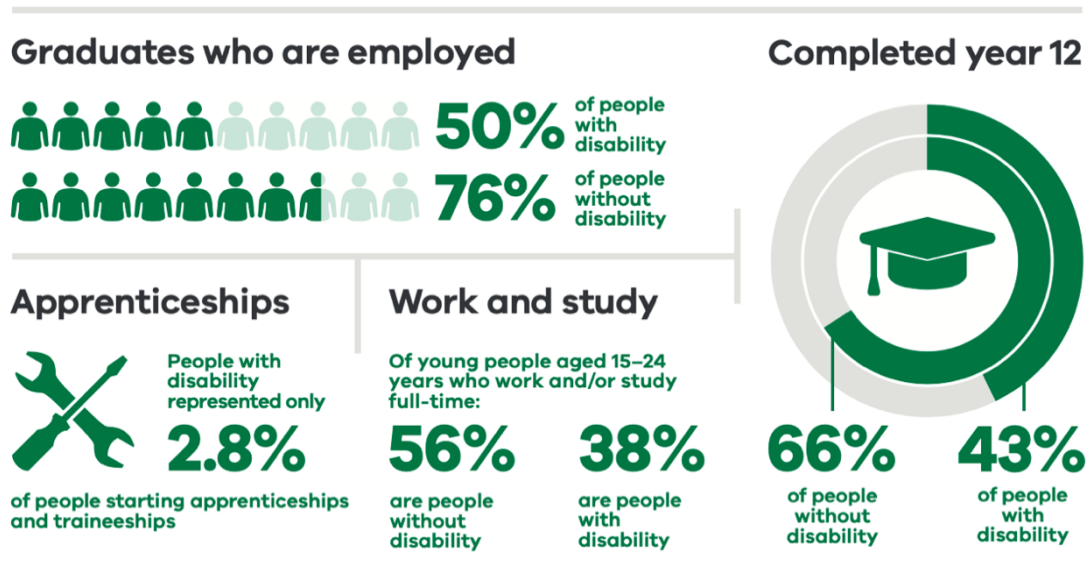
In comparison to people without disability, people with disability are:

- more likely to have poorer general and mental health
- more likely to experience difficulties and barriers to accessing and using health services
- more likely to experience some form of discrimination
- more likely to have experienced violence, abuse or sexual harassment at some point in their lives
- more likely to rent from a state or territory housing authority
- more likely to have additional risk factors that increase their likelihood of experiencing homelessness
- more likely to leave school early and to have a lower level of education, and
- more likely to have a lower level of personal and family income.

With regards to employment, people with disability are:

- more likely to have lower rates of labour force participation and employment, and
- more likely to have higher rates of unemployment and longer duration of unemployment.

Employment is considered to be a key element for gaining independence and addressing inequity.



Source: *Every Opportunity Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018-2021*

There are many misconceptions around employment of people with disability. Some key facts about employing people with disability include:

- people with disability generally take fewer days off, take less sick leave and stay in jobs longer than other workers
- employment costs for people with disability can be as low as 13 % of the employment costs for other employees
- workers' compensation costs for people with disability are as low as four % of the workers' compensation costs for other employees
- once in the right job, people with disability perform as well as other employees
- people with disability build strong connections with customers, and
- people with disability boost staff morale and enhance a sense of teamwork.<sup>6</sup>

### Work adjustments



Source: Every Opportunity Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018-2021

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*Most employed (88%) and unemployed (82%) working-age people with disability do not require additional support from their employer to work.*

*Similarly, 83% of employed working-age people with disability do not need time off from work because of their condition(s).<sup>7</sup>*

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The social model of disability (as represented in the diagram<sup>8</sup> below) involves removing barriers to full participation in society.

When barriers are removed, people with disability can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives.

Equality of opportunity in employment can be achieved through ensuring barrier-free recruitment including effective reasonable adjustment and inclusive and supportive management.



<sup>6</sup> Job Access. <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers/benefits-employing-people-with-disability>

<sup>7</sup> People with disability in Australia 2020: AIHW

<sup>8</sup> Eliminating Obstacles, Zoe King, Funding and Projects Manager, diverse cymru <https://slideplayer.com/slide/11987428/68/images/12/The+Social+Model+of+Disability.jpg>

### 1.3 Work experience context

Across Victoria councils employ more than 43,000 staff in more than 300 different job roles.

While each council is different, councils do offer a variety of programs to assist local students develop practical workplace skills through a range of work experience/employment opportunities. These include:

- apprenticeships
- traineeships
- tertiary job placements
- cadetship
- graduate program, and
- pre-trade youth work experience.

The work experience to date has primarily focused on the traditional channels of work experience tied to school or tertiary studies. People with disability generally have not been included nor targeted for work experience programs offered by councils.

A desk-top audit by the evaluation consultant of councils' online information about work experience showed a majority of councils did not include any reference to work-place experience for people with disability.

Of the 37 councils with work experience information (many councils had a temporary hold on work experience due to COVID restrictions)

- three councils mentioned people with disability are eligible to apply
- two councils referred to being an Equal Opportunity Employer, and
- 32 councils did not include/reference people/students with disability in work experience information.

A number of national, state and local government policies and reforms (see attachment 2) aim to redress discrimination in employment and promote economic participation including education and learning pathways. An action for local government under the Victorian government 's *Every Opportunity* includes 'identify and replicate good practice in the employment of people with disability and social procurement across local government'.

A range of government initiatives provide resources and incentives to support organisations and businesses to engage people with disability in work experience and employment.<sup>9</sup> Many of these resources and initiatives are tied in with a Disability Employment Service (DES) however to date, only some councils have utilised these resources and /or have a relationship with their local DES.

Councils are considered opportune places for gaining work experience and developing career pathways. The breadth of council business provides a range of work experience settings and potential employment opportunities, as well as networks and connections in the local community.

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<sup>9</sup> Details in Attachment 3

## 1.4 About the evaluation

### Evaluation aims

The MAV Work Experience Project Evaluation aims to share the outcomes and learnings from the ten pilot projects to build local government disability-confidence around work experience programs and employment.

The evaluation will report on the:

- different project approaches and models implemented in each of the ten pilot projects
- Project learnings and challenges
- Project outcomes for councils and participants, and
- practice resources developed through the pilot projects.

### Data collection & analysis

A mixed method approach was used to collect qualitative data from each of the ten pilot projects including interviews with project coordinators/managers, supervisors/team leaders, stakeholder interviews, a reflective workshop, analysis of council project data and a participant survey.

Key questions explored in the evaluation included:

- How did councils implement their work experience project? Why?
- What were the key learnings, enablers and challenges of the work experience project?
- What difference did the project make for council workplace policy, practices and processes?
- What impact did the project have on participants? How?
- What else needs to happen for councils to implement inclusive employment practices?

All data and information collected in the evaluation was thematically analysed.

### Data limitations and challenges

The evaluation plan was modified to accommodate the impact of the pandemic. With projects delayed the evaluation was delayed and a flexible approach was implemented to manage each project's adjusted timelines, plans and project implementation. With the exception of seven interviews, all interviews were conducted via the phone or on-line due to restrictions on face-to-face meetings.

Challenges in engaging participants through a (voluntary) survey included the need to forward the surveys via a third party. With interruptions and modified projects, the finish date for participants was not always evident and some surveys were not forwarded in time. In addition, due to delays and project adjustments, the original intended number of work experience participants was significantly reduced.

A reflective workshop was held on Zoom, however most projects at that stage had not been able to progress their work to the level where they could share their learnings. The initial approach of the evaluation to share the learnings between participating councils throughout the life of the Project was limited as councils did not implement their projects within the same timeframe and there was considerable time lag between projects.

## Evaluation participants

A total of 35 people participated in the evaluation interviews and a further 12 people completed a participant evaluation survey. Additional information from 18 participants was received via individual council's feedback surveys.

Evaluation participants	People
MAV Disability Work Experience Project Manager	1
Work Experience Pilot Project Coordinators	12
Council staff (work experience hosts/supervisors/team leaders)	19
Partnership organisations/personnel	3
Work experience students/placements (evaluation survey)	12
Work experience student's feedback (via individual councils)	18 <sup>10</sup>
<b>Total individual contributions to the evaluation</b>	<b>65</b>

## Evaluation report

The evaluation report will meet the needs of the funding grant as well as share Project outcomes and resources to support and inform councils in Victoria to become more disability-confident.

During the Project (due to the extended timeframe) the MAV decided to include a promotional video of the Project findings to further engage councils around opportunities for work experience and employment of people with disability. It is intended that this video will be available publicly via the MAV website and promoted to councils across Australia.

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<sup>10</sup>One participant's work experience included gathering feedback on 7 student placements that had taken place in that council in the previous year.



## 2. Evaluation findings

The evaluation findings of the MAV Disability Work Experience Project funded through the ILC Grant Program of the NDIS are presented for nine of the ten participating councils. The tenth council has been granted an extension to implement their pilot project in 2022, due to pandemic restrictions for both schools and councils.

The overall Project reach from the nine councils funded through the ILC grant includes:

- 34 students or internships undertaking work experience in a council
- 50 (directly involved) council staff including project coordinators, work experience hosts, managers and supervisors, and
- 15 stakeholders from Disability Employment Services or other employment organisations.

A further 130 council staff were involved in training and/or workshops on disability awareness delivered through different council projects.

Disability Employment Services undertaking recruitment for many of the pilot projects reported a very high demand for the work experience placements. One council, for example, had the capacity to accept four placements however they received expression of interest from 27 potential participants. Another council received 15 applications for seven placements.

The work experience placements took place across a range of council areas including community services, customer services, information management, libraries, youth services, neighbourhood houses, parks and gardens, recreation and leisure centres, transport, maintenance, depot, kindergartens and childrens centres.

Evaluation interviews and surveys from project managers, supervisors, team leaders, stakeholders and work experience students and interns across the nine council pilot projects have been analysed using a thematic analysis approach.

The findings are presented under six key themes.

2.1 Previous involvement in work experience programs with people with disability

2.2 Project challenges during COVID 19 pandemic

2.3 Individual council project approaches and models

2.4 Key project learnings

2.5 Council and participant outcomes

2.6 Stakeholder outcomes

## 2.1 Previous involvement in work experience programs with people with disability

The evaluation explored each council's previous involvement in work experience programs for people with disability. In particular, the evaluation aimed to gain an understanding of what motivated councils to participate in this Project and what were the perceived barriers in undertaking work experience with people with disability.

Councils commonly offer and implement work experience programs for students and interns, however, only three out of the nine councils had previously targeted or included people with disability in these programs. Council interviews reiterated a desire to improve the inclusion of people with disability across all employment areas in council.

The 'drive' for improving inclusion of people with disability usually sits within the community services area. With the pilot projects specifically focusing on work experience, many councils embraced the opportunity to incorporate disability inclusion and confidence across other areas of council such as business development and human resources.

The MAV Project was viewed enthusiastically as an opportunity that would bring outcomes for both council and people with disability.

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*This project presented a unique opportunity to understand barriers that people with disability experience and I thought it would be rewarding for council and participants.*  
(Metropolitan council)

*Win, win style project. No one loses – everyone comes out better for it.*  
(Metropolitan council)

*As council we have a responsibility to make sure we are inclusive, this project helps fulfil this responsibility.* (Metropolitan council)

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Councils with no prior work experience with people with disability, identified a number of barriers including:

- limited disability understanding and disability-confidence
- limited or no exposure to employment of people with disability
- a lack of dedicated resources or someone to lead the work
- limited or no connections/partnerships with disability organisations
- time and resource pressures, and
- myths and misinformation about possible resources/ adaptations required.

Regardless of prior experience, councils considered the MAV Project to be an opportunity to address barriers and build work experience with the view of increasing employment of people with disability. Councils with little or no previous experience saw their project as the catalyst to commence work that had been on their agenda for some time.

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*We are aware of the statistics on employment rates and people with disability. This always comes up in discussion. Our Disability Action Plan advocates to explore more options for employing people with disability. The MAV project provided us with an opportunity to have a greater focus on incorporating inclusive employment. (Rural council)*

*The MAV project provided the opportunity for council to increase awareness, capability and confidence of staff around employment of people with disability. (Metropolitan council)*

*We support local job readiness programs for students including those with disability. We hope to use this program to further develop our capacity in disability employment. (Metropolitan council application)*

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The pivotal role of employment for health, wellbeing, housing and participating in community life is included in Disability Action Plans, with employment often assigned a central priority of the plan. The evaluation interviews reinforced the life-changing aspect of employment for people with disability alongside councils' unique position as organisations with diverse employment options and a role in building inclusive communities.

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*Economic participation and employment of people is a goal in our Disability Action Plan. It is a requirement of the Disability Act. Being involved in this project is among other things honouring the obligations of our Disability Action Plan. (Metropolitan council)*

*Employment is one of the strongest vehicles to eliminate barriers to a person's participation in the community. It is certainly the most powerful way to reduce barriers and challenge myths and stereotypes around employing people with disability. (Metropolitan council)*

*We want to have employment of people with disability not just as a project but as part of what council does. In this project we were aiming to engage areas of council beyond the community services area such as civil engineering, transport and infrastructure. (Metropolitan council)*

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## 2.2 Individual council project approaches and models

The MAV sought to include diverse project approaches and models with the intent of sharing learnings and resources across local government and ultimately progressing disability employment confidence in councils.

The evaluation explored the thinking behind each council's approach, commonalities and differences between the models, and the different target audiences for the work experience programs. A few case studies are presented to provide further detail of a model. It is anticipated that the 'learnings' shared in this evaluation report will assist councils to replicate or adapt the models and approaches and to see opportunities for how to implement a work experience program for people with disability in their council.

Councils designed their pilot projects to achieve outcomes for both council (as an organisation) and work experience participants. Projects were designed to provide 'meaningful and purposeful' work experience through a 'real' working environment. This approach aimed to develop participant skills, confidence and prospects for future employment as well as provide a greater understanding of enablers and barriers to councils inclusive employment practices and processes.

The approaches and models adopted were framed by an understanding of the social model of disability and a strength-based approach focusing on ability, not disability. In particular, the models embedded an understanding of the value of developing skills, relationships and disability-confidence through hands-on practice and experience.

Common elements across the models included:

- a dedicated project coordinator to oversee the pilot project, promote the project across council departments, provide support to hosts, mentors, supervisors and, in some cases, act as the 'go-to' person to discuss any issues or challenges
- a 'real' recruitment process to engage work experience participants including application and interview processes
- a part-time work experience program (up to 3 days per week for at least four weeks) in order to provide an 'immersive experience'
- an assigned host, mentor or supervisor to each participant to support the placement and guide the work experience tasks. A few councils implemented a 'buddy system' to support participants, and
- the matching of each participant's area of work with their area of interest as determined through the recruitment and interview process.

Some differences in the models adopted between the nine councils included:

- training – some councils included training on disability to support the hosting of a work experience placement. Training ranged from a two-day commitment through to a one-off session. Other councils did not build training into their model as they considered their ongoing disability awareness training for all staff to be adequate.
- partnerships – some councils utilised local disability employment services to recruit and support the work experience placement. For some councils this was an ongoing partnership, for others this was reported as a new partnership initiated through the project.
- financial payment – with the exception of two councils, the models included payment for participants. (Payment was usually set at student/graduate entry level roles or between Band 2-4). One council provided a range of supports (including access to professional training and

resources and a gift card) in lieu of financial payment, a further council involved school children and financial payment was deemed not appropriate.

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*Our model aimed at getting people face-to-face. The face becomes the person instead of the disability. You need to personalise it – it takes the fear out. (Rural council)*

*The model was designed to enable interns to come together and create a buddy network while at the same time the staff who were the hosts would be able to create a network of support. (Metropolitan council)*

*When someone is placed in an organisation, people working with people, that is when people start to engage. There is nothing like learning from actually implementing something. You just have to do it. (Metropolitan council)*

*It was very important to pay people, it makes them feel valued. You often hear about people with disability being offered volunteer positions and often for menial tasks. It was important to pay people and to provide them with a real experience to teach them the skills of the job. (Rural council)*

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The evaluation interviews explored what contributed towards a successful model or approach. Keys to success identified across all the different models include:

- allowing sufficient time for front-end planning and preparation
- applying flexibility to manage diverse needs and arising circumstances
- assessing communication for accessibility and inclusion from the outset
- setting up regular check-ins and reviews to discuss goals, issues, ideas, and
- ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment.

## Case study – Immersive work experience across four council areas

<b>Aim</b>	<p>For two people with a disability from a culturally and linguistically diverse background to gain valuable work experience across two council areas and significantly improve their chance of future employment.</p> <p>To increase confidence and capacity of council staff working with people with disability in order to dispel any negative stereotypes and harmful stigma associated with people with disability.</p>
<b>Coordination</b>	<p>Disability Planner provides coordination, support to both participants and council officers, shares experiences of the project across council and links with Human Resources area.</p>
<b>Recruitment</b>	<p>Participants recruited through a local Disability Employment Service (DES).</p> <p>Council staff/units – Expression of Interest sought from interested units/departments.</p>
<b>Training</b>	<p>Relevant council units take part in disability awareness training to build the capacity of staff to confidently engage with people with disability, ensure the working environment is safe and raise any issues specific to the placement. Training delivered by external consultants and tailored to suit each council unit, totalling 80 staff.</p>
<b>Length of placement</b>	<p>Each participant to have a total of 14 hours per week for a 12 week period. This accounts for each participant to have 2 x 6 weeks work placement in two different units.</p>
<b>Payment</b>	<p>Band 2C of council’s Enterprise bargaining agreement 2018.</p>
<b>Partners</b>	<p>Local Disability Employment Service (DES) engaged to identify, recommend and prepare suitable participant and provide support via a Post-Placement Support Officer. DES to provide work site visits, weekly phone calls, and other support as deemed necessary.</p>
<b>Ongoing support</b>	<p>Internal council staff including host unit and Project Coordinator will provide ongoing support to participant.</p> <p>Local DES provides support to participant in all stages of placement.</p> <p>The 4 participating council units and DES to participate in follow-up 2-hour session to discuss experiences and learnings from the project.</p>

To note: Not all aspects of the model were able to be implemented due to necessary modifications due to COVID 19 pandemic restrictions.

## Case study – Work experience in partnership with local school

<b>Aim</b>	To provide work experience across different council areas for year 12 students with disability through partnering with a local school. To increase disability confidence in council staff by connecting staff and students in a face-to-face working environment.
<b>Coordination</b>	Project coordinator employed by council to develop the project, network with the local school, promote the project across council, coordinate placements and attend to administration of required paperwork such as required permissions, contact details, medical requirements, etc.
<b>Recruitment</b>	<p>Students were recruited by the school VCAL Coordinator in discussion with the Project Coordinator. School assisted in all communication between council, students and parents.</p> <p>Council departments were approached by the Project Coordinator to discuss their interest in hosting a student. Student interests were taken into account in selecting placements.</p> <p>Students and council supervisors underwent an induction process including a 'meet and greet' prior to placement.</p>
<b>Training</b>	Disability awareness training is rolled out across council. No specific formal training was provided for staff involved in placements. Staff involved in supervising placements benefited from building relationships and having conversations around disability between supervisors, schools and Coordinator.
<b>Length of placement</b>	Each student was offered two sessions (morning/afternoon) per week for six-eight weeks. Placements needed to fit in with school timetable.
<b>Payment</b>	No payment made to students.
<b>Partners</b>	Local school for students with disability.
<b>Ongoing support</b>	<p>Supervisors provided ongoing support and encouragement to support students to undertake the work experience tasks.</p> <p>Ongoing liaison between Coordinator, supervisors and school to discuss progress, experiences and any arising issues.</p> <p>Coordinator role as go-to person.</p> <p>Peer led experience of sharing outcomes of working with people with disability.</p>

## Case study – Strategic inclusion examples focusing on employment and business

Employment programs have developed as a result of activities from council's DAP processes. Council's Community Care and People and Procurement Unit drives the employment outcomes identified in this plan with the exception that all business units at council participate, generating a whole-of-Council approach to employment related matters for people with disability.

Council's Staff Consultative Committee and Equal Opportunity Committee address disability related matters. Staff training at Council is inclusive of disability issues and Council's business facing teams are proactive in the employment area. Council's website and intranet are inclusive of information on the benefits of employing people with disability.

Specific programs to address under-representation of people with disability in the workforce include:

- Stepping Into Internship – a national initiative of the Australian Network on Disability (AND). It is a program which connects business to skilled university interns with disability. AND coordinates recruiting interns, assessing eligibility, managing interns and workplace briefings as well as the evaluation process and feedback.
- Transition to Work from school – involves a Bushland and garden services project, initiated by the local school hosted by Parks and Gardens. 10-12 students with lived intellectual disability participate in learning and applying skills in gardening, park upgrades and park maintenance within the municipality. The school is also a registered training organisation which enables students to achieve school-based apprenticeship training qualifications.

Transition to Work from school also involves a kitchen operations project supported by the schools and provides students with disability the opportunity to gain work experience in a professional catering environment, made possible by utilising one of Council's industrial kitchens in a community centre.

- Strengthening Contact with Local Business – Through business networks and council's business unit, Council can promote the advantage of employing people with disability. Through an affirmative action approach to procurement, council has introduced a points-weighted system to contracts valued at over \$100,000) that show a commitment to among other things, employing people from marginal groups or social enterprises. The inclusion of Vendor-Panel (a E-Tendering portal for public advertisements) has simplified the process of finding suppliers that fit the ethical endeavours that Council seeks to support when engaging businesses.
- Making the Match – under a community revitalisation project, this research explored issues that are challenging jobseekers to identify where further progress can be made.
- Business magazines – a quarterly business magazine distributed to 20,000 businesses includes articles on employing people with disability. Recent additions include articles on procurement, unconscious bias and the benefits for people with disability of working from home.
- Resources and training for Managers – resources include workplace adjustment guidelines, *A Managers Guide to Creating A Disability Inclusive Workplace*, hosting Disability Employment Services Training, YouMeUs online training.

To note: City of Dandenong has developed these strategic actions over a number of years. The pilot project approach built on council's work in this area to strengthen and further progress a whole-of-council approach to inclusive employment and building disability confidence.



## 2.3 Project challenges during Covid 19 pandemic

Project funding required councils to implement their pilot projects between January 2020 and June 2020. This timeframe coincided with council operations, programs and services either being stopped or moved to online operations due to the COVID 19 pandemic and lockdown conditions. The impact for all projects was highly significant as all project models were designed to 'immerse' the participant across one or several areas of council and create 'real' working experiences.

Managing the projects during an extended lockdown period was reported in the evaluation interviews as the biggest challenge for councils. With projects on 'hold' followed by several 'stop-start' conditions, none of the projects were able to implement their model as originally designed. In addition, the intent of sharing learnings, support and resources across participating councils undertaking their projects within the same timeframe could not be realised.

Despite these conditions, nine councils over a 19-month period were able to redesign their pilot project and implement it either online or through a combination of onsite and online work experiences.

Key impacts included:

- redesigning the projects to an online experience with limited or no prior experience in delivering council business online
- a reduction in the number of participants (some participants chose not to participate and /or were no longer in a position to take up the work experience)
- the need to re-recruit participants
- a reduction in the reach of the project across council areas
- a reduction in disability awareness training originally planned through the projects, and
- a loss of momentum for councils in progressing disability confidence around work experience and employment for people with disability.

Despite the challenges some councils reported a few benefits from the delays and the redesign of their project including learning new (online)skills and having more time to work through issues and to develop project resources.

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*The virtual workplace threw a spanner in the works. There was lack of opportunity in incidental conversations across council and the workplace was compromised with not much activity. (Metropolitan council)*

*We learnt how to do things differently. Participants learned new technology skills which was a good thing. (Rural council)*

*Our project had so much momentum, enthusiasm and genuine excitement from colleagues. I am 'gutted' by the impact of COVID on the project. So much was accomplished, however, so much more could have been accomplished that wasn't. (Metropolitan council)*

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## 2.4 Key project learnings

The evaluation aimed to identify key learnings, challenges and outcomes of the work experience pilot projects. Evaluation interviews with councils included Project Managers, work experience hosts and supervisors and staff from Human Resources. Their perspectives provide a rich understanding of what worked well and why, and collectively they provide strategies and practices for increasing disability-confidence in councils.

### Value of project coordinators and sector support

The value of having sector support from the MAV for the Project was consistently reported in the evaluation interviews. The MAV Project Manager supported councils to implement individual projects and provided information and resources on building disability-confidence around employment, strategic advice to individual projects, support and advice around modifications due to COVID restrictions and negotiated with the funding body for extensions to the Project timeframe.

With sector support, councils gained prominence for their project within their own council as well as an opportunity to link and develop alongside other pilot projects. The open and flexible leadership from the MAV greatly assisted councils to implement their projects in the very challenging environment of extended lockdown periods.

All councils identified a key person to manage/coordinate their pilot project. Usually, this person had disability experience and/or an inclusion role within council and had capacity to offer support, guidance and overall project coordination. The role included promoting their project to council, getting buy-in from staff, organising training, developing resources, recruiting participants, introducing staff and participants, negotiating with human resources and liaising with stakeholders. This 'go-to person' was crucial for building staff confidence and ensuring smooth implementation of the pilot projects.

Questions around what area of council is best placed to coordinate such a project (given that the project was ultimately an employment project) were raised in the evaluation interviews. Generally, with disability expertise sitting under the community services umbrella, most councils placed their project in this area. In one council, responsibility for the project sat in human resources with support from the disability area.

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*I wish to acknowledge the support that was provided to the project from the MAV. The MAV are doing great work in this space, and it helps to elevate priorities for inclusive employment in councils. (Metropolitan council)*

*Support from the Project Coordinator was critical – training, policy development, guidance, targeted support. It prepared us well and made everything a lot smoother for us. (Metropolitan council)*

*The Coordinator developed an induction form which gave information to both the supervisor and participant. This form gave people some comfort and confidence. (Rural council)*

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## Accessible communication and engagement

Across all pilot projects, accessible communication was reported as highly significant for a successful work experience placement for both participants and staff. The projects highlighted a range of barriers for people with disability in accessing existing council information and communication. Strategies implemented in the pilot projects to mitigate these include:

- applying an accessible lens to all communication, correspondence and processes – in particular around recruitment and orientation
- modifying material to support accessibility for work experience participants
- applying an open and flexible approach to reviewing practices
- recruiting participants by meeting in a setting outside of council offices (eg the library, a café) and interviewing through conversation rather than formal questions
- arranging ‘meet and greet’ sessions before the placement starts
- establishing clear goals for the work experience placement together with the participant and the staff member and reviewing these goals during the placement
- providing clear communication about the work experience role, tasks, what to expect day-to-day, etc., and
- asking participants about their interests and developing a work plan around these.

Examples of inclusive information and recruitment practices are provided under the Supporting Resources attachment of this report. In addition, there are many online resources and information on recruitment and workplace adjustments. (See attachment 4)

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*Position descriptions are quite restrictive. With a focus on criteria and expertise this is a barrier for people who do not have previous work experience. We needed to make some changes to make this more accessible. (Rural council)*

*Our students had never been interviewed for a job. They were nervous and excited and as council we had to review how accessible our recruitment processes were for people with disability. (Metropolitan council)*

*Working with a disability employment agency was very helpful. They supported and encouraged students to put in the application. We worked with them to ensure students were supported in the process and implemented accessible language. There were good learnings for council about tailoring and modifying questions for accessibility. (Metropolitan council)*

*We organised a day where the team and the work experience participant came together, and every person talked about their job and how they ended up in council. It was a good way to introduce what council does and a new strategy that worked well to make a new person feel comfortable with the team. (Metropolitan council)*

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## Increasing disability-confidence and leadership

Through the pilot projects councils utilised different strategies to increase staff disability-confidence and leadership. A majority of council staff involved in the project had no prior involvement in work experience or employment of a person with disability. Staff preparations to build-confidence and undertake the work experience included:

- disability training tailored to a department and/or a potential placement
- immersing staff into a disability work experience environment
- having a 'go-to person' to discuss concerns, issues, ideas
- accessing the expertise and support of a disability employment service
- being part of a bigger project where learnings could be shared
- immersing the work experience person into the team where every day incidental conversations break down barriers and build confidence, and
- having some practical on-hand information and communication about the participant such as medical needs, allergies, contact person, drop off arrangements, etc.

Across all projects, an increase in staff disability-confidence through their engagement with the pilot project was reported. This included gaining a deeper understanding of disability and the value of diversity within a team, learnings on 'making adjustments' to accommodate different needs and how to plan and design suitable work tasks.

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*I feel that I was provided with the best possible preparation to be a host for our work experience person. I didn't know what type of disability or their circumstances, but the specific training built into this program gave you a certain amount of preparedness. I felt very comfortable and knew how best to be an advocate for my mentee and how to best support her in my team. Metropolitan council*

*I have done a fair bit of disability awareness training and have found that when we introduced people with lived experience the stories became far more impactful, and people really responded to this. This project was a further opportunity to introduce lived experience. Rural council*

*The Disability Employment Service that we partnered with for this project provided extra support to staff. They had a conversation with each of the supervisors, were available to take questions and were going to provide a support person on site. (But due to COVID 19 restrictions we could not have a support person on site). Metropolitan council*

*If the pilot project works then you can get more buy in. People fear the unknown and if this is successful then you build disability confidence into what council does. Metropolitan council*

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Most councils had regular and mandatory disability awareness training which was reported as beneficial, however a project that provided the opportunity for one-on-one lived experience was reported as most effectual in building disability-confidence. Some interviews related the need to further progress and consolidate this work by building confidence and leadership in senior positions in council.

## Understanding needs and adjustment requirements

Misconceptions around needs and adjustments in employing people with disability continues to be reported as a significant barrier for people with disability. The pilot projects highlighted challenges around understanding the possible needs and adjustments a person may require in an employment environment and the most appropriate way to discuss these needs.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act an employer can ask about any required workplace adjustments, however, it is unlawful to ask about a person's disability.

Comments from supervisors or staff hosting the work experience participant often relayed the benefits of having some knowledge about the participant and their needs in order to provide a suitable and appropriate work experience. Some participants also reported that they felt more comfortable if the person they were working with had some prior knowledge of their needs – and they therefore did not have to explain themselves. Other participants reported not wanting to discuss their disability and reiterating their rights.

Acquiring supportive information whilst at the same time respecting a person's rights and the law was reported in the evaluation interviews as a challenge. Challenges included difficulties in planning a work program when you are unaware of the person's capacities, wanting to be prepared for the best way to manage personal needs and wanting to know how to best make the work environment suitable, safe and comfortable for the participant. Some strategies used by staff to ensure the best possible experience for participants included:

- building a positive and comfortable relationship between participant and supervisors/hosts
- educating themselves about a range of disabilities, and
- using the services of the Disability Employment Service or Project Manager/Coordinator to seek advice.

Many staff reported that in reality the required adjustments were minimal and participating in the project had dispelled misconceptions, concerns and misunderstandings around adjustments and the potential impact on the work environment and/or the team.

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*We needed to navigate the advertising of the project and 'outing' people. How to do this in a supportive way was challenging. (Metropolitan council)*

*Before the intern started I did undergo disability training on how to manage someone with disability, ensuring language is correct, making the right adjustments. This was helpful training and valuable. (Metropolitan council)*

*Staff and participants alike demonstrated a lack of knowledge and confidence about accessible employment including reasonable adjustments. Training covering these topics would be beneficial. (Metropolitan council)*

*I did not even know what our participant's disability was. Did not ask this. Asked about ways that we could support them. (Metropolitan council)*

*Conversations around adjustments did not begin well and felt a little uncomfortable. I felt a little pressured to speak up on the matter. Some assumptions were made early on. I also*

*didn't like being introduced to people as an intern from a disability program, it focuses too much on the disability. (Metropolitan participant)*

*We didn't know about our participant's skills. Would have been helpful to know more about their skills. If we had known more about how computer literate the person was, we could have offered them more tasks. (Rural council)*

*Our person had a sight issue, so we just located them in a position where their sight was not affected. That was the only challenge we had, and it wasn't a great challenge. (Metropolitan council)*

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The evaluation highlighted that the communication around disclosure and how best to support a person while upholding their rights, is an area that requires further discussion and clarification.

### Understanding insurance and administration requirements

The pilot projects highlighted a range of administration issues that required working through prior to commencing their work experience program. Except for two projects, the models involved payment of participants which raised challenges around insurance. Insurance was a particular issue when council directly employed people and did not go through an external agency such as a Disability Employment Service.

Commonly people undertake work experience as a vocational placement (when they are studying with a school, education provider, and/or linked with a Disability Employment Service). In this case work conditions such a payment, insurance and public liability are covered by the external organisation. For non-vocational work experience and/or where councils directly engaged the participant, councils discovered that this person would not be covered by council's public liability insurance. Some solutions included:

- reclassifying participants as volunteers and council's Volunteer Insurance Policy then covered these participants. This meant that the work experience content needed to align with volunteering standards Victoria
- providing participants with a gift voucher and other associated costs such as transport and referrals/subscriptions to supportive organisations
- taking out a 12-month independent public liability insurance policy (<\$200) that covered up to ten work experience participants, and
- utilising the services of a Disability Employment Service.

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*During this project we learned that classifying non-vocational work experience placements for insurance purposes is not straightforward. If the participant is not enrolled with an education provider, then the host (council) must ensure adequate insurance is provided. (Metropolitan council)*

*We struggled with insurance and had to work it out with Human Resources and the Risk Assessment Team. It is just something that had never come up before. (Rural council)*

*It is important to work out the contract of employment (insurances, risk assessment etc) at the beginning. All councils need to have this front of mind. (Metropolitan council)*

*We had to set up a payment system where participants were set up as a supplier. We had to declare that participants did not have an ABN. We worked with procurement to work out a solution. It was an administrative nightmare. This project highlighted the need for the system to be fixed. (Rural council)*

*We went through a disability provider. They have labour hire and they become the legal employer so then they cover insurance, payroll etc. Because participants were working from home, the provider also took on this risk. (Metropolitan council)*

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### Strengthening council's inclusive Human Resources practices

The responsibility for Disability Access Plans, largely sits within the community services area. With a focus on employment the pilot projects identified a need for the Human Resources area to be actively engaged. Through the pilot projects many councils took the opportunity to collaboratively work through structural barriers identified in council human resources practices. Structural barriers identified included:

- templates used in recruitment and position descriptions can have language and inclusion barriers for people with disability
- interview questions and practices tend to focus on prior work experience and can miss identifying a person's capability and skills
- recruitment processes often do not support and encourage people with disability to apply for positions, and
- people with disability can find council intimidating.

The evaluation also captured participant perspectives of the barriers that people with disability face. These included:

- not having any work or workplace experience
- experiencing long-term unemployment
- having lived experience of encountering discrimination
- being unfamiliar with practices such as police checks and working with children checks
- experiencing affordability issues with work criteria such as the cost of working with children checks
- having restrictions around employment and income if receiving social support benefits, and
- being unfamiliar with councils and the potential opportunities for work experience and/or employment.

Working with or partnering with Disability Employment Services was reported as highly successful in supporting council recruitment of participants as well as providing ongoing support to deliver the work experience program.

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*We provided interview questions prior to the interview. The interviewee was offered a support person to attend as well as conducting the interview in Auslan. We used our questions but revised them. Some people needed prompting. We have now used these learnings to employ a person with disability. (Rural council)*

*A key learning for us was working through a disability employment provider. The HR team had not done this before. The project demonstrated to staff that the calibre of applications (from people with disability) was very high. (Metropolitan council)*

*Our project highlighted that we could improve our accessibility from paperwork to interview process. (Metropolitan council)*

*We worked with HR and made HR the front runner for this project with support from access and inclusion. The thinking behind this was that it is an employment project. We want to have inclusion of people with disability, not just as a project but as part of what council does. (Metropolitan council)*

*Our project was a great opportunity to feed back into council our learnings which I hope will assist council to keep moving forward. (Rural council)*

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At the time of writing this evaluation report, two councils reported that their council, after completing the pilot projects, had appointed 'inclusion positions' to their human resources team.



## 2.5 Council outcomes

The evaluation explored project outcomes for councils and participants. Regardless of what disability experience category<sup>11</sup> council had nominated in their funding application, all pilot projects overwhelmingly reported positive outcomes.

Overwhelmingly staff from across different areas of council related their strong enthusiasm and support for the pilot projects. Project managers/coordinators were greatly encouraged by the response and the willingness of so many people wanting to be involved.

Outcomes for participating councils were reported at a whole-of-council, departmental and individual staff level.

Whole-of-council outcomes included:

- progressing inclusion of people with disability in the work experience/employment area
- broadening 'disability experience' across council departments and contributing to a shift towards disability being 'business' for all areas of council
- progressing actions of Disability Action Plans and/or ideas that had been on council agendas for some time
- reviewing inclusive practices and processes realised through 'real experiences' that in turn resulted in impetus for improving practice, process and resources around inclusive employment
- contributing to raising the profile of disability in council business, and
- developing new partnerships with disability employment services.

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*The project provided us with a chance to have a greater in-depth experience. (Metropolitan Council)*

*Through engaging people with lived experience, we now have a greater understanding of accessible communication and were able to develop a new disability policy statement. (Metropolitan council)*

*The project was a catalyst to drive more inclusive employment. There is now a real interest in inclusive employment. (Metropolitan council)*

*The project kicked council along with regard to disability-confidence. We are now looking to build on the project. (Metropolitan council)*

*From a Council perspective, interns have completed quality work, to the point where their supervisors have kept them on longer than the four-week placement. Some interns were kept on part time for 3-6 months. (Metropolitan council)*

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Council staff directly engaged in the pilot project and/or involved in hosting a student or intern reported a number of positive outcomes on both a personal and professional level. Positive outcomes for teams and/or departments was also reported, however, due to much of council business and the work experience being conducted online, outcomes for teams/departments were somewhat limited.

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<sup>11</sup> See attachment 1

Staff and department/team outcomes reported in the evaluation included:

- breaking down fears and misconceptions about disability, resulting in a strengthening of staff capacity and disability-confidence
- gaining an understanding of how a service/program can be adapted to meet diverse needs of employees
- increasing hands-on involvement in disability from staff/departments with no prior experience in disability
- improving understanding of the breadth and dept of skills and qualifications of people with disability, and
- increasing personal satisfaction with work when tied to a positive contribution to a person's life.

Council staff related that their experience both professionally and personally had exceeded their expectations and unanimously all staff said they would do it again.

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*Staff were energised and excited to work with our students. Feedback from managers related how impressed they were with the students and how they had a positive impact on staff morale. (Metropolitan council)*

*Staff reported that they enjoyed having people with disability in their team. They were enthusiastic, wanted to work, wanted to do a good job. Staff appreciated the enthusiasm and motivation they brought to the team. (Rural council)*

*Human Resources has now engaged a diversity officer. (Rural council)*

*Rewarding experience. I would not hesitate to sign up again. (Metropolitan council)*

*More staff put their hand-up to be involved in the project than we had capacity for. (Rural council)*

*The training provided through our project was very valuable and I use it in my everyday work life. (Metropolitan council)*

*Supervisors have been impressed with the interns they have worked with and have found the prior assumption that working with a person with disability required either bending over backwards for complex accommodations, or that the work would be below standard, was erased by the actual experience of working alongside the interns. (Metropolitan council)*

*Supervisors found that the project identified a fresh set of eyes and a team player that they otherwise would not have found. (Metropolitan council)*

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## Practice resources developed by councils

The pilot projects developed a range of resources to support the implementation of their work experience programs. Resources include project communication, induction, orientation checklists, policies and training information. A list of practice resources developed by councils is presented in Attachment 4.

## 2.6 Participant outcomes

Participant outcomes were reported in a voluntary survey (12 participants) and through council and stakeholder evaluation interviews. Additional feedback from three individual projects’ involving a further 18 participants has been included in the comments below.

Overwhelmingly, participants reported many benefits on a number of levels. These included:

- personal development
- increased self-confidence
- learning new skills
- gaining preparation for employment, and
- supporting pathways for career aspirations.

An original aim of the Project – ‘to provide further insight into councils, their operations and opportunities for employment’ was limited due to project changes implemented around COVID 19 restrictions. However, regardless of this situation, a majority of participants reported that the experience had ‘helped a lot’ in understanding councils and job opportunities.

Participant survey	Not at all	A little bit	A bit	A lot
Understand what councils do		25% (3)	8% (1)	67% (8)
Understand different jobs in council			33% (4)	67% (8)

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*I learned so much about the library and how it works, I learned about how the library delivers to people that cannot get to the library. I also learnt that there are many different people behind the scenes. I learnt that there is help out there for me at Council.  
(Metropolitan participant)*

*I am happy to put my name down again to learn a bit more. (Rural participant)*

*What was most valuable was the broad exposure to the various areas that councils work in along with opportunities for professional development and ability to challenge myself on many tasks that were presented. (Metropolitan participant)*

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### Developing self-confidence

Developing self-confidence through the work experience was one of the strongest and most significant outcomes for participants. A number of factors were attributed to building self-confidence however being immersed in ‘real’ work experiences for a period of time (not a one-off experience), having a planned and structured environment, and building relationships were considered highly important. Increased confidence was reported by participants for both the online and onsite work experiences which went hand-in-hand with skill development.

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*I enjoyed working on the front desk. It got me more confidence to talk to people and engage. (Rural participant)*

*Gaining confidence in my ability to adapt to and learn new skills within a working environment was most helpful. I was helped in this by being given a range of administrative tasks, opportunity to be involved in several different meetings, contact with the community in person when it was possible and via Zoom during restrictions as well as through knowledgeable and supportive mentors. (Metropolitan participant)*

*I had an employment gap and was really unsure how the experience would be, so building relationships with people was helpful in building my confidence. (Metropolitan participant)*

*This was my first job as I have been studying part-time prior to this. It was a strong boost in my confidence because I was encouraged and was getting feedback that I was capable and that I was doing a great job. (Metropolitan participant)*

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## A safe and welcoming environment

Experiencing a safe and welcoming environment was highly important to participant outcomes and their experience of the pilot projects. Many participants reported previously experiencing barriers or feared barriers to inclusion particularly in workplace settings.

Feedback collected through participant surveys and interviews reiterated the importance of providing a safe and welcoming environment. Whilst most participants reported that they had experienced a safe and welcoming environment, there were suggestions as to how this could be improved. This has been discussed in the project learnings section of this report around communication of needs and adjustments and strengthening human resources practices.

	Not at all	A little bit	A bit	A lot
Participants felt safe and welcomed		17% (2)		83% (10)

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*The most valuable part of this program was meeting new people in a workplace who were so friendly and so welcoming, both being at home during covid and coming into the centre for my last day was an amazing experience, which is devastating to leave. (Metropolitan participant)*

*I didn't feel pressure to undertake any tasks or speak during meetings unless I was comfortable challenging myself. It was also explained and I felt safe that should a medical issue arise that I could communicate these and the role would be adapted or that I could attend at a different time without jeopardising my role. I also felt safe to ask questions as my mentors always took time to answer and explain tasks thoroughly. Everyone I interacted with was genuine and helpful. (Metropolitan participant)*

*What made me feel welcome and safe was the acceptance for who I was. (Metropolitan participant)*

*The team I was working with made me feel welcome and included from day one, from going out to lunch on my first day, to getting coffee together, or chatting in the office. If I had any questions they were more than happy to answer them – whether they were about work or the council in general. (Metropolitan participant)*

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## Building skills and opening pathways to employment

An aim of the MAV Disability Work Experience Project was to provide pathways to employment for people with disability. This was anticipated through councils gaining more disability-confidence and through participants being exposed to possible follow-on employment and/or opportunities for increased aspirations around employment.

	Not at all	A little bit	A bit	A lot
Gained more confidence to apply for jobs		8% (1)		92% (11)

The evaluation identified areas where the pilot projects built participant skills and experiences that would, in turn, open or support pathways to employment. These included:

- putting together a CV
- providing interview experience, both in person and online
- gaining 'in-depth' skills across a range of areas (customer services, community care, administration, library, recreation, parks and gardens, planning, information technology, business)
- learning key enterprise skills such as communication, time management, organisational structure and culture, networks and professions/work contacts, and
- providing access to referees.

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*I think my change is in my mind. I left knowing that I would be able to hold down a full-time job without any problem. That was a big acceptance and realisation for not only myself but for my family as well. (Metropolitan participant)*

*The ability to think logically, perform analysis on a problem and forge strong working relationships were learnt in my internship at council and applied in my current position, so the council experience definitely helped with that. (Metropolitan participant)*

*The internship was key in implementing my work ethic and all the approaches and skills that I took from the program have been so key to getting my future employment. (Metropolitan participant)*

*I have grown a love for council work. I knew I liked the work but this experience made me set a goal to work within council. (Metropolitan participant)*

*Our project reconfirmed my belief that people with disabilities are as good employees as any other able-bodied employee I have worked with. They have the same range of skills as anybody else I have worked with. (Metropolitan council)*

*Students got 'belief' through the work experience and this will help them transition from year 12 with more confidence. (Rural stakeholder)*

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It is not possible to report on the number of participants who went on to obtain employment. Anecdotally council staff reported five students or interns who had been successful in obtaining employment. Many staff reported that they would have been more than happy to employ the work experience student if positions had been available.

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*I have a new job starting in two weeks that I don't think I would have been able to get if it wasn't for this programme. (Metropolitan participant)*

*The program helped me massively, I have two job interviews in the next week and I don't think I would have got them if it wasn't for the experiences I have developed here!  
(Metropolitan participant)*

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### Suggestions for improvement

Work experience participants suggested some areas that could be improved. In their own words these included:

- councils could have a better understanding of physical disability
- some people require significant structure especially when first entering work experience
- everyone needs to be really understanding and accepting that everyone is different no matter who they are and to take it one week at a time as people's disabilities can fluctuate
- councils need to have a solid understanding of how flexible working environments, workplace adjustments and OHS work together. This is important as sometimes there can be a conflict
- councils could provide a little more organised communication at the outset so as participant knows what to expect and to be more prepared, and
- having interns at the same time is beneficial so as you can experience learning together.

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*Keep giving us a go. Advertise council is supportive of people with disabilities that want work. (Rural participant)*

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## 2.7 Stakeholder outcomes

Stakeholders involved in the Project included disability employment organisations and schools. For most councils, this was the first time that they had engaged or partnered with these stakeholders. Benefits from partnering with disability organisations have been discussed earlier in this report, with particular reference to insurance, administration, accessing expertise resources and advice and payment of participants.

The evaluation included three stakeholder interviews which all reported their enthusiasm at being involved and their desire to continue to build the relationships.

For a school, the pilot project fitted students' core foundation learning under the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The school viewed the project as a great opportunity for their students to experience 'real work' and to get a look at what happens inside councils. The school reported experiencing some prior hesitancy in engaging council around work experience and reported a notable shift in this through the pilot project.

Enthusiasm of council staff was highlighted in the two Disability Employment Services interviews. In addition, communication was easy, a flexible working approach was noted, the positive relationship that council staff built with students/interns was discussed and the hard work that councils had undertaken in setting up the pilot projects was acknowledged.

All partners expressed a desire to keep strengthening the partnerships to offer more work experience placements and opportunities for people with disability.

Suggestions for strengthening partnerships included:

- more marketing from councils about what they do and what the opportunities are
- more 'Accessibility Days' preferably in the middle of the year while students are on semester breaks
- more programs like the pilot projects.

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*This partnership showed that work experience for our school children can work and that it can work well. (Rural stakeholder)*

*Our partnership was strengthened during the project. There was continual support offered between the partners, we were working on this together. (Metropolitan stakeholder)*

*The project demonstrated council was willing to support the community. (Metropolitan stakeholder)*

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### 3. Conclusion

The MAV Disability Work Experience Project set out to increase disability-confidence around work experience and employment in councils. Funding ten pilot projects in rural and metropolitan councils in Victoria has provided the local government sector with significant learnings about barriers people with disability experience in accessing council work experience and employment as well as how to address these barriers.

Providing a longer-term work experience program over weeks or months enabled a deeper immersive learning for both councils and participants. Providing a 'real' working environment was reported as highly beneficial for building disability-confidence and achieving practical outcomes.

Regardless of prior experience with work experience or employment of people with disability, or which model or approach the council implemented, the evaluation findings report each council gained learnings to improve their disability-confidence at staff and council levels. Council learnings included dispelling myths about working with a person with disability and the opportunities and benefits of inclusive employment. In addition, councils developed a range of practice resources that will be valuable for the local government sector to continue to develop disability confidence.

Employment is considered pivotal to gaining independence and addressing inequity experienced by so many people with disability. For most of the participants involved in the pilot projects, this was their first work experience and their first engagement with council. Although the work experience was significantly impacted by the pandemic restrictions and extended interruptions, the evaluation identified a number of positive outcomes. Participants reported developing personal confidence around employment and a strengthening of skills that would open pathways to employment. They enjoyed the experience and expressed an interest in participating in more work experience programs. At the time of writing this report some of the participants had been able to secure long-term employment.

The pilot projects echoed the unique position of councils as employers with a range of employment opportunities as well as their role of building inclusive communities. Councils valued the opportunity that the pilot projects offered and hoped to continue to build on project learnings and improve inclusion for people with disability. The evaluation findings reiterated the need for an ongoing focus on improving disability inclusion and confidence in employment across all areas of council and noted the contribution that the Project has made towards building this across the sector.

Despite significant interruptions and adaptations due to COVID 19 pandemic restrictions to each pilot project and to the Project as a whole, the evaluation findings based on interviews and surveys with 65 people, identified 'significant returns for a relatively small investment'.



## Terms and Definitions

<b>What is disability?</b>	Disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, all of which can interact with a person’s health condition(s) and environmental and/or individual factors to hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. There are varying degrees of disability—from having no impairment or limitation to a complete loss of functioning. It can be associated with genetic disorders, illnesses, accidents, ageing, injuries or a combination of these factors. *
<b>What is meant by impairment?</b>	An impairment refers to problems in body function or structure (including mental functions), such as loss of sight, loss of hearing, loss of a limb, impairment of mood or emotion, impairment of speech, and any other lack of function of body organs. *
<b>What is meant by activity limitation?</b>	An activity limitation refers to difficulties in executing everyday activities, such as self-care, mobility, communication, cognitive or emotional tasks, health care, reading or writing tasks, transport, household chores, property maintenance or meal preparation. Self-care, mobility and communication are often referred to as core activities. People who always or sometimes need help with 1 or more core activities are referred to as people with severe or profound disability. *
<b>What is meant by participation restriction?</b>	A participation restriction refers to problems a person may experience in involvement in life situations, such as in education or employment.*
<b>What is disability discrimination?</b>	Disability discrimination occurs when a person with disability is treated unequally, less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as other people because of their disability. It may be direct or indirect.*
<b>Social model of disability</b>	Involves removing barriers to full participation in society. This approach replaces the medical/deficit model where the focus was on the individual and their impairment within a charity/welfare context.
<b>Vocational Placement</b>	Person undertakes work experience when they are studying with a school or other education provider.
<b>Non-vocational Placement</b>	Person undertakes work experience on a voluntary basis, they are not fulfilling a course requirement.

\*Source: People with disability in Australia 2020 AIHW

## Acronyms

AND – Australian Network on Disability

DAP – Disability Action Plan

DES – Disability Employment Services

EAF – Employment Assistance Fund

ESA – Employment Services Assessment

ILC – Linkages and Capacity Building grants (under the NDIS)

JCA – Job Capacity Assessment

MAV – Municipal Association of Victoria

NDIS – National Disability Insurance Scheme

NDS – National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

VCAL – Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning

## Attachment 1 Council Disability Assessment Categories

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### Establishment

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Address “Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment” within council’s disability action plan or Council Plan.

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Include human resources staff on a disability action plan working group.

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Conduct an audit of employment policies and processes to identify gaps and barriers.

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Develop a Reasonable Adjustment Policy and promote this to all council staff, in particular, hiring managers.

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Include people with a disability in the development, monitoring, review and evaluation of council’s disability action plan.

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Review position descriptions for unnecessary physical or other requirements

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Identify external funding opportunities, resources and tools and promote these to council staff – in particular hiring managers.

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Provide all job descriptions, forms and background information in accessible formats such as Word, HTML or online.

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Participate in AccessAbility Day. AccessAbility Day is a voluntary, obligation free day for employers to have an opportunity to see the potential jobseekers with disability can bring to the workplace and learn about available Government support. <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/people-with-disability/accessabilityday>

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### Review and improvement

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Seek feedback on the accessibility of employment policies and processes from employees with a disability.

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Actively engage mainstream recruitment agencies to encourage them to add people with a disability to their books and refer them for positions.

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Send all job vacancies to local disability employment services and organise regular meetings to ensure applicants are matched according to their skills and capabilities.

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Engage an external organisation to assist council to review and improve its approach to disability employment.

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Host a business breakfast with employment agencies to build on-going working relationships and discuss employment opportunities available within council.

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Encourage applications from people with a disability in all job advertisements.

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Provide regular disability awareness training to hiring managers, human resources and economic development staff.

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When planning the council budget, create an allocation of funds to promote good practice in training, work experience and employment initiatives

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Participate in a work experience or internship program that brings people with a disability into your council. One example is the Australian Network on Disability Stepping Into program

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<https://www.and.org.au/pages/stepping-into...-programs.html>

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Also consider being a workplace participant in Jobs Victoria programs.

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## Innovation and Integration

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Integrate disability into relevant council policies and procedures related to recruitment and selection and other key documents for staff such as the Code of Conduct.

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Undertake and respond to an audit of human resources web pages, software and IT systems to meet web accessibility standards.

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Implement work experience, internship or mentoring programs for people with a disability and encourage the involvement of senior staff.

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Require recruitment agencies to demonstrate inclusive employment practices as a condition of using them and build this into contracts.

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Recognise the value of a lived experience of disability for particular jobs in lieu of formal qualifications or sector experience.

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Include information about disability employment (and related policies) in induction material and training for all council staff.

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Provide mandatory disability awareness training for all hiring managers upon commencement of their role.

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Promote positive stories about employees with a disability through internal communications, for example profiles in staff newsletters or on the intranet.

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Promote council's inclusive recruitment processes to other councils, for example when participating in human resources networks or meetings with other councils.

May include becoming an Employer of Choice for people with a disability.

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Explore ways to keep statistics on the occupation and employment status of people with a disability working for council. Set voluntary targets.

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Develop a Work Support Policy to support and retain existing staff.

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Source:

*Creating employment opportunities for people with a disability A resource guide for Victorian councils on employment and social procurement.* MAV September 2019 Second Edition

## Attachment 2: Disability policy and reform

**National** The *Fair Work Act 2009* governs the employee/employer relationship and provides guidance to prevent and redress discrimination in employment.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 is the main strategic framework driving inclusion policy and service provision across Australia. The NDS has seven outcome areas, including 'Employment and Financial Security' – to increase access to employment opportunities and provide employment and financial security to people with disability. [Link here](#)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the significant national reform driving a real shift in how disability is perceived and what people with disability can achieve with the right supports. Enhancing the economic participation of people with disability is a key objective of the NDIS. The NDIS provides support to eligible people with intellectual, physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial disability. It is worth noting however that the majority of people with disability seeking employment opportunities will not be eligible for NDIS funding.<sup>12</sup>

**State** *Disability Act 2006* and *Disability Regulations 2007* – aim to provide a whole-of-government, whole-of-community response to the rights and needs of people with disability for all areas of government. Includes a focus on reducing barriers for people with disability to employment.

The *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability in employment and goods and services.

The Victoria government has committed to boosting disability employment and economic participation through '*Every opportunity, Victoria Economic Participation Plan for people with Disability 2018-2020*' [Link here](#)

Key aspects of this plan include:

- a focus to all aspects of economic participation including employment, self-employment, career progression, enterprise development, education and training
- remove systemic barriers and tackle entrenched attitudes that prevent people with disability from achieving economic participation.

'Education and learning pathways' and 'Employment opportunities' are key themes of *Every Opportunity*. Early actions identified include:

- strengthen support for school-based apprenticeships or traineeships for students with disability
- sponsor traineeships, cadetships and graduate careers of people with disability in health services
- identify and replicate good practice in the employment of people with disability and social procurement across **local government**. (Action 12)

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<sup>12</sup> Creating employment opportunities for people with a disability A resource guide for Victorian councils on employment and social procurement. MAV 2019

- Achieving a target of six percent of people with disability employed across all government departments.

A new state disability plan 2021-2025 is currently being developed. The new plan will have a focus on recovery from the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic given it's significant impacts on people with disability.

*Jobs Victoria* supports jobseekers disadvantaged in the labour market into work. Through the *Jobs Victoria Innovation Fund* and more recently *JobsBank*, the State government support projects and a jobs pipeline to benefit disadvantaged jobseekers such as people with disability.

#### Local government

The MAV *Creating a more inclusive community for people with a disability – A Strategic Framework for Local Government* provides steps for councils to continue their work to systematically improve inclusion for people with a disability and their families. This includes a whole-of-council approach and improving employment opportunities – ‘Councils will exercise their responsibilities as equal opportunity employers and exercise their community leadership role to work with others to enhance local employment opportunities for people with a disability’. [Link](#)

The MAV's *Creating employment opportunities for people with a disability: A resource guide for Victorian councils on employment and social procurement* [Link](#) provides specific support for councils around employment

Council Disability Action Plans are enshrined in the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*. Each council must have a disability action plan in place and report against it on an annual basis. These plans make commitments to reduce barriers to accessing goods, services and facilities and to obtaining and maintaining employment. If a council has determined not to have a disability action plan, it must address these barriers in the Council Plan.

Many councils have developed and reviewed policies and processes to reduce barriers to recruitment, selection and retention of people with disability. Strategies include targeted training for hiring managers, traineeships, mentoring and work experience and more inclusive recruitment practices.

Many councils have Disability Advisory Committees to guide the development of their plans and council and community business.

Victorian councils have further obligations under the following legislation to remove barriers to discrimination for people with a disability:

- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*

## Attachment 3: Supporting government employment resources and financial incentives

Programs	For service providers/employers	For work experience/employee
<a href="#">Funding for changes to the workplace</a>	<p>Employment Assistance Fund (EAF). Can include buying equipment, modifications, assistive technology.</p> <p>Application to EAF ⇒ JobAccess assess the application ⇒ Arrange a specialist to confirm and approve. <a href="#">Link here</a></p>	
<a href="#">Wage subsidies</a>	<p>Usually paid to an employer. Employer intends to offer jobseekers sustainable work after the subsidy period expires.</p> <p>Available through Disability Employment Services (DES). DES determines need ⇒ confirms eligibility ⇒ negotiates subsidy ⇒ monitors employment</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>	<p>Choice of DES</p> <p>Centrelink appointment ⇒ Choose DES provider ⇒ work with provider to agree on a servicing strategy that works best for them</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>
<a href="#">Determining appropriate employment service</a>		<p>Employment Services Assessment (ESAt) or Job Capacity Assessment (JCA) – Used to determine the most appropriate employment service for a jobseeker with disability</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>
<a href="#">Access Ability Day</a>	Employers connect with jobseekers with disability currently DES participants looking for work. Provides opportunity for jobseeker to gain an insight into the work.	
<a href="#">National Work Experience Program</a>	<p>Support to provide work experience for up to 25 hours per week for up to four weeks in businesses and government agencies. An incentive payment of \$300 available for hosting a National Work Experience candidate</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>	<p>Available to DES participants for unpaid work experience placements. Insurances covered by Aust Govt</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>
<a href="#">PATH Internships</a>	<p>Opportunity to trial job seekers in a structured work experience placement.</p> <p>Eligible for a \$1,000 payment</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>	<p>Work placements of 15-25 hours per week for up to 12 weeks.</p> <p>\$200 per fortnight in addition to income support payment.</p> <p>With DES for at least six months</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>
<a href="#">Supported wage System (SYS)</a>	<p>Employer can match an appropriate wage with productivity of a person with disability.</p> <p>Apply for SYS ⇒ commence work trial ⇒ independent assessor conducts a SWS assessment ⇒ wage assessment agreement between all parties</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>	
<a href="#">Stepping Into Program Internship</a>	<p>AND (Australian Network on Disability) works closely with organisations</p> <p><a href="#">Link here</a></p>	<p>Minimum 150 hour paid employment for tertiary students. An AND initiative available by winter and summer semesters. <a href="#">Link here</a></p>

## Attachment 4: Supporting resources developed by councils

It must be noted that this list is not exhaustive. The list also includes recent resources developed by Victorian councils that assisted the pilot projects in their work.

Resource	What	Source
Inclusive employment	<i>Creating employment opportunities for people with disability. A resource guide for Victorian councils on employment and social procurement</i>	Municipal Association of Victoria September 2019 Second Edition
	<i>Local Government Building Inclusive communities. A report on 2011-2012 implementation of the MAV strategic framework for disability: Employment and civic participation</i>	Municipal Association of Victoria 2012
	Inclusive Industries toolkit	Wyndham City Council <a href="#">Link here</a>
	<i>Disability Inclusion Planning. A guide for Local Government</i>	Australian Local Government Association 2016
	Ten things employers can do right now	page 21 <i>Every Opportunity Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018-2020</i> <a href="#">Link here</a>
	Employment tool kit	Victorian Public Sector Commission <a href="#">Link here</a>
	Banyule Inclusive Employment Program and Toolkit	Banyule City Council <a href="#">Link here</a>
	Job Access	Australian Government Driving disability employment <a href="#">Link here</a>
	AND Disability Confident managers eLearning Solutions	<a href="#">Link here</a>
Inclusive employment models	<i>What do people with intellectual disability think about their jobs and the support they receive at work? A comparative study of three employment support models</i>	University of NSW <a href="#">Link here</a>
	Inclusive work experience in parks and gardens video	City of Greater Dandenong Bushland and Gardens Services Project <a href="#">Link here</a>
Policy	Disability Access and Inclusion Policy Statement 2021-2025	City of Maribyrnong
Insurance	Local community insurance Services	City of LaTrobe <a href="#">Link here</a>



Resource	What	Source
Inclusive information	Examples of inclusive website information	City of Greater Dandenong
	<i>MAV Disability Work Experience Program factsheet</i>	Wyndham City council
	Bias free recruitment article	City of Greater Dandenong <i>Talking Business</i> magazine, September 2020 <a href="#">Link here</a>
	WORKS FOR ME video	City of Warrnambool <a href="#">Link here</a>
Workplace adjustments	Many resources available online	
Information/ Orientation	<i>Employability Skills Worksheet</i> A self-assessment worksheet for a participant covering self-management, team work, problem solving, communication, technology/computer, numbers and maths, leadership	City of Warrnambool
	<i>Work Experience Placement Induction</i> Participant contact information, site information for participant including uniform/clothing, what to expect on the first day etc	City of Warrnambool
	Induction Checklist for Participant	Darebin City Council
	<i>MAV disability Work Experience program – Workplace Immersion Program</i>	Wyndham City Council
Council Training	Mental Health First aid training	Darebin City Council
	Disability Awareness Training (Scope)	Moreland City Council
	Disability rights in the workplace training	Aust Network on Disability (AND) <a href="#">Link here</a>
	Reasonable adjustments training	Darebin City Council
	YouMeUs	Online training program that promotes inclusion of people with disability City of Glen Eira, Kingston, Greater Dandenong, Port Phillip and Bayside <a href="#">Link here</a>
Participant training	Fitted for work One on one support, coaching, workshops,	<a href="http://fittedforwork.org/">fittedforwork.org/</a>
Other	Bendigo Inclusive Towns project	City of Greater Bendigo <a href="#">Link here</a>

For further information on the MAV Disability Work Experience Project, please contact

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