CITY OF BALLARAT

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2026–2030

Engagement Summary

What we heard

Easy Read

Engagement Summary
What we heard

The City of Ballarat talked with the community to help create a new **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).**

The community engagement happened from **16 February to 22 March 2026.**

Why was this done

The City wanted to:

- Hear directly from people about **access and inclusion**
- Learn what makes life harder for people with disability
- Find out what is working well
- Understand what needs to improve over the next **four years**

Who was involved

The City listened to:

- People with disability
- People with long-term health conditions
- Carers
- Local organisations
- Service providers
- The wider community



How people shared their views

People could take part in many ways, including:


» An online survey


» Face-to-face sessions


» One-on-one conversations


» Drop-in visits to programs


» An online blog

These options helped people choose the way that worked best for them.

What people in Ballarat told us

From **February to March 2026**, people shared their experiences about disability and access in Ballarat.

People talked about what makes life harder and what would help them feel:

- **Welcome**
- **Safe**
- **Respected**
- **Included**

This summary tells you the **main things people said.**

Engagement Summary
What we heard

Getting Around Town

- Many people said **getting around Ballarat is hard.**
- Bus services do not go where people need them to go
- Some areas have very few buses

This **makes it hard** to:

- » Get to work
- » Go to the doctor or hospital
- » See friends
- » Go to events

Bus drivers were often kind and helpful, but people said:

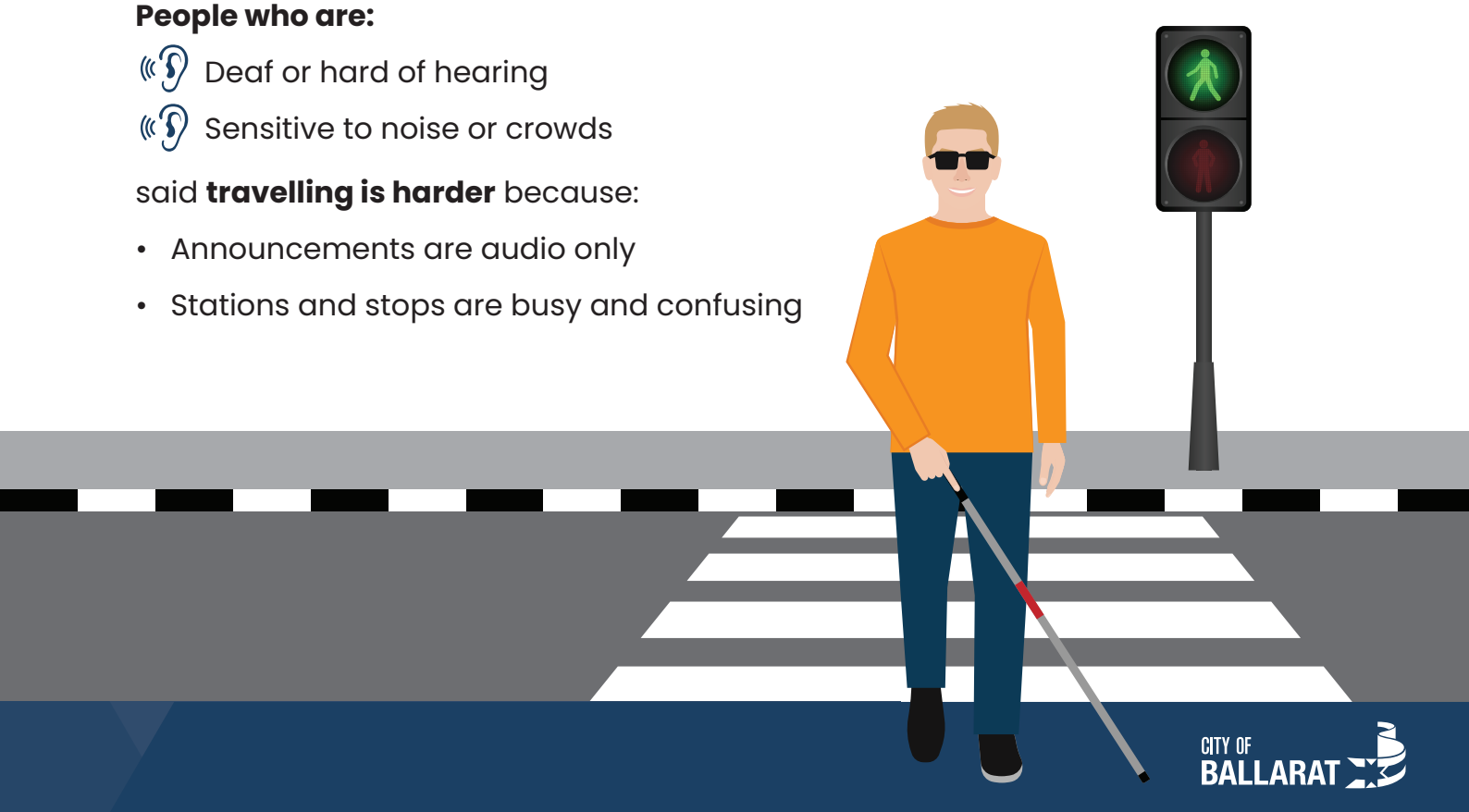
- More disability training would help drivers support passengers better

People who are:

- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Sensitive to noise or crowds

said **travelling is harder** because:

- Announcements are audio only
- Stations and stops are busy and confusing



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Parking and footpaths

- People said there are problems with:
  - » Not enough accessible parking
  - » Parking spaces that are too small
  - » Being judged for using disabled parking with a hidden disability

Footpaths and kerbs are often:

- » Broken
- » Steep
- » Missing

- This can be unsafe and very tiring.
- Some people said they stay home because it is **too hard.**





Buildings and Public Places

- Many buildings in Ballarat are **hard to use.**
- People said problems include:
  - » Steps and no ramps
  - » Narrow doors
  - » Not enough space for wheelchairs
  - » Toilets that are not accessible
- Places people struggle to access include:
  - » Doctors and hospitals
  - » Schools
  - » Sports and recreation places
  - » Train stations and bus stops
  - » Cafes, shops and restaurants

People also said:

- » There are not enough accessible homes
- » There are not enough accessible places to stay

- People **want**:
  - » Buildings designed to be accessible from the start
  - » More accessible toilets
  - » More Changing Places facilities
  - » Play spaces and pools everyone can use



Information and Communication

Many people said information is **too hard to understand.**

People said problems include:

- Have intellectual disability
- Have low literacy
- Are blind or low vision
- Are deaf or hard of hearing
- Do not use speech

People said information **works best** when it is:

- Easy Read
- Uses pictures and symbols
- In large print
- In Auslan
- Captioned or audio

Some places have hearing loops, but:

- Staff **do not** know how to use them

People **want**:

- Clear information about events
- Easy ways to know if a place is accessible
- Symbols to show access, like the sunflower icon
- Social stories to help plan visits to events or busy places



Finding Help and Services

Many people said getting support is **confusing and stressful.**

People said:

- There are too many services
- It is hard to know where to start
- Information about who can get help is unclear

People **want**:

One clear place to find information

Someone who can help them:

- Fill out forms
- Understand services
- Find the right support

Getting a diagnosis was described as:

- Slow
- Expensive
- Hard to access

People aged **25 to 40** were often missing out on help.

People also said there are **not enough:**

- Social groups
- Creative programs
- Support for people not on the NDIS
- Support for young carers

Some people said they **do not understand** their rights **or feel safe** using legal or advocacy services.



Work, Businesses and Events

Many people said it is **hard to:**

- Get a job
- Keep a job

This is because of:

- Job applications that are not accessible
- Interviews without adjustments
- Workplaces that are not set up for disability
- Not enough support once hired

People also said many shops, cafes and venues are **hard to access** because:

- There are steps
- Toilets are not accessible
- Staff do not understand disability

People **want**:

- **Disability training** for businesses
- **Sensory friendly** shopping times
- **Clear information** about access before visiting
- Events that clearly say **what access is available**

When access is clear, people feel **more confident to go**.



Attitudes, Discrimination and Belonging

Many people said:

- » They are **treated differently** because of disability
- » This happens in shops, schools, workplaces and services

People said inclusion is **not just being allowed in.**

People **want**:

- » To feel welcome
- » To feel respected
- » To belong
- » To join in without being judged

When disability is not understood, people:

- » Feel isolated
- » Stop going out
- » Miss out on work, learning and social life

They supported:

- » Learning led by people with disability
- » More understanding of hidden disabilities
- » Respect for the right to use accessible parking and toilets

People also **want support** to:

- » Speak up for themselves
- » Know their rights



What this tells us

People **want** Ballarat to be a place where:

- » Getting around is easier
- » Places are built for everyone
- » Information is clear and easy to understand
- » Support is simple to find
- » People are treated with kindness and respect
- » Everyone feels they belong

This feedback will help guide the **next disability plan.**

What people said about council services

Libraries

Libraries were the **easiest service to use.**

People said:

- » Libraries are welcoming
- » Staff are helpful
- » Spaces are easier to move around
- » Information is clearer

Libraries are a good example of what **works well.**

Customer Service (in person and phone)

Some people said customer service **works better than other services.**

People said:

- » Staff are mostly helpful
- » It is easier to ask questions
- » Staff take time to help

But some people still want:

- » More disability understanding
- » Clearer communication

Pools and Leisure Centres

Many people said pools and leisure centres are:

- » Easier to use than other places
- » Better set up for access

Some people said:

- » Physical access is better here
- » More support would still help

Events and Event Information

People had **mixed experiences** with events.

Some people said:

- » Information about events is easy to find

Many people said:

- » It is not clear if events are accessible
- » Accessibility details are missing
- » They don't feel confident attending

People **want**:

- » Clear access details
- » Simple symbols to show access
- » Easy Read information

Youth Services

Most people said they were:

- Not sure what youth services exist
- Not sure how to access them

This suggests:

» Information is hard to find

» Services are not well promoted

Child Care and Family Services

(including Maternal and Child Health)

Many people said they:

- Did not know how these services work
- Were unsure if they were accessible

People **want**:

» Clear access details

» Simple symbols to show access

» Easy Read information

Seniors Services

Many people said:

- They were not sure what seniors services are available
- They did not know if services would meet disability needs

This suggests a need for:

» Better communication

» Clearer service information

Animal and Pet Services

Animal and pet services were one of the **least known** services.

Many people said:

- They did not know how to access these services
- They were not sure where to go for help

This shows:

» Information is **hard to find**

» Services are **not easy to understand**

Overall message from the community

People said:

» Some services **work well**

» Many services are **hard to find** or understand

» Being “not sure” often means **information is missing or unclear**

People **want**:

» Simple information

» Easy Read formats

» Clear contact points

» Staff who understand disability

What this tells us

People are **more likely** to use services when:

- They know the service exists
- Information is easy to understand
- The space feels welcoming
- Staff are confident and supportive

Improving **information and communication** will help more people use council services.

What happens next

A short summary of what people told us will be:

- **Emailed** to people and organisations who took part
- **Shared online** on the MySay website

This will happen in **April 2026.**

How the feedback will be used

What people shared will help:

- Create the new **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (2026–2030)**

The feedback will also be shared with:

- The Disability Advisory Committee
- City of Ballarat teams

This will help them:

- Plan their work for the **2026–27 year**
- Think about access and inclusion when making future plans