

Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan



Promoting Community Participation

Introduction

In 1998, the City of Casey undertook a comprehensive consultative process to develop a Disability Policy and Action Plan in recognition of its responsibility to provide accessible services to all members of the community. The City of Casey determined that a specific Policy and Action Plan is required to articulate the ways Council will ensure inclusion of people with disabilities in all of its areas of responsibility. According to the 1993 Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey", people with a disability comprise at least 18% of Casey's community ranging in degree of disability.

The aim of the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan is to identify barriers encountered by people with disabilities which prevent their use of Council services, facilities, information, and employment in the City of Casey. The policy and plan recognises that people with disabilities are part of the diverse Casey community, and also fulfils Council's legal obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.

As part of the process of developing the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan Council undertook lengthy consultations with community groups, people with disabilities, their carers and staff from the City of Casey. This process provided valuable information on the issues and barriers facing people with disabilities within the municipality.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan details the specific objectives and strategies designed to achieve the goals of Council's key commitment areas outlined in the corporate plan. It is a proactive way of addressing Council's visions, commitments and responsibilities to those members of our community who have a disability.

Council's vision is "a distinct and diverse environment, where people can enjoy:

- A secure and quality lifestyle
- Cultural and economic opportunities and
- A sense of community."

In keeping with these principles the City's Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan will enable people with a disability to receive equal treatment and participate fully in community life. It will enhance lifestyles and promote a sense of community. As the policy has been developed in accordance with Council's corporate plan it will compliment the City's strategic and economic planning and form an important aspect of management.



Key Principles

- People with disabilities have the same rights as all members of the Casey community.
- People with disabilities share the rights of other members of the community to participate in community life.
- People with disabilities share the rights of all members of the Casey community to access services and resources.

Aims of the Policy

- To acknowledge that people with disabilities are members of the Casey community.
- To provide equitable access to, and use of, Casey's resources for all community members.
- To address physical, social, economic and cultural barriers which presently exist with regard to access and participation.
- To raise awareness of Council personnel of the diverse needs of the community, and increase their competence and confidence, in meeting the needs of people with disabilities.
- To enhance the City of Casey's capacity to respond to the diverse needs of its citizens.
- To raise awareness within the community of the diverse needs of people with disabilities.



Key Policy Statements

- The City of Casey will act in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). It will aim to ensure that there is no discrimination based on disability in any of its own functions, services and programs or by any of the organisations to which it provides facilities or funding.
- The City of Casey will ensure that it is sensitive to the needs of people with disabilities as it enacts its six key directions:

1. Serving Casey

Accountable, innovative and customer focused Council committed to Casey's future

2. Planning Casey's Future

Clear direction, commitment and communication

3. Casey's Partners

A commitment to community understanding, growth and cooperation

4. Building Casey

Meeting the needs of our growing community and managing our distinctive environment

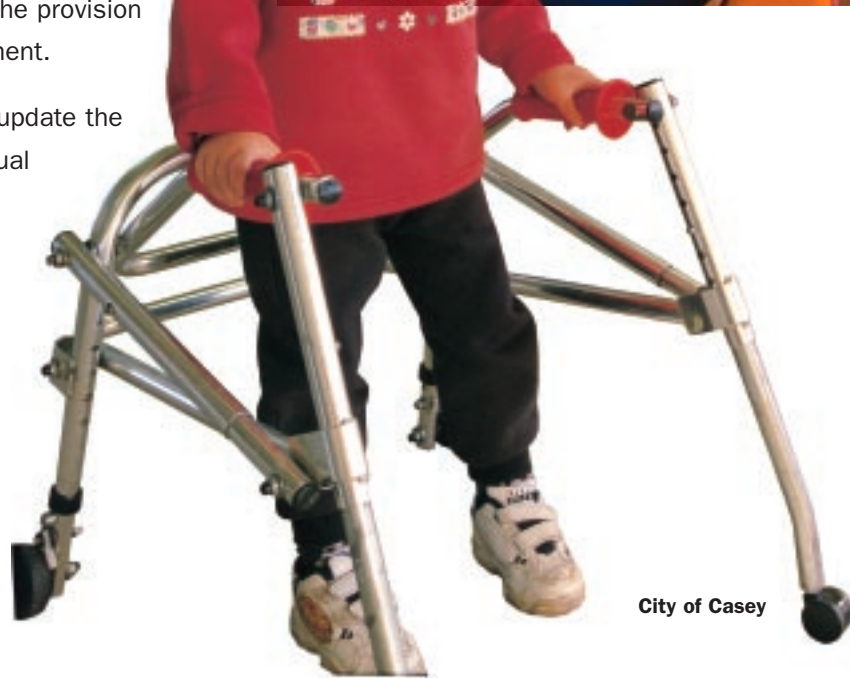
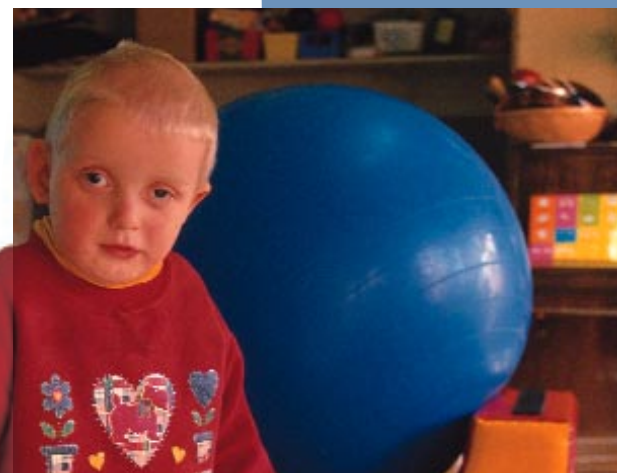
5. Jobs and Business for Casey

Improved opportunities and support for business and jobs

6. Funding Casey's Future

Generating the required funding

- The City of Casey recognises that the keys to inclusion of people with disabilities in the community are the provision of an appropriate physical and social environment.
- The City of Casey is committed to review and update the implementation plans of this Policy on an annual basis.
- The City of Casey will provide adequate resources to implement this policy.



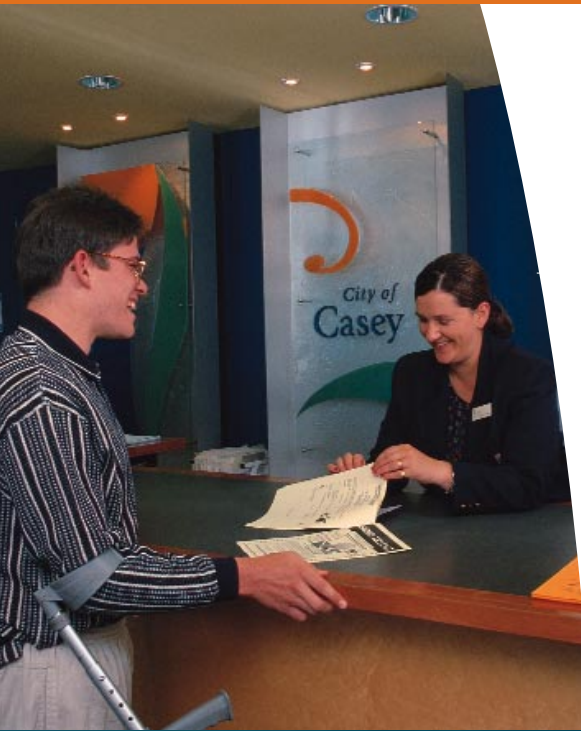
Defining Disability

The definitions used worldwide are those detailed in the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) published by the World Health Organisation (Geneva, 1980). They are as follows:

Impairment An impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. It involves damage to, or poor functioning in, any part of the body or mind, such as a loss of sight or a limb. Impairments may result from genetic or birth circumstances, disease or injury.

Disability Having an impairment can, but does not necessarily, lead to a disability. A disability is any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Handicap A handicap is a disadvantage for a given individual resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex and social and cultural factors) for the individual.



Defining Discrimination

The full description of the term **discrimination** is that provided by the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992:

Discrimination means treating people with a disability less favourably than people without that disability would be treated under the same circumstances.

Discrimination also exists where there is a condition or requirement imposed, which may be the same for everyone but which unfairly excludes or disadvantages people with a disability (for example in employment, education or access to goods or services).

Different treatment of people with a disability is not unlawful discrimination where it is reasonably intended to ensure that they have equal opportunities or to meet their special needs.

Disability Access and Inclusion Action Plan

The following Action Plan outlines the implementation of Casey's Disability Access and Inclusion Policy. It demonstrates an enhanced awareness of, and commitment to, addressing the planning, social, cultural and economic barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities who visit, live or work in Casey. The objectives and strategies are designed to integrate their awareness into all responsibilities, activities and services of Council.

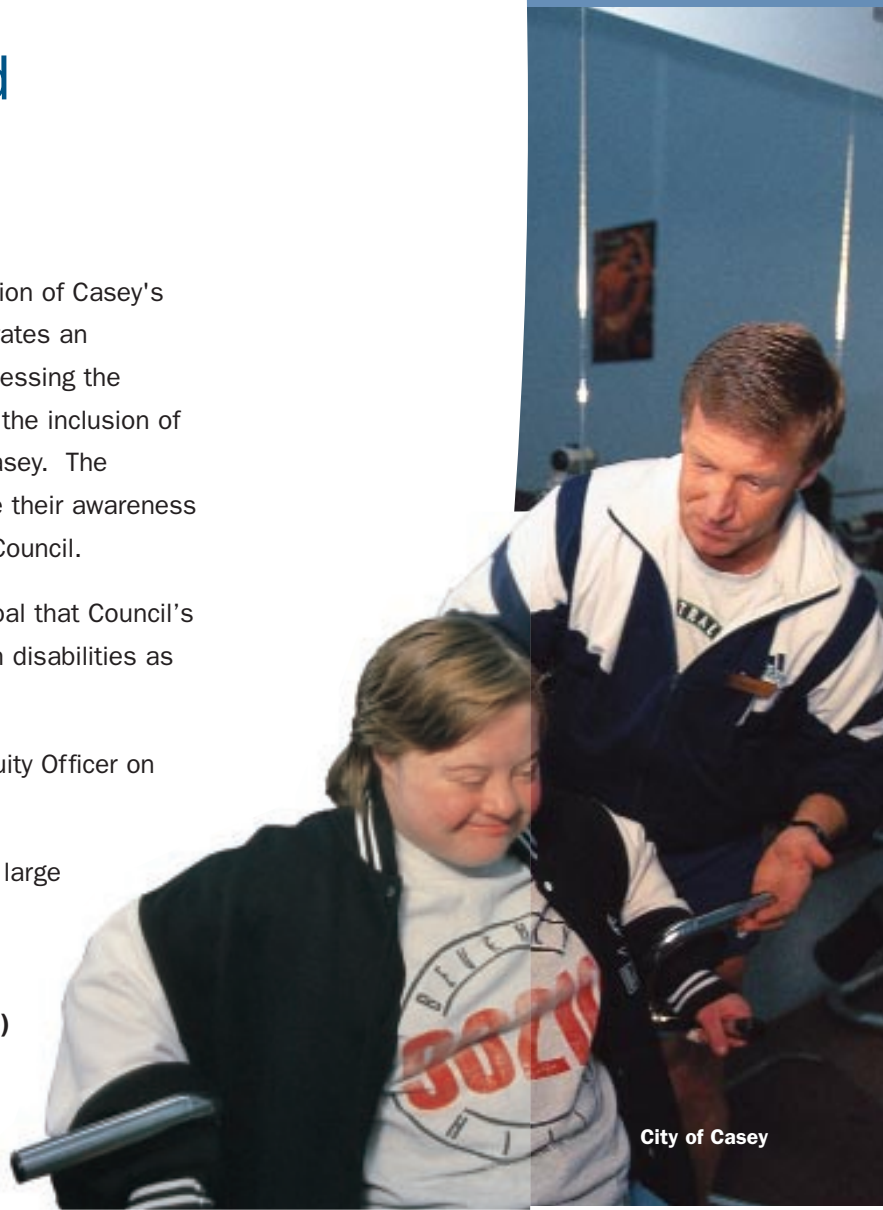
The Action Plan will be revised annually with the goal that Council's services and programs are inclusive of people with disabilities as with all other members of Council's constituency.

For further information contact the Access and Equity Officer on 9705 5200.

The Policy and Action Plan will also be available in large print and on audio tape.

TTY (03) 9705 5568

TIS 131 450 (Translating and Interpreting Service)



Goal: Serving Casey

Accountable, innovative and customer focused Council committed to Casey's future

O B J E C T I V E	S T R A T E G Y
1.1 To build an organisational culture which encourages all staff to address issues for people with disabilities as part of their regular practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a corporate resource for the promotion of and training about the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan and include in staff induction process.
1.2 To enable all staff and business units to integrate an understanding of and response to issues for people with disabilities into their regular practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the content and plan the most appropriate style of specialised training and support for staff in each area and business unit, and implement that training.
1.3 To ensure Council's responsibility for all emergency procedures include issues and strategies relevant to the safety of staff and community members with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide regular training for Fire Wardens on evacuation and review the evacuation procedures to ensure the needs of people with a disability, including visitors and staff, are adequately met at all of Council's facilities.
1.4 To maintain high quality, professional and responsive Customer Service that demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities as Casey's customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review all planned Customer Service training for the relevant knowledge and skills required for inclusion of people with all disabilities as Casey's customers.• Review Council's mainstream programs such as those provided through Youth Services and Children's Services for their accessibility to people with disabilities.• Include sessions that equip staff to assist people who have disabilities as library users in the (annual) library training program.• Publicise the availability of support to assist people with disabilities to access Customer Service areas including the Library eg. TTY and counter hearing loops, staff trained in signing for people with a hearing impairment.• Include accessibility for people with mobility limitations as a criterion in any plans proposed for any Council buildings and facilities. This should include staff areas.• Develop a strategy to inform all homecare clients about expected availability of carers and management of emergency and irregular situations.

O B J E C T I V E

1.5 To provide a process enabling Casey's documentation and forms to be "user friendly" for all of the community including people with disabilities

1.6 To ensure that all Council consultants and contractors are aware of Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and undertake their services in ways which take account of the needs of people with disabilities

1.7 To develop and maintain the knowledge of all members of Casey Council about "big picture" disability issues relevant to Local Government

1.8 To enable participation in all Council sponsored events by all community members

1.9 To improve the safety of the infrastructure provided and maintained by Council

S T R A T E G Y

- Trial all billing (and specialised communication) with people with expertise in a representative range of disabilities prior to finalising the design of any new computer software which generates material for the community.
- Maximise the use of multimedia technology to enhance the access by people with a disability to information about and communication with Casey Council. Use of a large screen, large mouse and similar aids at Narre Warren library will assist access to library catalogues etc.
- Review Casey's Internet Home Page for "user friendliness" for people with disabilities, (Note: audit facilities such as Bobby can be accessed via the Internet for this purpose) and create links to other resources which may be useful such as the Planet Project and Talking Book Library.
- Monitor the accessibility of the Casey-Cardinia Library's Internet site to people with disabilities.
- Allocate a budget in the communications area to provide for development of publicity and other information in alternative formats.

- Inform all current consultants and contractors of Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and discuss implications of service provision which takes account of the needs of people with disabilities.
- Include a standard clause in the tender specifications for Council run facilities for some programs specifically designed for people with disabilities and 'tangible examples of the ways the service will be inclusive of people with disabilities'.
- Include a check for the incorporation of access and inclusion of people with disabilities considerations in the review of all contract documentation.

- Produce a regular update document alerting all Council departments to particular issues and highlighting developments relevant to inclusion of people with disabilities.

- Review planned facilities and activities to enable access to community events organised by Council to be accessible to people with a range of disabilities, eg. venues, toilets, seating, transport and publicity.

- Determine, document and implement a mechanism which provides a consistent approach for safety reasons, to addressing branches and any other footpath obstructions which need removal and to the repair and maintenance of damaged footpaths.
- Maintain current tree root pruning program to prevent tree roots from damaging footpaths.

Goal: Planning Casey's Future

Clear direction, commitment and communication

O B J E C T I V E

2.1 To incorporate the intent of Casey's Disability Access and Inclusion Policy in all Council's planning and activities

S T R A T E G Y

- Include consideration of the issues of people with disabilities in all plans developed for Casey including Casey's Corporate Plan.
- Include people with disabilities and people with expertise in disability issues in Council's community consultation processes.
- Maintain Council's practice of (until allocated) reserving two places in each pre school to encourage parents of children with disabilities to access regular pre schooling for their children.
- Review and then monitor the Library Collection Development Policy to include materials appropriate for people with disabilities. In addition to large print and audio visual materials already provided, this will include :
 - Age appropriate literacy materials
 - Captioned videos
 - "other than book" formats eg. talking books

2.2 To provide leadership regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities in all forums where the needs of the general population are considered

- Include issues for people with disabilities re access and inclusion in all of Casey's advocacy with other levels of government and the private sector, eg. accessible public transport, disabled parking, other access issues.
- Develop a funding proposal to the Commonwealth for Casey Council to explore and develop strategies to increase participation of children with special needs in mainstream school age care programs.
- Request Department of Human Services to review their regulations to state explicitly an expectation that children with special needs will be included in State-funded early childhood programs.

2.3 To provide (a mechanism for) internal accountability for implementation of Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan

- Develop a formal cross-departmental Reference Group with responsibility for reviewing progress on implementation of current Action Plan and for developing future plans.
 - Quarterly updates to Council
 - Annual reports to Council

2.4 To maintain currency of information of Councillors and all Council staff regarding the local issues for people with disabilities

- Develop a mechanism for regular review and consultation with community members, and organisation-wide dissemination of information about issues for people with disabilities in the municipality.

Goal: Casey's Partners

A commitment to community understanding, growth and cooperation

O B J E C T I V E

3.1 To demonstrate Council's commitment to its Policy and Action Plan

3.2 To enable people from the community with disabilities to participate in Council governance activities

S T R A T E G Y

- Develop an annual plan for publicising the Policy and Action Plan and encouraging the community to participate in its implementation. Mechanisms include:
 - Regular items in Casey's Advice Column in local newspapers
 - Use of telephone "hold" message
 - Use of Casey's Internet Home Page
 - Incorporate into regular publicity, training and other information materials, (a series of) Casey flyers which inform about Casey's Policy and the benefits of inclusion of people with disabilities for different stakeholders e.g. retailers, architects, developers, building surveyors, leisure centre managers, building inspectors and local transport providers.
 - Include access issues such as:
 - Gradients
 - Surface
 - Toilet availability
 - Assisted hearing facilities

in all maps, guides and promotional publicity about services, facilities and events in the municipality and demonstrate their degree of accessibility eg. bike paths maps.
 - Ensure details about particular library services for people with disabilities are actively promoted in any marketing of the Library's services.
 - Advocate to private childcare services in Casey to include children with special needs in their programs, providing information about the benefits of inclusion.
 - Actively explore the opportunity for Council to provide work experience opportunities for young people with a disability.
-
- Review the current Public Address system in the Council Chamber and other available and appropriate communication technology eg. FM portable hearing system, to ensure all members of the community, including those with a hearing impairment, are able to participate in proceedings.
 - Choose and publicise accessible venues for all Council consultation activities.
 - Publicise the availability of the TTY facility (for those with a speech or hearing impairment) in all Council's public documents and include in the style manual.

Goal: Building Casey

Meeting the needs of our growing community and managing our distinctive environment

O B J E C T I V E

4.1 To enable people with disabilities to access Casey's built environment as do other members of the community.

S T R A T E G Y

- Include consideration of pedestrian access, with particular focus on the needs of people with a disability in the planned Transport Strategy.
- Include people with specific expertise in access for people with disabilities and the built environment in the development and review of all precinct plans.
- Review all existing Casey planning policies and include appropriate clauses addressing issues for people with disabilities, and include appropriate conditions on any planning approvals.
- Develop a strategy and associated policy on desirable street treatments in collaboration with major local developers.
- Include issues for people with disabilities in Casey's Safer Cities and Shires Project and Plan.
- Assess all proposed developments, especially shopping centres, for access for people with disabilities as part of the public who will use them.
- Include issues raised during the consultation for the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan, for example those related to lack of footpaths and inadequate footpaths, into the Casey Strategic Plan.
- Develop guidelines on the use of tactile tile markers for paths at public centres, shopping centres and for intersections on signalised main roads.
- Advocate with VicRoads to adhere to Casey's guidelines about Tactile Tiles (TGSIs) when they are developed.

O B J E C T I V E

S T R A T E G Y

- Review Casey Standards, Guidelines and Standard Drawings to provide accessible infrastructure eg. pathways, crossings.
- Maintain Council's approach to making kerbs and ramps fully accessible.
- Include improving accessibility for people with a disability as an important consideration in the prioritisation of the annual Capital Works Program. Footpath construction and maintenance will be the main issue.
- Review all public toilets in Casey, especially those with special disabled facilities for opening times and access.
- Review existing playground equipment and ensure plans for new playgrounds maximise accessibility, including consideration of:
 - Accessible equipment
 - Location
 - Undersurfacing
 - Pathways to the playground
 - Fencing
- Explore the feasibility of using Council buses for community transport particularly to key community facilities, including libraries, on a regular basis.
- Incorporate the requirements to upgrade the physical accessibility of the libraries into Council's Facility Management Plan. (This could be done progressively – one library branch per year). Specifically:
 - Access to an after hours chute at all libraries
 - Unisex wheelchair accessible toilet facilities
 - Access to self-opening doors at entrance and exit points (especially Narre Warren)
 - Width of entrances and exits (especially Narre Warren)
- Develop and publicise a set of criteria (e.g. high public usage), to prioritise physical access issues which should be addressed.
- Maintain an active enforcement of "disabled parking" bays and develop a public information strategy about their provision and usage.
- Develop standardised plans with all landholders responsible for public parking to allow disabled parking to be enforced.

Goal: Jobs and business for Casey

Improved opportunities and support for business and jobs

O B J E C T I V E

5.1 To include people with disabilities as potential employees in all Council's work to improve opportunities for business and jobs

S T R A T E G Y

- Provide education to local traders on the benefits of providing accessible facilities for people with a disability through ongoing communication avenues including the quarterly business bulletin and regular breakfast meetings.
- Liaise with local employment specialists for people with disabilities (eg. Latrobe Employment Services) in planning strategies to increase access to jobs.
- Advocate to local retailers to consider the employment of people with disabilities.
- As job vacancies arise within Council, revise all position descriptions and job advertisements to check that there are no unnecessary exclusions for people with disabilities.

Goal: Funding Casey's future

Generating the required funding

O B J E C T I V E

6.1 To enable Casey Council to redress some barriers to participation of people with disabilities

S T R A T E G Y

- Monitor funding advertisements with a view to applying for or informing Casey community groups about funds available to upgrade existing facilities and develop programs which are inclusive (eg. funds may be provided to facilitate access to leisure and recreation facilities).
- Be proactive in developing creative funding options to enhance the access and inclusion of people with disabilities in community and Council activities.
- Include an access audit in the regular maintenance audit of all Council infrastructure in order to have appropriate information for funding submissions.

This document provides a comprehensive summary of the strategies included in the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan. A complete version of this document is available by contacting Council's Access and Equity Officer on 9705 5200.

City of Casey
PO Box 1000
340-350 Princes Highway
Narre Warren Vic 3805

Cranbourne Customer Service Centre
156-160 Sladen Street
Cranbourne Vic 3977

Telephone: 03 9705 5200
Facsimile: 03 9704 9544
E-mail: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au
Website: www.casey.vic.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)
Telephone: 131 450
TTY 9705 5568

Access difficulties (ie overhanging branches,
footpath repairs, contact Council's Works
and Operations Department.
Telephone: 9705 5345

