

Overview of the Inclusive Leisure Initiative

Improving leisure centre access for people with a disability in Victoria

Inclusive Leisure Victoria and Aquatics & Recreation Victoria successfully secured funding from VicHealth's PICSAR Grants from 2007-2011. The aim is to pilot a state-wide initiative to improve the accessibility of leisure centres in Victoria for people with a disability.

Background

The project is based on an English program called the "Inclusive Fitness Initiative" (IFI), which works strategically to set consistent standards in the leisure industry, assisting leisure centres to become inclusive of people with a disability. The initiative has led to the development of a quality benchmark for centres to work towards achieving, which in turn advertises to people with a disability that the centres have considered their needs.

The Inclusive Leisure Initiative (ILI) aims to assist centres by making it easy for centre managers and professionals who support those centres, to cater for people with a disability. The ILI will develop consistent standards for the industry, creating a one stop shop for information, guidelines and good practice models. This will provide Victorian recreation and leisure centres and associated professionals with tools and resources to develop inclusive sites which meet the needs of people with a disability. Over the 4 years, the ILI will work towards developing an inclusive standard for leisure centres.

What we want to achieve?

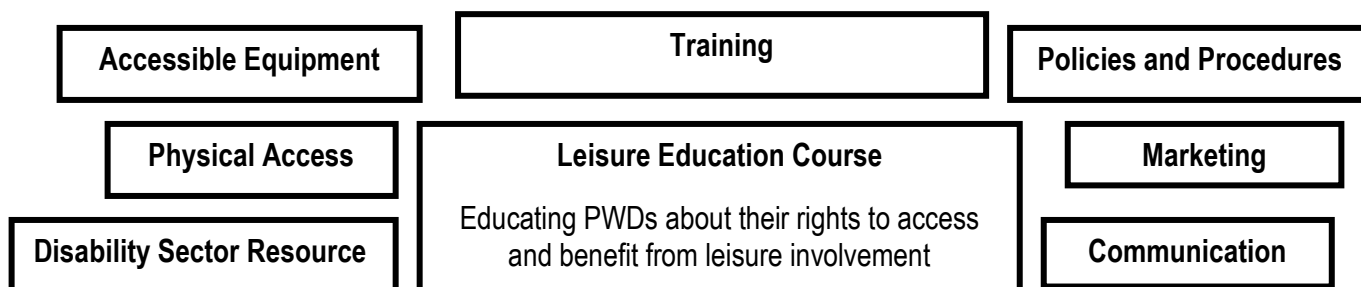
Aim: Increase opportunities for people with a disability to become physically active, through the development of inclusive leisure centre environments.

Objectives:

1. To build capacity within the Leisure Industry to become inclusive of people with disability, through increasing the understanding of barriers and enablers.
2. To increase participation in physical activity, among people with a disability, by increasing their knowledge and confidence in the leisure opportunities available.
3. To establish new benchmarks and inclusive standards for the industry.
4. To advocate and lobby within the Leisure industry for the needs of people with a disability.

How we will achieve our aims?

The project will focus on eight main areas



Training

To educate and raise awareness among centre staff in relation to the needs of people with a disability. This included a review of the training opportunities currently available.

The Inclusive Leisure Initiative project has developed disability awareness training specifically for the leisure industry which is consistent, with set content and will be recognised for personal development points.

The Inclusive Leisure Initiative has worked with SportEd Victoria and Active Approach to develop and deliver a sustainable, industry accredited disability awareness training package. The package aims to provide leisure centre staff with the skills and confidence to better include patrons with a disability. The training focuses on areas such as attitudes, terminology, communication strategies, modifying equipment and working with customers with challenging behaviour.

The course will initially be offered to the 13 pilot sites and available to the rest of the industry in the future.

Inclusive Policies and Procedures

To develop guidelines for the industry in regards to embedding long term changes into a centre's policies and procedures.

Communication

Effective communication is vital for all centres, and can have a huge impact on the experiences of people with a disability in leisure centres. The communication resource will provide templates to develop communication cards, information about accessible communication strategies to leisure centres, and link centres with speech pathologists to assist with implementation in this area of work.

Marketing

This component of the project will include highlighting successful engagement strategies, innovative programming, and how to attract people with a disability to participate at your centre.

Accessible Equipment

To highlight accessible equipment to the industry, this will include gym equipment and disability equipment and aids.

Leisure Education

To educate and empower people with a disability to explore the opportunities which exist in leisure centres. This will involve developing a course which will educate people with a disability about the benefits of physical activity, and raise awareness of the opportunities to participate in physical activity.

Physical Access

To provide the industry with good practice examples of physical access, covering every aspect of the centre. To develop more consistency in access audits, and develop a team of auditors across the state who can provide consistent and informed advice on physical access.

Disability Sector Resource

To provide information and support to disability support workers, around how they can assist their clients to engage in leisure centre activities, and work with clients to fulfil their desire to participate.

Key Actions

1. Research, stakeholder consultation and resource development:

To ascertain what is happening in the eight main components, as specified prior, and which involves collecting information from the leisure industry and centre managers, disability sector including RuralAccess, MetroAccess and Access for All Abilities (AAA) workers and people with a disability. This research will be used to develop resources which assist the leisure industry to be inclusive of people with a disability and raising awareness of good practice.

2. Develop useful online resources and networking opportunities:

All project resources are available to the pilot sites on the ARV website, and create a one stop shop for information on disability and inclusion within Leisure centres.

Throughout the year, Inclusive Leisure Victoria and Aquatics & Recreation Victoria hold three networking and information sessions for the pilot sites and their reference groups. The forums aim to give all project stakeholders a chance to network, share ideas and discuss different elements of the project, while giving participants the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions.

Each forum has a different theme or focus and new project resources are launched at the forums, and support and information is provided by guest speakers, industry experts and people with a disability.

3. Piloting the project at 13 leisure centres:

The piloting commenced in year 2 of the project, with 13 sites. The selected sites are:

- Bendigo: Peter Krenz Leisure Centre
- Sale: Aqua Energy
- Geelong Splashdown
- Hamilton Indoor Leisure and Aquatic Centre (HILAC)
- Ballarat Aquatic Centre
- Coburg Leisure Centre (YMCA)
- Carlton Baths Community Centre (YMCA)
- Kensington Community Recreation Centre
- Monash Aquatic and Recreation Centre (MARC)
- Broadmeadows Leisure Centre
- Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre (MAC)
- Richmond Recreation Centre
- Sunshine Leisure Centre

Each of the pilot sites have developed reference groups consisting of centre managers, local government representatives, AAA workers, Rural and Metro Access workers, centre staff and people with a disability.

All pilot centres and reference groups will follow the same process, involving a Readiness Assessment Task (RAT), the development of a Disability Action Plan (DAP), and an evaluation of the impact of the changes on the centre and people with a disability.

4. Develop consistent standards and benchmarks for the industry:

The benchmarks will provide the industry with realistic and consistent targets for inclusion. It is important the standards are owned by the industry and meet the needs of people with a disability.

What makes this project different from any other?

The Inclusive Leisure Initiative adopts a holistic approach to the development of inclusive leisure centres, rather than focusing on just one area. The project involves a number of industry partners, which enables the project to work strategically to bring about long term change, impacting on centres across Victoria.

Desired Outcomes:

- Increased participation at local leisure centres for people with a disability.
- Centre managers and the industry to value people with a disability as customers.
- Greater awareness of disability in the leisure industry.

Who are we working with?

1. YMCA Victoria
2. Sport Education (SportEd) Victoria
3. Municipal Association Victoria
4. Kinect Australia
5. Fitness Victoria
6. Communication Resource Centre - Scope
7. Access for All Abilities (AAA) Officers
8. Council on the Aging (COTA)
9. MetroAccess/ RuralAccess
10. Department of Human Services (DHS)
11. Scope's Communication Access Network
12. Belgravia Leisure
13. Local Governments
14. Leisure Centre Managers
15. Disability organisations across Victoria
16. Regional Sports Assemblies
17. Active Approach
18. Kerrie Lante, Independent Consultant
19. Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
20. VICSRAPID
21. and...people with a disability!

For Further Information

If you would like more information concerning the project please contact: Hanna Phillips, Project Coordinator at Inclusive Leisure Victoria via email on, hanna.phillips@afcl.org.au or phone 9489 2999.