

Wednesday 2 March 2011

## Draft Plan to encourage a more open community

Indigo Shire Council wants the community to become a more inclusive and accessible place for everyone. It has developed a Draft Access and Inclusion Plan and is seeking public comment.

To develop this plan, Council worked closely with Indigo Disability Advisory Committee. The Plan has a much greater focus on people who have limited access or opportunities to be included, such as young families, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with difficult economic circumstances and the elderly, as well as people with a disability.

Indigo Shire Council Manager of Community Planning David Koren said that everyone in the Shire, whether residents or visitors should be able to be part of a group, activity or event with no restrictions. "Council wants everyone in the community to get involved with community life. Council provides a range of services, resources and facilities, and a person's physical ability, ethnicity or financial circumstances should not stop them participating. Everyone in the Shire contributes to the community in some way, and we want to make it easier for people to make these contributions, but we need help from the community to do this," Mr Koren said.

Working towards greater access and inclusion is not just about building more ramps and footpaths, but also making public transport more available, improving access to information for new residents about health and community services and supporting people with their employment opportunities.

"One issue that we are seeing across the country, as well as in Indigo Shire is the ageing population. It is expected that over 27% of the population will be over 65 by 2026. With this plan, we are hoping to shift our thinking and be able to look more at planning and development in this area."

2006 Census data shows the largest changes in age structure in Indigo between 2001 and 2006 were in the age groups:

- 50 to 59 (+473 persons)
- 60 to 69 (+246 persons)
- 25 to 34 (-176 persons)
- 5 to 11 (-157 persons)

Comments in writing are encouraged until **5pm on Monday 21 March 2011**. They should be sent to Indigo Shire Council, C/O David Koren, PO Box 28, Beechworth 3747 or [indigoshire@indigoshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:indigoshire@indigoshire.vic.gov.au) .

For more information or to download a copy, please go to [www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.indigoshire.vic.gov.au) or call 03 5728 8000.

For more information, please contact David Koren, Indigo Shire Manager of Community Planning 02 6028 1121 or [dkoren@indigoshire.vic.gov.au](mailto:dkoren@indigoshire.vic.gov.au)