

Dandenong Ranges Music Council

# Disability Action Plan

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2016-2019



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# Aims for DRMC in developing the Disability Action Plan

**The Dandenong Ranges Music Council (DRMC)** has a rich history of community music that encompasses not only local and interstate projects but internationally as well. In this age where people are living longer and developing age-related disabilities and with an increasing focus on people with disability through the introduction and implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the DRMC is taking steps to involve all people with disability in their community music programs – as participants and audience – through a program called ‘Attitude Arts’. To this end, a Disability Action Plan has been developed by the DRMC as a foundation to support their intention to support more disability arts music programs.

The DRMC is committed to music for all ages and all abilities. For the Disability Action Plan we will concentrate on ABILITY rather than disability. As a definition of disability for the Disability Action Plan, we will extend the definition as it applies to the DRMC and include all disabilities such as age related, intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Disability Action Plan forms part of the Dandenong Ranges Music Council Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2019.



# 'Attitude' Arts program; the DRMC's unique model

The Dandenong Ranges Music Council has been creating opportunities for people of all ages and abilities through an all abilities/inclusive program called 'Attitude Arts', to listen, learn, participate and to perform in community music and the performing arts since 1979.

Activities have included a diverse range of music genres, drama, puppetry, dance, digital music, research, composition, visual arts and mask making.

Performances range from pantomimes to musical theatre, dance parties, jazz festivals, orchestras, choirs and bands, and concerts.

Special projects have included a song writing and research project for people with dementia and their carers in partnership with Melbourne University. As well there are dedicated all abilities/inclusive projects for children and families and some, such as song writing, utilizing specialised computer and music technology in small groups.

The DRMC places a high priority on the visiting professional artists, music and dance therapists, composers and music directors we choose to support our Attitude Arts activities in partnership with resident professionals and the community.

Our creative partnerships have included special development schools, families with autism, organisations like Knoxbrooke, Parks Victoria, RSL Clubs, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Victorian Opera and the Bushfire Recovery Authority to name a few.

**The DRMC mantra is ALL AGES, ALL ABILITIES, INCLUSIVE MUSIC**

# Overview of the DRMC

The DRMC is a community driven music arts organisation based in the outer Melbourne metropolitan area. It directly serves the communities of the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley and attracts participation beyond this area from the inner east to the rural areas.

The DRMC produces arts and cultural programming that contributes to State and National creative development. The DRMC has a strong artistic program which has five permanent ensembles led by Artistic Directors who determine their own annual schedule and repertoire.

These are:

- DRMC Big band
- Happy Wanderers
- DRMC Orchestra
- Dandenong Ranges Young Strings
- New Horizons Concert band

The DRMC has links with over 30 music arts groups. These groups were started within the DRMC and are now self-managed through DRMC training pathways.

The DRMC is an inclusive organisation producing arts and cultural activities to meet the goal of 'All Ages, All Abilities'. This is actively demonstrated in action in all events, ensembles and DRMC projects. They advocate for artists with disability and are proud of the success of the Attitude program which has been in existence since 1979.



# Overview of the DRMC

(continued)



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The DRMC is a 'Centre' for the region for music arts. The services it provides are information about participating in music groups, music education, networking between arts educators and the development of community arts projects that respond to the communities ideas and requests. They have an extensive local base throughout the region and beyond.

The DRMC supports and develops music education. They have long standing networks with local primary and secondary schools right through to universities. They provide pathways for learning which link private and classroom tuition with participation in ensembles, groups and signature events. They have set a framework for lifelong learning in music education and the integration of music making with people of all ages and abilities. They have an annual awards program to recognise and encourage excellence and emerging artists.

The DRMC has a commitment to community wellbeing through music arts and they develop projects to address social issues. The DRMC has had a lot of success commissioning new works ranging in style from orchestral to band to popular music and more. The aims and outcomes are two fold; opportunities and experience for professional artists to compose and progress their career pathway and it is the way the DRMC achieves their purpose of 'community as creators'. The new works are developed with local communities in collaboration with artists composing works to express ideas and issues that ultimately contribute to the sense of identity and belonging in the community.

Through well planned programming the DRMC delivers music arts activities and projects for all ages and all abilities. Right through from older age beginners to advanced young people and everything in-between, their programs bring musicians together to play, learn and share the passion for music.

# The DRMC Strategic Plan 2016-2019

## **Vision**

The Dandenong Ranges Music Council sees the power of Music Arts as a generational and culture changing catalyst for Local, National and International Communities. The mission of the DRMC is to create and strengthen community bonds and well-being through Music Arts.

## **DRMC belief parameters:**

- Music is a core human need
- Group music making has a binding effect on people and develops community strengths
- Music crosses all boundaries of ability, age and social strata
- The happiest people in our community are those who volunteer and assist others.



# The DRMC Strategic Plan

2016-2019

(continued)

## DRMC 4 pillars

- 1 Economic Viability
- 2 Social Inclusion
- 3 Cultural vitality
- 4 Education – Growth and Enrichment

Pillars Two and Four have specific goals for implementation in the Disability Action Plan.

### **Pillar Two – Social Inclusion**

DRMC will take formal steps to reduce barriers to participation, and promote inclusion in their activities and functions.

Ensure that people from all backgrounds, including our first Australians, have opportunities, information, services and use of our facilities and skills. These measures are embedded in our inclusion plans reflecting the diversity of the population.

**Goals:** Bring the community to DRMC and DRMC to the community through creative and inclusive actions.

### **Pillar Four – Educational Growth and Enrichment**

**Goals:** Promote the establishment of a disability music arts advisory team.

Encourage music training at all levels for all ages and abilities, including mentoring by experienced musicians.

# Context for the Disability Action Plan

**There will be significant positive impacts on the DRMC DAP within 2016-2019.**

## **Australia Council**

“Our vision is to be a disability confident and competent organisation. The Australia Council for the Arts strives to be a leading innovator in the area of disability and accessibility. We are dedicated to supporting artists and arts workers with disability to access the full resources available through the Australia Council. We will implement innovative good practice in accessibility throughout our programs and initiatives.”

**(Australia Council for the Arts 2013, webpage)**

## **Creative Victoria**

“...ensure that government funded creative industries organisations have appropriate access, diversity and inclusion plans as well as the requisite training to improve workforce diversity and engender greater diversity in programming and participation. The program will be delivered in partnership with peak organisations such as Arts Access Victoria, and with the advice of Aboriginal Victoria and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship.”

**(Creative Victoria 2016 p.28)**

## **NDIS**

The NDIS will roll out in Outer East Melbourne from November 2017.

The DRMC has attended briefing meetings and will be looking to develop the opportunities the new scheme can provide for arts and disability.

# Context for the Disability Action Plan (continued)

## **New DRMC Centre**

Planning has commenced for a new facility for the DRMC. The current facilities have been upgraded but restrict access and inclusive music activities. The new Centre will be designed to accessibility standards.

## **Yarra Ranges Council**

The Vision for the Yarra Ranges is an accessible, inclusive and equitable society that enables people with a disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

The Council Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023 has four goals and specific objectives that effect the DRMC DAP.

## **Training**

Box Hill TAFE has introduced teaching Certificate IV in Disability at the Lilydale Campus. This initiative could open up opportunities for employment, training specifically in skills for disability arts and events requirements, OHS and needs.



# Areas to be addressed

1

**Consultation and decision making – Provide opportunities for people living with disability to participate in the decision-making process in regard to areas like program participation.**

## **Objective 1**

**To involve people living with disability in the decision-making process.**

### **Actions**

Comprehensive consultation will be ongoing and will be implemented through:

- surveys of participants following each event
- informal discussion between participants, project managers and DRMC Board members
- input between partners of the Community Music Hub
- annual review of the Strategic Plan with the Shire of Yarra Ranges
- discussion with funding bodies, including NDIS providers if appropriate
- monitoring of relevant Disability Legislation
- liaison with relevant educational Institutions and members of the arts community.

# Areas to be addressed (continued)

1

**Consultation and decision making – Provide opportunities for people living with disability to participate in the decision-making process in regard to areas like program participation. (continued)**

## **Objective 2**

**To comply with best practice for communicating with people living with disability.**

### **Actions**

The DRMC will adopt the strategies of partner organisations in particular the Yarra Ranges Council in regard accessible information and communication across a wide range of communication platforms including web, print and audio.

The Disability Action Plan will be monitored as part of managing the Strategic Plan and annually evaluated:

- its relationship to the DRMC Strategic Plan
- development of the structure and nature of Attitude events and programmes.
- variations in funding models
- compliance with relevant Legislation.

# Areas to be addressed

(continued)

## 2

**Physical access to buildings and facilities – Through an accessibility Audit develop a plan to improve the accessibility of the DRMC site.**

### **Objective 1**

**To determine how the current DRMC facility meets the needs of people living with disability.**

### **Actions**

Refer the findings to the architects designing the new DRMC facility. As of July 2016 the DRMC has been consulting the wider community on the design of their new home as part of the music hub at Upwey High School. The process with the architects is ongoing with high level advocacy for facilities to meet highest standards of accessibility.

### **Objective 2**

**To identify the suitability of venues for people living with disability when the DRMC is producing and utilising public spaces other than its own facility.**

### **Action**

The DRMC will liaise with Yarra Ranges Metro Access Officer and refer to the Yarra Ranges Council Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy Goal 2 with regard to facilities and provision of technical services in regard to arts and cultural activities for people with disability.

# Areas to be addressed

(continued)

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3

**Staff and volunteer awareness and understanding of the needs of people living with disability – Provide information and opportunities for staff, including Board members, to interact with people with disability.**

### **Objective 1**

**To develop capacity of DRMC volunteers and staff to respond to the needs of people living with disability in relation to our activities and events.**

#### **Action**

Certificate IV in disability work courses provide opportunities for people to learn how to best support and empower people with disability in a manner suited to their individual requirements, and to help each individual to become more independent. Currently this course is offered at Coonara Community House and other sites throughout Yarra Ranges. Staff and volunteers will be encouraged to do this course in order to better assist DRMC clients with disability.

Monitor the experiences people with disability have when interacting with DRMC staff and volunteers.

### **Objective 2**

Use the Attitude program as a critical element in the development of training which will increase awareness of people living with disabilities.

#### **Actions**

Promote training for leaders, DRMC members and volunteers to build the capabilities to form a sustainable, independent Attitude ensemble.

Provide ongoing training in managing and administering the Attitude ensemble planning for growth in participation, creative projects and broad community engagement.

# Areas to be addressed

(continued)

4

**Making the direct delivery of programs and performances inclusive – improve methods of communication, presenting publicity materials in accessible formats and increasing involvement in decision-making.**

## **Objective 1**

**The DRMC will model best practice and influence both individuals and community organisations to increase and promote inclusiveness and access so that people living with disability can actively participate in arts and creative projects.**

### **Actions**

The DRMC programs and events will actively work at being accessible and inclusive and ensure that it adheres to the Access Guidelines, Yarra Ranges, Council Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy.

Update protocols and guidelines for event organisation in relation to clients, carers and families.

## **Objective 2**

**The DRMC will be proactive in facilitating people living with disability attending performances.**

### **Actions**

The DRMC will endeavour to ensure events and activities are held in venues that are easily accessible by public transport. To assist with engagement with the event, the DRMC will endeavour to provide devices such as hearing aid loops, print support-materials, surtitles and associated aids.

# Areas to be addressed (continued)

## 5

**Supporting positive attitudes and practices towards people living with disability in the short, medium and long term.**

### **Objective 1**

**The DRMC will continue its leadership and advocacy role for people with living disability participating and creating in the arts.**

#### **Action**

The Dandenong Ranges Music Council will continue to advocate to all levels of government, community organisations, ensembles, creative arts/music organisations and others to respect and resource inclusive arts opportunities.

It will formalise the collaborations and support network ie Yarra Ranges Shire and local groups. It will promote the establishment of an Advisory Group for Attitude.

### **Objective 2**

**The DRMC will continue to engage with organisations researching and developing understandings for inclusive social models of disability particularly in regard the arts and education.**

#### **Action**

Consolidate the partnership and co-operation links with professionals and organisations highly experienced in arts and disability. ie Melbourne University, Music Mind and Wellbeing. The DRMC will involve artists with disability in advocacy leadership teams in partnerships with professional artists, music and dance therapists and continue to nurture partnerships with service providers, tertiary institutions and the wider community.

# Areas

## to be addressed

(continued)

5

**Supporting positive attitudes and practices towards people living with disability in the short, medium and long term. (continued)**

### **Objective 3**

**The DRMC will maintain its commitment to innovation. In terms of funding the DRMC will continue its successful model of accessing a broad range of funding opportunities.**

### **Action**

The DRMC will endeavour to contribute to policy development to funding bodies, philanthropic trusts and government ministries.

# Towards an independent Attitude ensemble

**The DRMC aim within the next three years would be to transition Attitude to a self-sustaining model where programs meeting the aims and outcomes presently achieved could be offered on a regular basis with an independent source of funding.**

**Possibilities include:**

- establish 'Attitude' as a unit of the DRMC, with its own management and development objectives but remaining under the umbrella of the DRMC
- establish a separate and independently incorporated entity with its own charter to operate, possibly expanding geographically to Shire wide, with local government support.

Both of these options would require considerable continuing support and funding from sources such as local, state and federal government, educational institutions and philanthropic organisations.

