**Street accessibility audits for inclusive access**

**CCS Disability Acton.**

Many people including the young, elderly and disabled are disconnected from the community by inaccessible footpaths and are unable to access social, health, educational and economic opportunities with resulting negative impacts on wellbeing.

Older inaccessible footpaths and community demands for improvements present challenges to Road Controlling Authorities (RCAs). Audit tools currently available to RCAs provide limited useful information about access barriers. Some identify access barriers but do not provide best practice engineering solutions. Others use outdated standards which no longer meet increasing and changing access requirements.

CCS Disability Action, in collaboration with transport engineers and disabled people, developed an audit tool which combines transport engineering expertise, the lived experience of disability and the principles of Universal Design. The audit identifies, classifies and prioritises access barriers and provides RCAs with a systematic method to schedule and progress improvements using existing maintenance funding. The most common defects creating access barriers include kerbs, kerb ramps, crossings, mobility parks and tactile ground surface indicators. Councils are encouraged to prioritise hazards likely to cause serious harm and address others during planned works.

Upgrades made following the implementation of the audit recommendations included improvements in mobility parks, kerb cuts, footpaths and crossings. Pre and post pedestrian counts which identified people using visible mobility aids (a proxy measure for disability) following upgrades to a five-arm intersection showed an increase in disabled people crossing the roads. RCAs who used the audit found the reports helpful, concise and easy to use.

Community access via footpaths can be improved by collaboration between the disability and engineering sectors to provide RCAs with a best practice, effective and practicable method to increase the use of footpaths by improving accessibility and increasing the associated benefits of walking.

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