



Central Coast Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021–2025

An accessible and inclusive place to live, visit, work and play

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise the positive example of inclusion that Aboriginal cultures show us.







Contents

Acknowledgement of Country.....	2
CEO's Message.....	6
1. How to use this Plan (and find the things you are interested in)	8
2. Introduction.....	9
How we developed the Plan.....	9
3. Vision.....	10
4. Focus areas.....	12
5. Focus Area 1: Attitudes and Behaviours.....	15
5.1 Introduction	15
5.2 What we heard	15
5.3 What we have achieved so far	17
5.4 What we will do next	17
Liveable Communities	23
6. Focus Area 2: Liveable Communities.....	24
6.1 Introduction	24
6.2 What we heard	24
6.3 What we have achieved so far	26
6.4 What we will do next	26
7. Focus Area 3: Employment	36
7.1 Introduction	36
7.2 What we heard	36
7.3 What we have achieved so far	38
7.4 What we will do next	38
8. Focus Area 4: Systems and Processes.....	43
8.1 Introduction	43
8.2 What we heard	43
8.3 What we have achieved so far	45
8.4 What we will do next	45
9. Monitoring, reviewing and reporting	53

See Part 2 for more detailed information.

CEO's Message

I am proud to present Central Coast Council's new Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Like everyone else, people with disability want to live a meaningful life and be able to participate in all parts of community life. This is what inclusion is about.

Most of us in the community will be impacted by disability at some point in our lives, through our own experience or through caring for others.

This Plan was developed with our community to ensure the Central Coast is accessible, inclusive and liveable for all of us.

Through this plan, Council will work to develop positive community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability, create more liveable communities, support meaningful access to employment, and improve access to services.

This is Council's second Action Plan, building on the achievements of the first Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017 - 2021.

Thank you to everyone who helped to develop this Plan, especially those people with disability, families and carers who have shared their lived experience.



A special thanks to Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group (AIRG) members whose knowledge and lived experience of disability has guided the development of the Plan. This group will also guide Council as the actions are carried out.

Council would also like to thank the local disability services sector – the work you do every day to support the inclusion of people with disability and their families in our community is so important.

With all your continued support we can make a positive difference. An inclusive community will benefit everyone.

David Farmer,
CEO
Central Coast Council





1. How to use this Plan (and find the things you are interested in)

To make this plan easy to use for everyone, it has two parts.

Part 1 (this document) has a short introduction and the Action Plan that details all the actions that Council will do to make the Central Coast more accessible and inclusive. The actions are split into four focus areas. There is a short summary of each focus area and what the community told us.

Part 2 includes resources for the community (fact sheets), background information about how the Plan was developed and why, and further detail about what the community said through the consultation.

Part 2 is set up this way so you can use the information that you need for things like grant applications, research projects or business cases. If there are other resources that you need, or to contact Council's Disability Inclusion Officer, please ask Council at ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 463 954.

2. Introduction

Everyone has a right to feel included and belong in our community. This includes the right to participate in all parts of community life as a resident or visitor to the Central Coast.

There are, however, many barriers that stop people with disability from joining in. These barriers can be:

- Attitudes that people with disability cannot do or participate in certain activities, do certain jobs or meaningfully contribute; or discrimination that makes someone feel unwelcome
- Places and spaces that are not accessible or easy to navigate, or a workplace that is not welcoming or flexible; or not being able to get around
- Information that is not presented in an easy and accessible format, hindering access to a required service in an accessible format; or not being able to access a service they need.

People are not disabled by their impairment, but are disabled by the social, physical and economic barriers in our society. People with disability may face additional barriers if they also experience racism, homophobia and/or sexism. If we work together to remove these barriers, then people with disability, and the community more broadly, will experience the many social and economic benefits of inclusion.

Central Coast Council is committed to

improving access and inclusion for people with disability. This Plan states what Council will do over the next four years to help make the Central Coast more accessible and inclusive for us all.

How we developed the Plan

We asked the community to help us develop this plan. We invited people with disability, their family members, carers and people working in the disability sector to get involved through surveys, community forums and focus groups. We offered people a range of ways to get involved. We made sure that we involved people from the Aboriginal community and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, and people with different types of disability. Survey results can be found in Part 2: Fact Sheet 4.

The community told us what was working well for people with disability and what needed to improve on the Central Coast. Central Coast Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group, which is made up of people with lived experience of disability with expertise in accessibility, communication, community engagement, legislation, advocacy and planning, then helped Council to develop actions that responded to what the community said.

It is important for all areas of Council to involve and consider people who have lived experience of disability when making decisions, planning and providing programs, services and facilities.

3. Vision

The Central Coast is an accessible and inclusive place to live, visit, work and play.

Accessible: means easy access for everyone; easy to get to or get around, or easy to use and understand.

Inclusive: means everyone can be involved and included.



4. Focus areas

The Central Coast Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been developed around four focus areas. These are based on the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan, but also reflect what is most important to us on the Central Coast. The four focus areas are summarised here and explained further in the following pages.

1: Increasing positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability

- We will promote positive attitudes in the community towards people with disability, while attempting to challenge assumptions
- We will educate Council staff and local businesses about people with disability and the importance of access and inclusion
- We will increase community understanding about invisible disabilities and remind people of the importance of leaving accessible toilets and parking for people with disability

2: Making the Central Coast more accessible, inclusive and liveable

- We will apply 'universal design' principles to help make places and activities more inclusive of and accessible to everyone
- We will make it easier to access the places we love on the Central Coast – the beaches, waterways and bushland
- We will improve our pathways, accessible parking and accessible toilets
- We will make our events, programs and activities more accessible and inclusive

3: Increasing employment of people with disability in meaningful roles at Council and in the community

- We will include Council staff with disability, provide the adjustments they need and offer inclusive career development opportunities
- We will improve job opportunities, from entry level to leadership roles
- We will support people with disability to establish new businesses

4: Improving access to mainstream Council services through better systems and processes

- We will make sure that Council makes information available in accessible formats, including Easy English, Auslan interpreted and captioned information, as well as hard copy
- We will provide information about how places and activities are accessible so that people with disability can plan ahead
- We will provide people with disability with opportunities to have a genuine say when it comes to Council matters



Attitudes and Behaviours

5. Focus Area 1:

Attitudes and Behaviours

Objective: To increase positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability

5.1 Introduction

One of the main challenges faced by people with disability are the attitudes and behaviours of other people towards their disability. In our survey of people with disability and their carers on the Central Coast, 41% said they or the person they cared for had recently been discriminated against because of disability. This suggests we have very high rates of disability discrimination here on the Central Coast.

Disability discrimination has a very real impact on the lives of those who experience it. It also damages the strength of our community and results in additional costs for health care and unemployment benefits. There can also be legal costs and damage to reputation if a case is made that an organisation has breached the Disability Discrimination Act.

By educating the community about disability, including invisible disabilities, we can improve understanding and reduce discrimination. Better attitudes will lead to better outcomes in other areas such as employment and access to mainstream services. Positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability will lead to a more welcoming and inclusive Central Coast where we all feel like we belong.

5.2 What we heard

- Disability discrimination is an issue in our community. It must be addressed
- People understand physical disability much better now, but we need to respect that accessible parking and toilets are there for people with disability
- There needs to be better understanding in the community about invisible disabilities including autism, mental illness, sensory disabilities and dementia
- Attitudes can improve when people with and without disability spend time together, so we need accessible and inclusive events and activities
- Positive stories and images of people with disability in the media help change attitudes, as do people with disability in leadership positions
- Local business and Council need to have disability confident staff
- Everyone in the community can help to create inclusion
- Culturally appropriate services are needed for people with disability who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or from a multicultural background



5.3 What we have achieved so far

Achievements to date include:

- Targeted disability awareness training for Council staff
- Disability awareness training for all new staff at inductions
- Deaf awareness/Auslan workshops
- Celebrating International Day of Person's with a Disability
- Educating the community about disability, through:
 - A photographic exhibition with Central Coast ARAFMI to raise awareness of Mental Health as an invisible disability
 - 'Seen & Heard', an inclusive arts project in partnership with Musicians Making a Difference and Ability Links where young people with disability creatively raised awareness about access and inclusion.
- Educating local businesses on how to be more accessible and expand their customer base through local business forums and a Business Resource Kit.

5.4 What we will do next

The next four years will focus on:

- Deepening the understanding in our community, local businesses and at Council about different types of disabilities, especially invisible disabilities
- Raising community awareness about the importance of access and inclusion and how we can work to achieve it
- Including people with disability in Council's promotions and communications, such as celebrating positive stories of people with disability in our community and showcasing local businesses and community groups who are accessible and inclusive
- Providing further Council staff training in disability awareness, inclusive practices and universal design so we have staff who are disability confident
- Providing opportunities for social interaction and connections through the provision of inclusive events, programs and activities

Action Plan: Attitudes and behaviours

To increase positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability.

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
AB-1 Educate the community about disability					
<p>AB1.1 Deliver an annual campaign to educate the community, including children and Council staff, about disability, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the lived experience • invisible disabilities • respectful behaviours and inclusive practices • the importance of accessible parking spaces and toilets for people with disability • positive stories showing the diversity of people with disability • respectful use of shared pathways • how to get and use an MLAK key • promote the role and value of carers 	Community and Culture	<p>Access and Inclusion Reference Group;</p> <p>Community and Culture</p>	<p>Increased understanding in the community and at Council about disability and real inclusion of people with disability</p> <p>Reduced use of accessible parking and toilets by people with no disability</p> <p>Children are educated about disability inclusion</p> <p>People get and use MLAK keys for accessible facilities</p>	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	<p>Campaigns have been delivered on identified topics</p> <p>Number of fines for parking in accessible parking without a permit</p>
<p>AB1.2 Continue to promote inclusive sporting opportunities, including with local clubs, active recreation providers, associations and local sports peak bodies and at Council facilities, such as 'Come and Try' Days.</p>	Open Space and Recreation; Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities	Community and Culture	People with disability are aware of inclusive sport opportunities and can choose to participate	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Increased participation by people with disability in mainstream sport

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
AB-2 Educate businesses to be more inclusive and accessible					
AB2.1 Implement a program to support local businesses to be more accessible and inclusive (such as review of Business Resource Kit, profiling local businesses who are active in disability inclusion, promoting benefits to employers, new category in Local Business Awards, support improved inclusion programs such as 'quiet hour' at Westfield Tuggerah and use of companion cards)	Community and Culture	Access and Inclusion Reference Group; Chambers of Commerce	Local businesses have improved capacity to address issues of access and inclusion and become more welcoming, accessible and inclusive for people with disability	Yr 2, Yr 3	Number of businesses implementing actions to improve access and inclusion (e.g. staff training, physical access, information, activities etc)
AB-3 Build capacity of Council staff to be disability confident					
AB3.1 Deliver training to Council staff including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability confidence training – All customer facing staff Applying Universal Design – Planning and Design staff Induction training – All new staff 	People and Culture	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement; Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities; Libraries and Education; Rangers; Community and Culture	All frontline service staff are disability confident and provide a positive customer experience for people with disability Council staff apply Universal Design principles in their work. Project deliverables are universally designed and accessible to people with disability to greatest extent possible	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	At least 100 customer facing staff complete disability confidence e-learning or face to face training each year. All relevant staff are familiar with Universal Design Guidelines By end Yr 4, all planning staff have attended Universal Design training All new Council staff receive disability awareness training at induction via online e-learning in first 90 days or combined with other face to face training

Timeframe key: Yr 1 – 21/22, Yr 2 – 22/23, Yr 3 – 23/24, Yr 4 – 24/25

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
AB3.2 Roll out disability awareness training to Councillors as part of Induction Program and Senior Leadership Team as part of leadership training	Governance & Risk; People and Culture	Community and Culture	Councillors and Executive Team understand their role in meeting legislative requirements of the Disability Inclusion Act.	Yr 2, Yr 4	All Councillors are trained within 6 months of starting their term Senior Leadership Team has been briefed on its obligations under the Disability Inclusion Act
AB-4 Positive representation of people with disability in Council communications					
AB4.1 Use best practice contemporary images of people with disability in Council publications and digital content.	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement	Community and Culture; Project partners	Council publications and digital content include positive imagery of people with disability to support positive community attitudes	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Council publications and digital content include positive and diverse images of people with disability
AB4.2 Support International Day of People with Disability	Community and Culture		Bring focus to people with disability to educate and challenge assumptions	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	International Day of PWD is celebrated and promoted by Council each year

Erin's Story

Erin is a mental health peer worker with Central Coast ARAFMI. She uses her own lived experience of mental illness to help others who have faced similar challenges.

Tell us about your role as a peer worker:

"It is my dream job.

Originally when I was diagnosed, and struggling with the impact of my mental illness, I thought that I had lost the chance of ever having a meaningful life. But living with a disability has taught me so much about myself, and the world. I get to bring that experience to work and use it to support others.

Living with a disability doesn't have to define who you are, or restrict you from leading a meaningful and purposeful life.

When my illness was at its worst, I was mentored and supported by those who had travelled the same road. This is my opportunity to give back and to support the next generation. There is nothing better than supporting another person to realise that they are not alone, that there are others out there just like them.

I love being able to challenge stigma, and to encourage other workers to see the value in lived expertise."







Liveable Communities

6. Focus Area 2: Liveable Communities

Objective: To make the Central Coast more accessible, inclusive and liveable

6.1 Introduction

'Liveable Communities' is about making sure that people with disability have access to all the important parts of community life. That includes access to buildings, public areas and natural places across the Central Coast. It includes opportunities for social engagement and entertainment through community events and activities. It can also include access to transport and housing.

'Universal design' is about creating buildings, spaces, places or activities that everyone can access. This means from the start, thinking about and addressing the needs of all people who might use a place or space, including people with disability. Making something accessible for all people from the start means there is less need for special assistance or adaptations later. This makes for a more inclusive and liveable community. It also saves money in the longer term.

6.2 What we heard

- On the Central Coast we love our beaches, waterways and bushland. People with disability want better access to these natural places. The beaches that are accessible are highly valued
- Our community also want safer footpaths in places they need or want to go. Some places have no footpaths. Some are unsafe, or they are not joined up nor have safe kerb ramps. Some of the pathways along waterways on the Coast are excellent!
- Adult change rooms should be available in key locations across the Coast such as Wyong, Gosford and The Entrance
- Accessible toilets need to be available to people with disability and be big enough to fit large wheelchairs and a carer if needed
- Some Council pools are not fully accessible and need a hoist
- Accessible parking spaces are not long enough for minibuses with hoists at the back. While spaces are wide enough, they need to be longer, we need more of them and they should be undercover
- Council events and activities need to be more inclusive of people with disability, including people who are deaf, who have sensory processing difficulties or mobility challenges



6.3 What we have achieved so far

Achievements to date include:

- Universal Design Guidelines: developed to help staff understand how to make things accessible for the broadest range of people, beyond basic compliance
- Publication of a Planning Accessible Events Guide: developed to help staff and the community plan and host accessible events
- Pedestrian and Access Mobility Plan (PAMP): developed to guide footpath improvements
- Started developing access maps for Budgewoi, The Entrance, Wyong and Umina Beach town centres
- Access audits: completed in key locations so access upgrades can be planned
- Beach matting at Umina Beach, Avoca Beach and Toowoong Bay
- Beach wheelchairs for use at 12 of our beaches
- Created more accessible play spaces across the Central Coast, using the 'Everyone Can Play' Guidelines
- Accessible Adult "Changing Place" installed at Gosford Olympic Pool
- Wheelchair accessible picnic tables, shelters, pathways and barbeques installed at Memorial Park, The Entrance
- 86 bus stops installed that meet Disability Standards
- "Including You" sensory tent provided at key community events

6.4 What we will do next

The next four years will focus on:

- Delivering accessible destinations including beaches, bushland reserves and parks through better coordination across Council
- Continuing to improve the region's footpaths, accessible toilets, accessible parking and the accessibility of our town centres
- Continuing to improve the accessibility of our community and recreation facilities
- Delivering community events and activities that are more accessible and inclusive
- Embedding universal design in Council's policies and planning processes

Action Plan: Liveable Communities

To make the Central Coast more accessible, inclusive and liveable

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
LC-1 Continue to make our natural places and spaces more accessible and inclusive					
LC1.1 Continue to make beaches more accessible with installation of beach matting and other accessible features	Environmental Management	Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities	People can more easily access our beaches and participate in beach activities	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Beach mats installed at all beaches where they are feasible
LC1.2 Continue to make Council bushland destinations more accessible with features like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, wide compressed pathways • Accessible signage • Accessible toilets • Accessible parking • Views unobstructed by railings etc. • Shaded seating 	Environmental Management		People with disability can more easily access bushland destinations	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 2, Yr 4	Number of new or upgraded accessways to high profile bushland destinations, such as lookouts, that have addressed disability access and inclusion
LC1.3 Continue to improve accessibility of places and spaces in Budgewoi, Umina Beach, Wyong, Gosford and The Entrance	Community and Culture		Budgewoi, Umina Beach, Wyong, Gosford and The Entrance have improved accessibility	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Access improvements made in Budgewoi, Umina Beach, Wyong, Gosford and The Entrance
LC1.4 Continue to make parks and play spaces more accessible and inclusive, with design informed by the 'Everyone Can Play Guidelines'	Open Space and Recreation		Over time all parks and playgrounds are made more accessible and inclusive	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	All new and upgraded play spaces have continuous paths of travel and inclusive play elements

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
LC-2 Make it easier to get around					
LC2.1 Implement actions from the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP), seeking external funding as required	Roads and Drainage Infrastructure		Pathways are improved so people can get where they need to go, safely	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Kms of pathway built or improved
LC2.2 Work with state government on Gosford city planning to facilitate accessible linkages across Gosford, including links to key hubs and facilities, for example Gosford Train Station and Gosford Hospital	Strategic Planning	Engineering Services; Open Space and Recreation; Transport for NSW; NSW Health	Gosford CBD becomes more accessible and easier for people with disability to get around	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Advocate to NSW Government to provide priority accessible linkages to key hubs and facilities within Gosford
LC2.3 Continue to implement programs to make bus shelters accessible, including supporting infrastructure like pathways and kerb ramps	Roads and Drainage Infrastructure; Engineering Services		Accessible bus shelters will make it easier for people to use public buses	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of bus shelters made more accessible
LC2.4 Publish and promote Accessibility Maps	Community and Culture		Information about accessibility of key town centres is available and informative	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of maps published showing access in town centres
LC-3 Improve access to public toilets and adult changing places					
LC3.1 Investigate options to deliver new Accessible Adult Changing Facilities in a key location	Community and Culture		Adults with high support needs have access to a purpose-built changing facility to change safely and comfortably	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	An Accessible Adult Changing Facility or certified "Changing Place" is installed in at least one town centre

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
LC-4 Improve access to Council facilities					
LC4.1 Implement access upgrades at pools and leisure centres (e.g. hoists, accessible adult changing facility), seeking external funding if needed	Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities		All Council pools are accessible to people with disability	Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of actions taken to improve access to pools and leisure centres
LC4.2 Continue to upgrade Council owned community facilities informed by access audits as part of 10-year program	Facilities and Asset Management	Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities; Asset owner	Community facilities are accessible to everyone	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of facilities upgraded for better accessibility
LC-5 Improve accessible parking					
LC5.1 Research and investigate accessible parking sites to fit minibuses/vans with rear hoists (e.g. The Entrance)	Engineering Services		Access to town centres, shops and tourist places will be improved for people using vans with hoists, and safety will improve in carparks	Yr 1, Yr 2	Recommendations made on opportunities to provide suitable parking for minibuses/vans with rear hoist
LC5.2 Research opportunity to increase accessible parking spots at beaches, shops and schools close to entrances and facilities (with compliant widths and clearance zones)	Engineering Services		People with access parking permits will have better access to beaches, shops and schools, allowing them to participate	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Recommendations made on opportunities to increase accessible parking
LC5.3 Explore improvements to technology to check availability of accessible parking	Engineering Services		Finding an accessible parking spot is made easier	Yr 3	Recommendations made on technology to check on availability of accessible parking

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
LC-6 Make community events, programs and activities more inclusive of people with disability					
LC6.1 Build capacity of Council event staff to deliver accessible and inclusive events, activities and programs	Community and Culture		Knowledge, skills and capacity of events staff is further developed to plan and deliver accessible events	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of Council events staff who receive training/ upskilling on delivery of accessible events
LC6.2 Plan and deliver community, cultural, sporting, recreation, leisure and learning events, activities and programs that are welcoming and accessible for people with a disability	Community and Culture; Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities; Libraries and Education; Open Space and Recreation		People with disability can participate fully in Council events that interest them	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of accessible events and activities delivered annually
LC6.3 Provide Council theatre and performance art spaces that are welcoming and inclusive, such as Auslan interpretation, audio description and reserve accessible seating only available to people with disability	Community and Culture		Theatre productions are more accessible to people with disability	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Teams deliver at least 2 accessible activities per year
LC6.4 Revise Council's event permit and grant funding application forms to include questions on accessibility and inclusion	Community and Culture; Leisure Beach Safety and Community Facilities		Community run events are more inclusive of and accessible to people with disability	Yr 2	Forms have been revised to reflect access and inclusion questions

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
LC-7 'Universal Design' principles are embedded in Council policies, planning and infrastructure projects					
LC7.1 Ensure Council's Comprehensive Development Control Plan (DCP) incorporates inclusion of universal design principles	Strategic Planning	Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities	Developments are universally designed to the greatest extent possible to be accessible for everyone	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	The Development Control Plan talks about the importance of designing for universal access
LC7.2 Promote universal design through Council's Housing Strategy	Strategic Planning	Community and Culture	Housing developments incorporate universal design making housing accessible for everyone	Yr 1, Yr 2	Council's Housing Strategy includes universal design principles
LC7.3 Finalise Central Coast Public Domain Guidelines to reference AS 1428.1 Design for access and mobility, Part 1: General requirements for access - New building work	Strategic Planning		All new public areas are accessible to everyone	Yr 1	Public Domain Guidelines finalised and highlighting importance of access and mobility
LC7.4 Ensure universal design and accessibility requirements are considered for all renewal and upgrade programs, new capital works, infrastructure and place planning where practicable	Open Space and Recreation; Leisure, Beach Safety and Community Facilities; Community and Culture; Roads and Drainage infrastructure; Facilities and Asset Management; Procurement and Projects		Places and spaces become more accessible to people with disability	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Demonstrated application of universal design principles

Kathy's story

Kathy is a member of Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group. She has over 18 years of experience in the disability sector. Kathy is now an Access Technology Trainer with Vision Australia. Kathy also has lived experience of blindness.

Tell us what you like to do and where you like to go on the Coast? Where would you like to go that you can't currently?

"I enjoy participating in any running/walking events like my local Woy Woy Park Run, Blackmores Running Festival, City-2-Surf, Bay-2-Bay along with Fun Runs interstate. I also love Dragon Boat Paddling and eventing at regattas both on the Coast, in Sydney and overseas when the opportunity arises.

I love to go and see live bands, go bushwalking and shopping but often find it difficult getting to the venues or starting points as public transport is infrequent or doesn't exist and you need a car."

What is something you like to do that is accessible?

"My local Woy Woy Park Run as I can get to the start independently, along the shared path and participate with support from the running guides from Achilles."



Craig's Story

Craig lives in Long Jetty. He loves the ocean and used to make surfboards for a living. He has recently discovered the beach matting at Toowoon Bay.

Tell us what do you like to do and where you like to go on the Coast? Where would you like to go that you can't currently?

"I would like to get back to surfing. Surfing has been my life for a long time before my accident. It would mean a lot to be able to get back into the ocean which has always given me a sense of freedom.

I would like to go to Toowoon Bay as it's more accessible for people with disability, it has the beach mat.

I would like to see more accessible beaches with longer and wider beach mats. Also accessible change rooms for people with disability."



Linda's Story

Linda lives in Long Jetty. She loves shopping.

Tell us what you like to do and where you like to go on the Coast? Where would you like to go that you can't currently?

"I like to visit the shops at The Entrance, Bateau Bay and Tuggerah. I would like to go to the shops at Toowoon Bay but I can't because most of them have steps.

I would like to see more wheelchair accessibility in the shopping centres and wider pathways for big wheelchairs like mine. Also accessibility to all beaches and parks."

Can you give an example of something that is accessible to you?

"The clubs and shops because they are more wheelchair friendly."





Employment

7. Focus Area 3: Employment

Objective: To increase employment of people with disability in meaningful roles in the community and at Council

7.1 Introduction

People with disability experience many barriers in finding and keeping a job. Our survey found the greatest barriers on the Central Coast were related to discrimination and assumptions about ability, physical access in the workplace and lack of flexibility by employers. 71% of disability sector workers said 'getting a good job' was the top challenge impacting on people with disability on the Central Coast.

Despite the many benefits of employing people with disability¹, rates of employment for people with severe or profound disability have declined, full-time work for people with disability has declined and part-time work has increased steadily since 2003. The trends are going the wrong way and people with disability are increasingly underrepresented in the workforce.

Inclusive employment means increased income, reduced social isolation and independence for people with disability. For businesses, benefits include access to a broader range of skills and dedicated and hard-working staff. If we don't employ people with disability, there are higher costs to the community through income support and increased health costs.

7.2 What we heard

We asked people with disability and carers what employers can do to help people with disability find meaningful employment. The top answers are:

1. Employers should get educated and understand disability
2. Be flexible – offer part-time, flexible hours, work from home, adjust aspects of the job
3. Employ us! Give us an opportunity!
4. Focus on ability – skills, resilience
5. Provide workplace adjustments and supports

1. Deloitte Access Economics (2011) 'The Economic benefits of increasing employment for people with disability', commissioned by the Australian Network on Disability, Aug 2011,



- Council could support people with disability to start their own businesses through the Launchpad program
- Internships, apprenticeships and work experience placements are important entry-level opportunities. But there also needs to be career development opportunities so there are people with disability in leadership positions
- Educating the community about disability and sharing positive stories will improve employment opportunities

7.3 What we have achieved so far

Achievements to date include:

- New work experience program that includes people with disability
- Recruitment process updated to include a diversity and inclusion statement in job advertisements
- Making reasonable adjustments in the application process and in the workplace
- Workforce diversity data is collected
- Kincumber Library featured as one of the accessible workplaces in the factual ABC TV series 'Employable Me'

7.4 What we will do next

The next four years will focus on:

- Creating more work, training and volunteer opportunities for people with disability, including people with intellectual disabilities
- Valuing and supporting Council staff with disability and working towards being an employer of choice for people with disability
- Supporting people with disability to start up their own businesses

Action Plan: Employment

To increase employment of people with disability in meaningful roles within Council and the community

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
E-1 Measure employment of people with disability					
E1.1 Continue ongoing collection of data on staff disability status (non-mandatory) through anonymous options	People and Culture		Council can measure any increase or decrease of employment of people with disability and make changes to improve it	Yr 1	Data collected on annual basis
E-2 Support people with disability in the workplace and ensure they are heard					
E2.1 Consult with staff with lived experience of disability to set up a Council Disability Employee Network (DEN) as an internal peer support network	People and Culture	Community and Culture	Staff with disability feel supported and have a say in making Council a more inclusive workplace	Yr 2	Staff consulted and appropriate network established
E2.2 Assist Managers and Supervisors to support staff with disability, including mental health, by providing reasonable adjustments	People and Culture	Community and Culture	Staff with disability get the reasonable adjustments they need and are supported by their Managers	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Assistance provided as required
E-3 Recruitment					
E3.1 Ensure that job advertisements are provided in formats that are compatible with assistive technology, and applications are accepted in alternative formats where feasible	People and Culture	Community and Culture	Council provides an inclusive recruitment process and actively attracts people with disability to consider a career at Council	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of people identifying as having a disability who have applied for a role with Council

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
E3.2 Review, amend and demonstrate how recruitment policies and procedures ensure flexibility in the application, interview and onboarding process for people with a disability, including reasonable adjustments	People and Culture	Community and Culture	Inclusive recruitment processes result in Council having more people with disability on staff	Yr 2	Review has been conducted with input from Access and Inclusion Reference Group
E3.3 Review job descriptions to remove non-essential criteria that impacts people with disability, e.g. requirement for driver's licence if not essential for the role	People and Culture	Community and Culture	Council gets the best staff based on the essential criteria	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of job descriptions where amendments made for new hires
E-4 Inclusive entry level opportunities					
E4.1 People and Culture host an industry day for people with disabilities to see and experience what it is like to work at Council, including practicing interview skills	People and Culture		People with disability, including young people, can gain work experience on the Central Coast	Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of people with disability who have participated in a work experience or industry day
E4.2 Ensure that undergraduate positions, traineeships and apprenticeships with Council are accessible to and promoted to people with disability – with a commitment to providing reasonable adjustments and flexibility as required	People and Culture		Making Council undergraduate positions/ apprenticeships more accessible will result in more people with disability getting the opportunity to enter the workforce	Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of people with disability who have participated in undergraduate positions, traineeships and apprenticeships

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
E-5 Career development and leadership					
E5.1 Ensure that all professional development opportunities within Council, including leadership programs, are explicitly accessible and inclusive of people with disability, with reasonable adjustments made to facilitate access and delivery	People and Culture	Managers/ Executive	People with disability will be supported to develop their career and move into leadership positions, being a role model for others	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Training information, delivery and premises are accessible and adjustments have been made to enable full participation
E5.2 Upgrade staff training facilities in Council administration buildings and depots to improve accessibility	Facilities and Asset Management		Employees with disability can participate in training like everyone else	Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of access barriers addressed for training facilities
E-6 Support people with disability to establish new businesses					
E6.1 Actively attract people with disabilities who have start-up business ideas to participate in Council's LaunchPad program	Community and Culture		People with disability are supported with skill development and networking to start their own business	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of people with disability involved in skills development and networking activities
E-7 Recognition of Carers					
E7.1 Review workplace leave and flexibility policy and associated FAQs so Managers know how to support staff who are carers for people with a disability	People and Culture	Carers NSW	Staff who are carers are well supported by Council, making our community more inclusive and supportive	Yr 1	The revised policy recognises the role of carers and outlines how they can be supported



Systems and Processes

8. Focus Area 4: Systems and Processes

Objective: To improve access to mainstream Council services for people with disability through better systems and processes

8.1 Introduction

This section is about looking at systems and processes to see if there are any barriers that stop people from being able to get the support and services that they need. People with disability should be able to access all the services that are available to the rest of the community and have a say about issues that affect them. Systems and processes can include how you get information, how you can make an enquiry or payment, or how you can give feedback or have a say.

Through the consultation, people told us that they need more information and it needs to be in accessible formats. People want to know what's on in their community, what's accessible and how to get support. Websites need to be accessible and easy to use. We also need to make information available in hard copy for people without access to the internet.

People who attended Council programs said they enjoy being included and the sense of community, but our staff could be more disability confident.

About 55% of people with disability and carers said they had no difficulties doing general business with Council, but about 12% said they had difficulty filling in a form, making an application or making a complaint.

8.2 What we heard

- Council and local businesses should have disability confident staff. We need well trained and understanding frontline staff who can assist when needed
- We need to provide information about how places, activities and services are accessible so people with disability and carers can plan ahead. For example, it is not easy to find information on Council's website about the accessibility features of Council's pools and recreation centres or community events
- We also need to provide more information about what's on and how to get support on the Central Coast



- We need to make information available in Auslan for people who are deaf and in Easy English for people with intellectual disability
- We need to make sure that people with disability are considered in our Emergency Management plans, actions and communications. This includes making sure that local emergency information is available in accessible formats and reaches people with disability, e.g. the deaf community
- We also need to maintain our Access and Inclusion Reference Group and other options that allow people to have a say

8.3 What we have achieved so far

Achievements to date include:

- Website accessibility improved (WCAG2.0) and providing information about accessible features of play spaces
- Accessible documents guide: to help staff develop accessible documents
- Access and Inclusion Reference Group established, made up of people with lived experience of disability to oversee the Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Auslan interpreters provided at more Council events
- Appointment of a permanent Disability Inclusion Officer

8.4 What we will do next

The next four years will focus on:

- Making more of Council's information accessible in a range of formats and making it easier to find.
- Providing more information about how places and activities are accessible for people with disability.
- Improving engagement and consultation with people with disability.
- Making it easier to interact with Council.
- Making sure that emergency management is inclusive of people with disability.

Action Plan: Systems and Processes

To improve access to mainstream services for people with disability through better systems and processes

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
SP-1 Council information is available and accessible to people with disability					
SP1.1 Ensure that accessible documentation training has been completed by all Communication, Graphic Design and Digital staff	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement		Staff know how to make documents accessible and they do this as part of their core work	Yr 1, Yr 3	All Comms, Graphic Design and Digital staff have been trained
SP1.2 Ensure that at least one representative from each unit across Council completes online accessible document training	People and Culture		Staff know how to make documents accessible and they do this as part of their core work	Yr 1, Yr 3,	Number of people who have completed accessible document training
SP1.3 Identify and provide key Integrated Planning and Reporting documents (or summaries of these) in accessible formats, such as Community Strategic Plan, Annual Reports and Operational Plans	Strategic Planning		All people can access key Council information, including people who are deaf, people who are blind and people with an intellectual disability	Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Minimum of 5 key Integrated Planning and Reporting documents are available in accessible formats including Auslan and Easy English
SP1.4 Update knowledge base for customer service staff to include advice on how to respond to requests for information that is more accessible	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement	Community and Culture	People with disability will be assisted to access the information they need	Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Customer Service knowledge base has been updated
SP1.5 Update existing guidelines (e.g. Writing Style Guide and Brand Style Guide) with accessibility requirements to assist Council staff to develop information that is accessible	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement	Community and Culture	Staff will understand access requirements and create documents that are accessible	Yr 2	Guidelines have been updated to include accessibility requirements

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
SP1.6 Create and promote a Council guide for creating accessible videos; and update procurement terms of engagement (purchase order) to ensure contractors follow the guide	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement; Procurement and Projects		Council videos will be accessible	Yr 2	<p>Accessible video guide is developed</p> <p>Purchase order standard terms and conditions amended to reflect requirement for accessibility when developing video content on behalf of Council</p> <p>Communicate requirement to Council's preferred marketing and communication practitioners on vendorpanel</p>
SP1.7 Make information available on accessible events, activities, services, support and places, including links to accessibility apps, info on where to get help, inclusive community and Council activities	Community and Culture	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement	People with disability can participate fully because they have the information they need to plan ahead	Yr 1, Yr 2 Yr 3, Yr 4	<p>Number of events, activities and services for which access information is available</p> <p>Number of places for which access information is available on the website</p>

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
SP-2 Customer Service is more accessible					
SP2.1 Implement use of ‘speech to text’ technology for frontline staff to communicate with people who are deaf and promote that it’s available	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement; Libraries and Education	Information and Technology	People who are deaf can confidently communicate with front desk staff and receive the information they want	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Front desk staff know how to use ‘speech to text’ technology to support people who are deaf
SP-3 Participation in community engagement is inclusive					
SP3.1 Make communication for public consultation accessible, use community networks to reach a broad range of community members and include information on how consultation will be accessible	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement with relevant Project owners		People with disability can access and participate in all Council engagement activities	Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Engagement sessions are planned using Accessible Event Guidelines and accessibility features of the event are actively promoted
SP3.2 Convert Council’s Your Voice Our Coast website to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement	Project owners	Community engagement is inclusive of people with disability	Yr 3, Yr 4	Your Voice Our Coast provides information in a range of accessible formats
SP-4 Improve accessibility of the website					
SP4.1 All Council websites comply with the most current Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) version.	Communications, Marketing and Customer Engagement		Council’s websites provide web content accessibility that meets the needs of the community and Council	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Web compliance audited biennially and compliance actions addressed

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
SP4.2 Review accessibility and inclusiveness of Council meetings, including investigation of closed caption webcasts	Governance and Risk	Information and Technology	Council meetings are accessible and inclusive	Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Number of access improvements made to Council meetings
SP-5 Targeted communication to groups Council may not reach					
SP5.1 Implement targeted communication to disability networks and contacts to share information about access and inclusion developments/ opportunities at Council and across the Central Coast community, including reach to Aboriginal, Deaf and CALD communities	Community and Culture		People with disability, advocates, carers and service providers are informed about access and inclusion news and opportunities and can share this information to their networks, leading to more active participation	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Biannual communication to key groups
SP-6 Emergency Management is inclusive of people with disability					
SP6.1 Consult with Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group to improve awareness amongst people with disability about local emergency information resources, such as the Central Coast Disaster Dashboard, and advocate to primary agencies about any issues raised about access to emergency information	Environmental Compliance and Systems	Access and Inclusion Reference Group	People with disability know where to access information about local emergencies	Yr 1, Yr 2, Yr 3, Yr 4	Access and Inclusion Reference Group have been consulted and feel informed
SP6.2 Provide 'Get Ready Central Coast' information in accessible formats, including Auslan interpreted, Easy English etc	Environmental Management	Resilience NSW	People with disability have information that helps them be prepared for emergencies	Yr 2, Yr 4	Get Ready information is available in accessible formats

Action Description	Responsible Unit/Team	Key Partners	Aim/Expected outcome	Timeframe	Indicators
SP6.3 Review and implement emergency evacuation procedures for all Council administration buildings and depots that address the needs of people with disability, considering aspects such as flashing emergency lights for people who are deaf and easy egress from buildings	Facilities and Asset Management		All people can evacuate safely and with dignity	Yr 2	Number of buildings for which evacuation procedures have been reviewed considering accessible evacuation requirements under the Disability Access to Premises standards



Bobby's Story

Bobby is an educator and advocate for people living with dementia. She represents people with dementia on local, national and international advisory groups. Bobby is a member of Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group.

What would make it easier for a person with dementia to interact with Council?

“Communication (both speaking and understanding) can be difficult for many people living with dementia or other forms of cognitive impairment. The message needs to be clear and concise. Short, to the point and in plain English.

Please speak slowly, clearly and in short sentences. Allow us time to take in the information and respond. We need people to be patient with us and respectful of the additional processing time that we may need.

The website needs to be simplified. Clear headings with a suitable drop-down menu, would make accessing information much easier. This response would apply for everyone, but especially so for those of us with dementia or other cognitive impairment.”





9. Monitoring, reviewing and reporting

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan is aligned with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework including the Community Strategic Plan, the Delivery Program and annual Operational Plans. The progress of the Plan will be regularly monitored and reported.

Council will continue to work with the Access and Inclusion Reference Group to practically look at how it can best implement the Plan, to check-in on progress and modify if required to meet changing community priorities.

The internal DIAP Reference Group, made up of representatives from across Council business units and lead by our Executive Sponsor, Director Community and Recreation Services, will monitor progress of the Plan over the four years.

Each year progress against the actions in the Plan (for that year and all ongoing actions) will be reported quarterly to the community as well form part of Council's Annual Report. A copy will be provided to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services.

Implementation will be evaluated towards the completion of the Plan to inform the next plan. The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be reviewed and updated every four years in consultation and collaboration with the community.

We welcome any feedback on this Plan or suggestions related to access and inclusion. Please direct any enquiries to Council's Disability Inclusion Officer.

See Part 2 for more detailed information.



Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025

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