

LAKE
MACQUARIE
CITY

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2021-2025



Acknowledgement of Country

We remember and respect the Ancestors who cared for and nurtured this Country. It is in their footsteps that we travel these lands and waters. Lake Macquarie City Council acknowledges the Awabakal people and Elders past, present and future





DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2021-2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Lake Macquarie City Council's ongoing commitment to making Lake Macquarie City truly inclusive and welcoming is captured in our Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Inclusive cities are easy to get around, they provide people with disability opportunities for participation in the diverse social, cultural life of the City and access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Our plan includes a series of actions designed to actively address barriers faced by the 6.6 per cent of people in Lake Macquarie with disability to make our City more inclusive. It builds on the success of our previous Disability Inclusion Action Plan, and harnesses new and emerging opportunities.

This plan sets out practical ways we can continue to create a more inclusive city through programming, events and infrastructure improvements. These actions show that an inclusive city benefits everyone – not just people with disability.

We can all play a part in making it easier for people with disability to live, work and visit our City.

Cr Kay Fraser
Lake Macquarie Mayor



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Lake Macquarie City Council is committed to providing outstanding services to all members of our community, and I am confident that our 2021-2025 Disability Inclusion Action Plan will allow us to continue to deliver on this commitment.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan builds on the work we completed as part of our 2017-2021 Plan, which saw our Council and City take important steps towards improving access to services, increasing the liveability of our communities and providing employment opportunities for people with disability.

Evidence of this work can be found throughout our City: accessibility improvements at Redhead and Blacksmiths beaches have made it easier for everybody to enjoy our beautiful coastline; our Lake Mac Holiday Parks now boast a greater range of accessible accommodation; hearing loops are available at more Council facilities; and our Including You tent has popped up at major events across the City, providing welcome refuge for people with sensory conditions.

I am proud of what we have achieved so far, but there is more work to be done.

Key actions identified in this Plan include: further increasing accessible accommodation options at our Holiday Parks; creating more opportunities for people with disability to work for Council; providing basic sign language training for our tourism and customer service staff; and helping local businesses be more inclusive, including investigating a grant program to assist with access improvements.

With this Plan, and working alongside other governmental agencies, industry leaders and our community, Council will continue to advocate and act to make our City a welcoming and inclusive place for all our residents and visitors to enjoy.

Morven Cameron
CEO



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2017-2021

Attitudes and behaviours

- Introduced Assistance Animals welcome signage at various Council facilities, including Customer Administration Building, Lake Mac Libraries and Lake Mac Swim Centres.
- Introduced an Including You tent at twelve of Council's major events, which has sensory resources and offers a quiet place to retreat from the noise and crowds. This was an initiative of St Vincent De Paul Society.
- Developed and introduced the Me2 program, to provide free activities for people with a disability to build networks and skills. Held 75 activities which were attended by 1557 participants and 370 carers.
- Introduced a monthly e-newsletter for people with disability, which has 190 subscribers.
- Introduced a campaign to distribute one free Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) to eligible residents.
- Presented internal training to various Council departments including breaking down the barriers exercise and silent morning tea, reaching more than 30 staff.

Liveable communities

- Design and construction of changing places at Toronto Swim Centre and Caves Beach.
- Design and construction of access ramp at Redhead Beach and an accessible walkway and viewing platform at Blacksmiths Beach.
- Trialled beach matting at Caves Beach to improve access for all users.
- Participated in accessible cabin design project. Four individual cabins were designed and constructed based on universal design principles at Swansea, Belmont Pines and Blacksmiths Holidays Parks.

Employment

- Survey conducted with existing Council staff addressing wellbeing and additional support requirements.
- Diversity in recruitment review conducted by the Australian Network on Disability.

Systems and processes

- Hearing loops installed at the Lake Macquarie and Rathmines Theatres, Council Chamber, Customer Service Centre, Committee Room and Councillors Workroom.
- Upgraded Council's website to align with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Lake Macquarie City Council is committed to ensure that local services, facilities and programs provided by Council are inclusive to all members of the community. Council supports the rights of people with disability in our community to have equal access to opportunities, services and facilities and choice over how to live their lives as all residents do.

OUR VISION

Lake Macquarie is a City with a lake at its heart encircled by distinctive towns and villages. We balance our cherished environments with our need for great spaces to live and visit, smart transport options and a thriving economy; which adapt and strive to be fair for all.

OUR VALUES



UNIQUE LANDSCAPE

A place where the natural environment (bushland, coast, Lake and mountains) is protected and enhanced; where our existing urban centres are the focus of our growth, maintaining their unique characteristics.



DIVERSE ECONOMY

Which is resilient and adaptable to change, making the best use of the unique advantages of our location and lifestyle.



LIFESTYLE AND WELLBEING

A place that encourages safe, active and social opportunities.

ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

Our organisational values support the culture of our organisation. They are the 'glue' that brings us all together in achieving our Council and community goals.

Shaping our future

Leading at all levels

Working together

Community values

Our Plan aligns with our Community values and demonstrates the commitment to building an inclusive community where everyone is valued and respected. We will work to break the barriers faced by people with disability so they can have increased opportunity to live a full and meaningful life.



MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Effective transport systems that provide choices to conveniently move people, goods and services.



CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

That support and care for all and provide a sense of belonging.



CREATIVITY

Working together with creative process and outcomes that bring together history, culture, knowledge and expertise that support new technologies and ways of thinking.



SHARED DECISION MAKING

Lake Macquarie communities continue shared responsibility for governance.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGIC LINKS

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) is the legislative foundation for Local Government disability inclusion and access planning. DIA supports the Government's commitment to improving the lives of people with disability and reaffirms NSW's direction on building an inclusive community.

In 2014, DIA required all NSW government agencies and local councils to develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) in consultation with people with disability. These plans were to outline the measures put in place so that people with disability can access general supports and services available in the community and can participate fully in the community.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan identified four areas of focus that people with disability said were priority areas. These were:

- 1) Developing positive community attitudes towards disability
- 2) Creating liveable communities
- 3) Increasing access to meaningful employment
- 4) Improving access to mainstream services through improved systems and processes.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025 is related to the following International, National and State legislations.

International

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

National

National Disability Strategy (NDS)

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010

State

NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA)

Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Government Sector Employment Act 2013

Other legislation and standards

Australian Standard (AS 1428) Design for Access and Mobility

Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

Lake Macquarie City Council Strategies and Action Plans

This plan relates to other Council strategic documents as inclusion is embedded into the principles and actions of the following plans:

Aboriginal Community Plan 2019-2023

Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027

Asset Management Plans 2019-2024

Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

Culturally Diverse Lake Mac Plan 2021-2024

Event and Festival Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024

Lake Macquarie City Council Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management Plan 2019-2022

Lake Macquarie City Council Footpath Strategy 2013-2023

Lake Macquarie City Housing Strategy 2020

Lake Mac Libraries Strategic Business Plan 2019-2024

Parks and Play Strategy 2020-2030

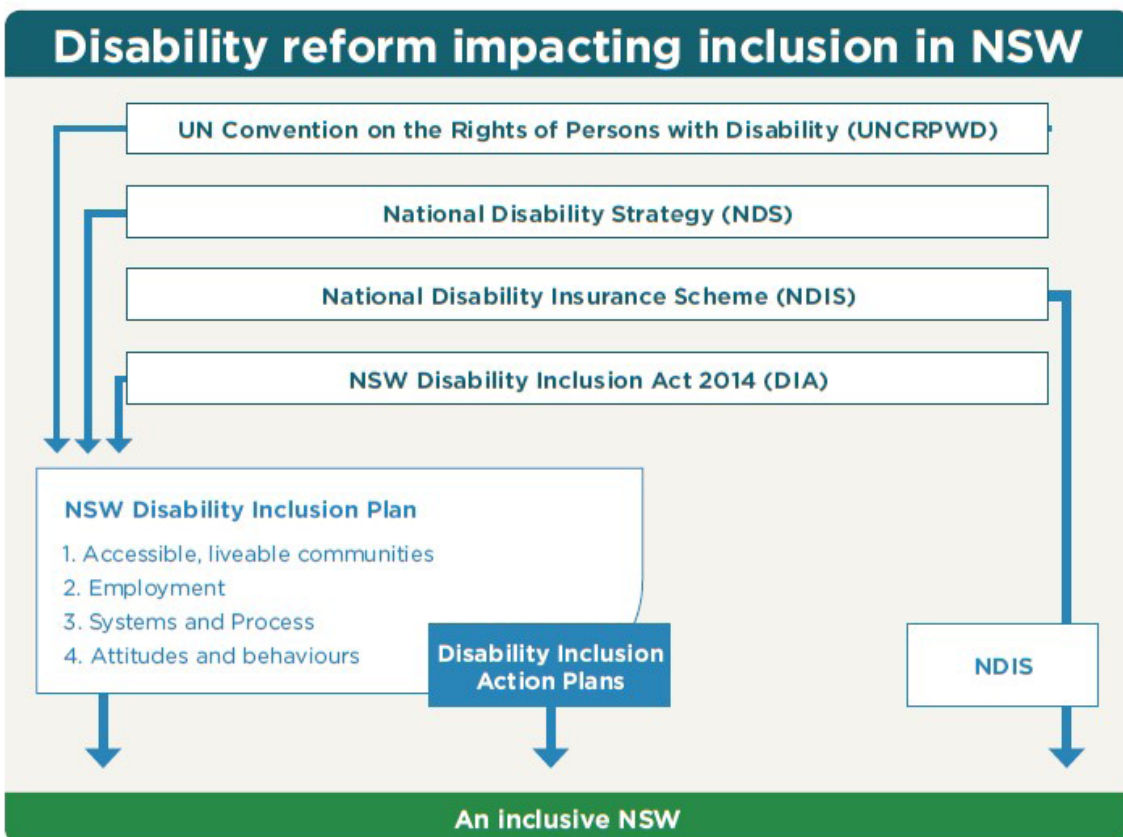


Figure 2: The relationships between the relevant policy and legislative instruments.
 Source: Department of Communities and Justice – Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are a set of global principles to guide action. Seventeen goals sit atop 169 detailed global targets and an emerging set of indicators. Adopted in 2015 by nations including Australia, participation is voluntary.

Lake Macquarie City Council has made a commitment to supporting the Sustainable Development goals. Consideration has been given to these goals when developing this plan. The following goals align with the plan:

- Goal 1 – end poverty in all its forms
- Goal 3 – good health and well-being
- Goal 4 – quality education
- Goal 8 – decent work and economic growth
- Goal 10 – reduced inequalities
- Goal 11 – sustainable cities and communities
- Goal 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





COMMUNITY PROFILE

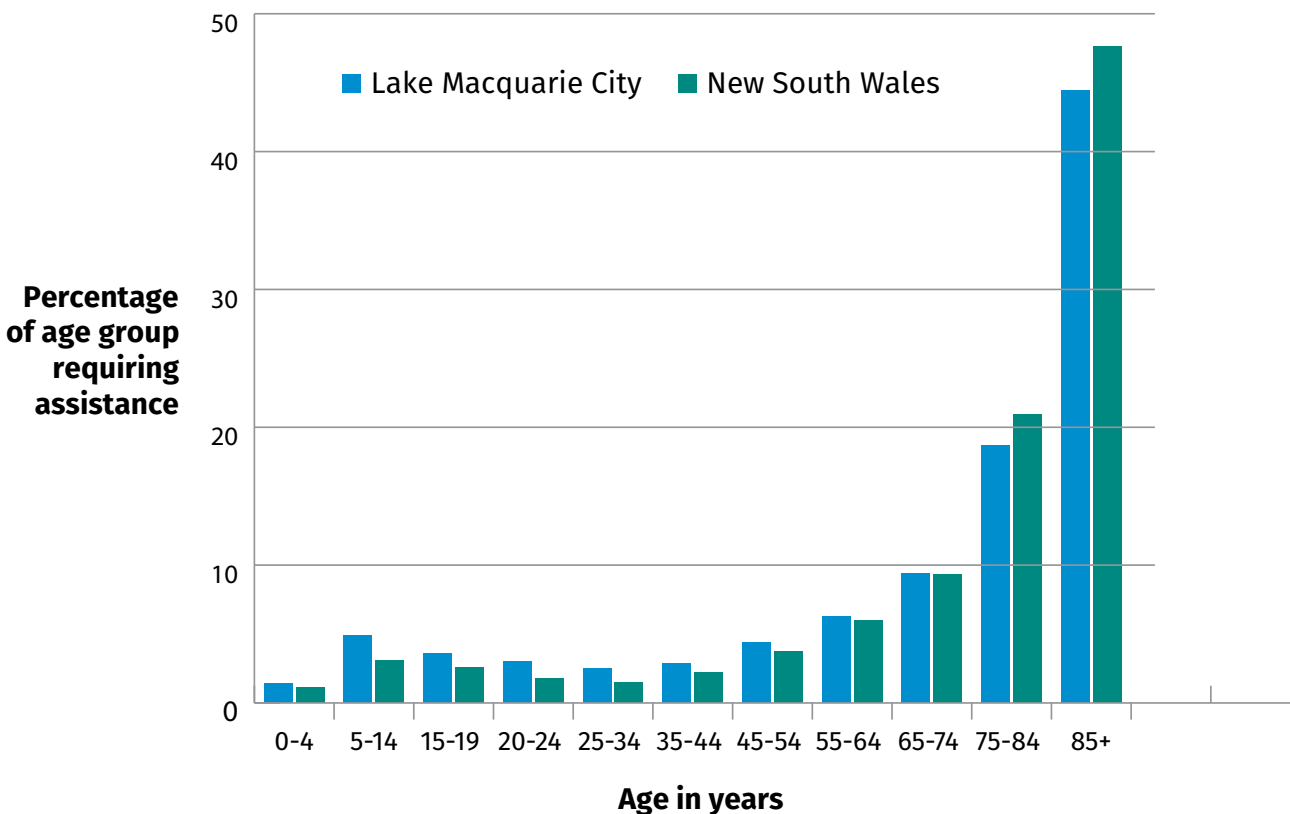
- In 2019, more than 205,000 people called Lake Macquarie home, making our City the third largest regional city in NSW by population
- People living with a profound or severe disability represent 6.6 per cent of the City’s population
- Population is expected to grow by 28,000 people by 2036, creating demand for 13,500 new dwellings and 12,000 new jobs
- Lake Macquarie is a landscape of 357 square kilometres, comprising beaches, lake and mountains

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 defines disability as:

‘The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.’

Core activity need for assistance by age

Source: 2016 Census of Population and Housing: Australian Bureau of Statistics



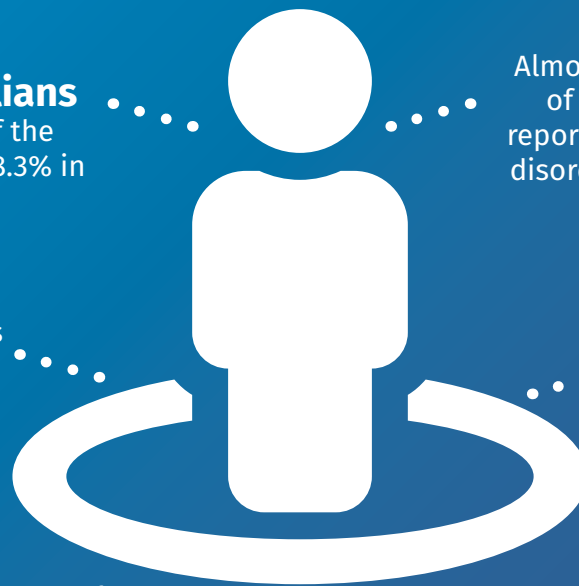
The 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) identified that:

In 2018 there were **4.4 million Australians** with disability, 17.7% of the population, down from 18.3% in 2015.

Almost **one-quarter** (23.2%) of all people with disability reported a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition, up from 21.5% in 2015.

Disability prevalence was similar for males (17.6%) and females (17.8%).

5.7% of all Australians had a profound or severe disability.



The prevalence of disability increased with age

- one in nine (11.6%) people aged 0-64 years and one in two (49.6%) people aged 65 years and over had disability.



Of those with disability (living in households):

one-third (33.4%) of those aged 15 years and over had completed year 12 or equivalent, up from 31.4% in 2015

one in six (16.1%) aged 15 years and over had a Bachelor degree or above, up from 14.9% in 2015

37.9% of those aged 15-64 years said their main source of personal income was a government pension or allowance, down from 41.9% in 2015

one in 10 (9.6%) aged 15 years and over had experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months because of their disability, up from 8.6% in 2015

59.7% of people had their need for assistance fully met, down from 62.1% in 2015

11.4% of those with a profound or severe disability (aged 15-64 years) were working full time, up from 7.9% in 2015.

labour force participation for those aged 15-64 years has remained stable since 2015 at **53.4%**, in contrast to an increase in the participation rate for people without disability (84.1%)



CONSULTATION GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

30 SEPTEMBER TO 15 NOVEMBER 2020

We asked

For feedback to assist in developing the draft plan, particularly focussing on four key themes:

1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes, for example within Council and the community.

Feedback was received via an online survey, direct phone call or attendance at one of three drop-in sessions at Toronto and Charlestown Libraries, and the Swansea Centre.

You connected



59 online surveys completed



500 visits visits to Council's online portal Shape Lake Mac



12,000 reached via social media



5,000+ eNewsletters sent



5 consultation meetings with disability organisations



1 consultation meeting with Council's Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel



8 feedback received via informal methods



400+ high school leavers reached at post school expo

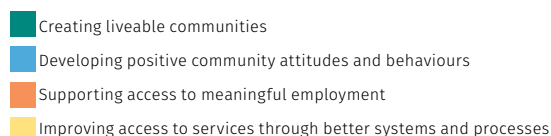
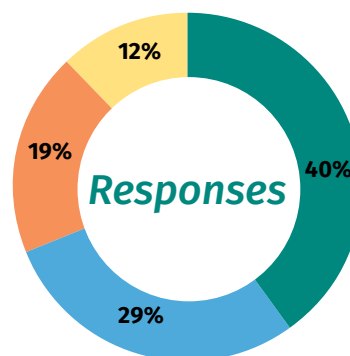
You said

'Provide more opportunities for voluntary programs to allow individuals to integrate into workplaces and gain valuable skills so they can then be supported to gain paid employment'

'Provide information to the community to raise disability awareness'

'Improve pathways and connections to access playgrounds and other community infrastructure'

'Need for more changing places like at Caves beach'





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Attitudes and behaviours

Aim: To develop and improve positive attitudes of the wider community towards people with disability.

Annually, Community Partnerships will recognise and promote International Day of People with Disability and other significant dates through Council social media networks, for the wider community. Success will be measured through the number of dates and events promoted within the community.

By June 2022, Community Partnerships and Communications and Corporate Strategy will rename current “Me2” program and continue to offer free inclusive programs to build skills and networks, for people with disability and carers. Success will be measured through the number of people attending and feedback from participants.


On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and Communications and Corporate Strategy will publicise and share good news and success stories of inclusion within the community, for the wider community, organisations and businesses. Success will be measured through the number of stories promoted in media and on Council’s website.

By June 2023, Community Partnerships will introduce a Disability awareness training program, for tourism operators, new elected Councillors and new Council staff. Success will be measured through the number of people trained and training evaluation feedback.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and the Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel will work with local businesses to improve knowledge of disability and promote benefits of making businesses more inclusive, for business operators in economic centres in the City. Success will be measured through the number of businesses consulted.

By June 2023, Community Partnerships will investigate a grants programs to assist small businesses to make access improvements to premises, for business operators in economic centres in the City. Success will be measured through the investigation being completed and recommendations made.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships will maintain and facilitate the Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel in order to seek feedback into Council strategies and represent and advocate for the target group, for service providers, organisations, older people, people with disability and carers. Success will be measured through attendance at panel meetings and the number of presentations to the panel.



On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships will continue to participate and attend relevant networks and forums to share information and advocate for the needs of the target group, for service providers, service users, professionals and organisations. Success will be measured through the number of meetings attended.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and Arts, Culture and Tourism will advocate for improved accessibility and inclusive Council events, for the wider community. Success will be measured through the number of events that are accessible and inclusive.

By June 2023, Community Partnerships and Communications and Corporate Strategy will develop a commitment statement for a diverse and inclusive community and workplace, for the wider community, Councillors and Council staff. Success will be measured through feedback form within Council and the community.

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Aim: To provide infrastructure and services to enable people with disability to fully participate in community life.

By June 2023, Community Partnerships and Property and Business Development will increase the number of accessible cabins at Council's Holiday Parks, for tourists and local families, and local and regional service providers. Success will be measured through the number of bookings for cabins.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships will advocate for an increased number of changing places, for people with disability and carers. Success will be measured through the number of changing places installed, and the estimated number of people using the facility.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and Recreation and Land Planning will advocate for improved options for accessible recreation and sport opportunities within the city, for the wider community. Success will be measured through the number of accessible facilities and services/programs available.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and Asset Management will advocate for improved connections between Council and community infrastructure and the built environment, for the wider community. Success will be measured through the number of improvements made to Council infrastructure and the built environment.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and Integrated Planning will advocate for an increase in suitable housing options for people with disability including liveable housing, adaptable housing and specialist disability accommodation, for people with disability, family/carers, and the wider community. Success will be measured through the number of amendments to the Development Control Plan (DCP).

EMPLOYMENT

Aim: Reduce barriers to employment for people with disability at all stages of the Council employment process.

By June 2022, Community Partnerships and People, Culture and Risk will enable Council to become a disability confident employer by addressing the recommendations of the review completed by Australian Network on Disability, for people with disability and current staff. Success will be measured through the number of people with disability applying for and being appointed to Council positions.

By June 2022, Community Partnerships and People, Culture and Risk will establish a Disability Employment Network (DEN) within Council to support staff, for staff with disability and other interested staff. Success will be measured through the number of meetings held and attendance at meetings, and feedback and actions from meetings.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and People, Culture and Risk will advocate for the inclusion of an identified Disability position as a part of Council's Education to Employment Program, for people with disability. Success will be measured through the number of people with disability employed by Council's Education to Employment Program.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and People, Culture and Risk will expand Council's school work experience program to include students from support unit classes, for school students with disability. Success will be measured through the number of students with disability who are included in school work experience program.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships and People, Culture and Risk will increase volunteering opportunities for people with disability through partnerships with service providers and through promotion on website, for people with disability. Success will be measured through the number of people with disability volunteering at Council.

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Aim: To improve the range of communication formats to assist with communication within Council and the wider community.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships will introduce additional resources to Council infrastructure to assist with communication for all of the community e.g. hearing loops, communication cards and magnifiers, for the wider community. Success will be measured through the number of new resources implemented.

By June 2022, Community Partnerships will introduce deaf awareness and basic sign language training for key staff, for Arts Culture and Tourism staff and Customer Experience staff. Success will be measured through the number of key staff trained.

On an ongoing basis, Community Partnerships will continue to provide information through various formats including e-newsletters, updating Council's website and National Toilet Map, for the wider community. Success will be measured through the number of e-newsletters produced, the number of updates on website, and new toilet facilities added to National Toilet Map.

Resources: A range of Council resources will be used to achieve these actions including venues, staffing, volunteers, website and external presenters and trainers. Funds have been allocated under operational budget.



MONITORING, REVIEWING AND REPORTING

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be forwarded to the Disability Council NSW.

Council's Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel will monitor the progress of the actions listed in the Plan as a standard agenda item. In addition, Council's Community Planner, Ageing and Disability and Ageing and Disability Officer will report on the actions of the plan as part of the key performance indicators in monthly reports and through Council's quarterly Operational Plan reports.

Council will report on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan action items as part of its Annual Report. The report will be available in a range of formats through Council's website and Administration Centre.

In accordance with the DIA, an annual report on the outcomes against the actions of the plan will be submitted to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. The Disability Council NSW assists the Minister to review the plans and provides advice on their success.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be reviewed and updated in 2025.

For more information



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