



Northern Beaches Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026



northern
beaches
council

Acknowledgment of Country

Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands and shows its respect to the Elders past and present.

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Mayor's message



The people of the Northern Beaches have a diverse set of strengths and abilities that contribute to how they experience life on the beaches. As a community we want all people to be treated with respect, have control of their life and be active contributors in the community.

In order to do that we need to recognise and embrace the diverse abilities within the community so that we can remove barriers and actively work towards a society that is more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Together, we continue to make significant strides towards building an inclusive and accessible Northern Beaches. This Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022-2026 will build on the exceptional work of our previous plan in working towards our vision of universal access and inclusion across the Northern Beaches.

Council will always have an essential role in creating and enabling access and inclusion for all people in the community. Through service provision, infrastructure delivery, and advocacy Council can promote positive community attitudes and behaviours, ensure that facilities and programs are accessible and inclusive and provide meaningful employment opportunities for people living with disability.

Improving the accessibility and inclusion of Council facilities, public areas and programs is already a fundamental component of project and service delivery. The DIAP provides an additional 'roadmap' for Council action that will assist in making the Northern Beaches more inclusive for all.

I am grateful to the many members of our community who contributed their lived experience and feedback during the consultation period which has informed the development of this plan. Your involvement ensures that this plan reflects the priorities and aspirations for people living with disability, their loved ones, carers, and service providers.

This DIAP continues our commitment to work with the community to support all people to experience universal access and inclusion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Regan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Michael Regan
Mayor



Introduction

People living with disability are important and valued members of the Northern Beaches community. We are stronger as a community when all people can participate, and when a diverse range of views and individual perspectives are valued. People living with disability bring a range of individual strengths, interests and knowledge that enriches and contributes to the vibrancy and diversity of the Northern Beaches.

Northern Beaches Council is committed to continually improving access and inclusion in the area. Universal inclusion and access are rights to be afforded to all people. Creating a community that is inclusive and accessible to all is a long-term vision that will not be achieved in four years.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 (the DIAP) provides information for how we are going to make the Northern Beaches a more inclusive and accessible place to live, work and visit.

Council has continued working towards universal access and inclusion over the past five years through the implementation of the first Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021. The DIAP 2022-2026 builds on the achievements of the previous plan.

This DIAP has been developed following an extensive consultation process with the community, disability service providers groups and organisations, and our Council staff to understand the existing barriers and identify opportunities for improvement related to each of the four key focus areas.

Strategic Overview – Delivering on the Better Together Strategy

Better Together 2040 Social Sustainability Strategy outlined the vision for creating a socially sustainable and inclusive community for all.

The Strategy's three strategic directions work towards achieving the vision in our Community Strategic Plan: Shape 2028: 'A safe, inclusive and connected community'.

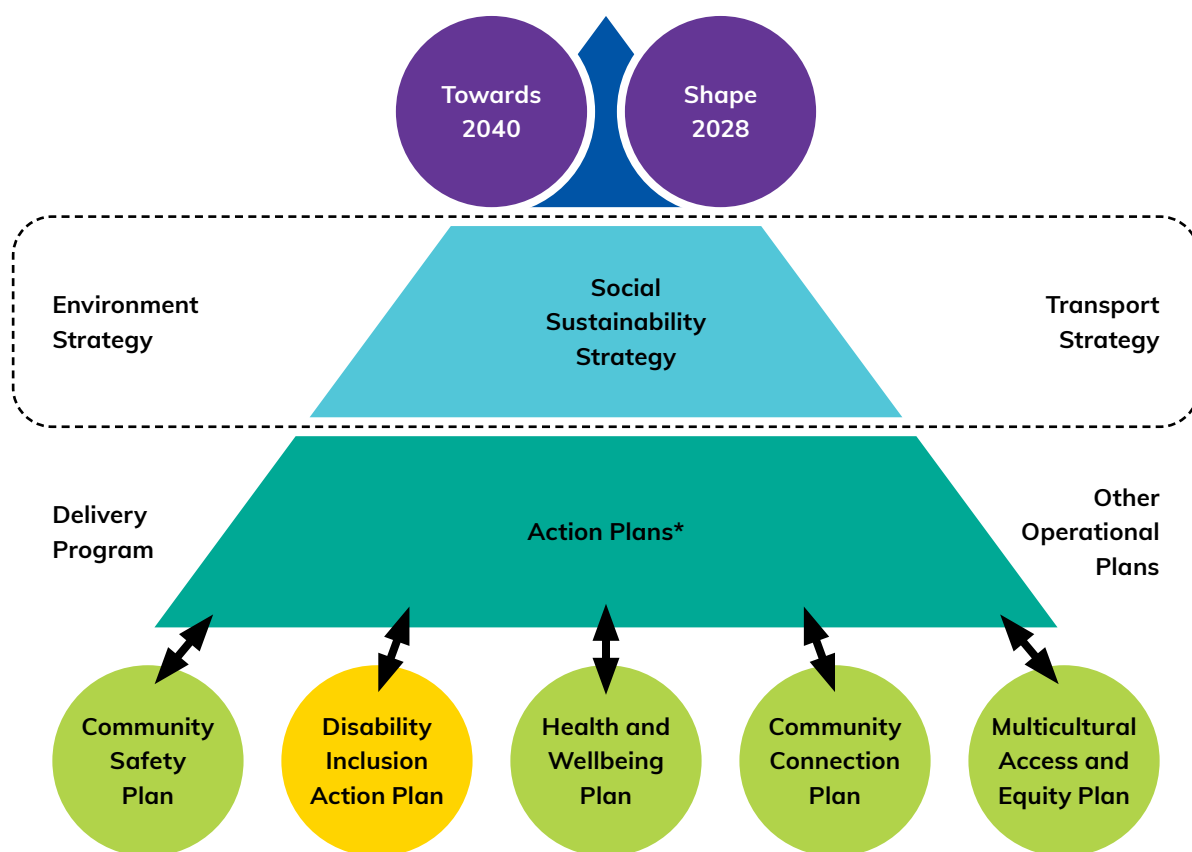
The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 2026 is an action identified in Better Together 2040, working towards the outcomes in the Inclusive pillar of the strategy.

The DIAP is a supporting document that will inform actions in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan over the next four years.

Council is required under the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 to develop a DIAP every four years. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the legislative context for this plan.

Figure 1

Alignment of Disability Inclusion Action Plan in Council's strategic framework



What is inclusion?

For the purpose of this plan, inclusion is defined as everybody having equal opportunity to enjoy the same experiences, and be part of groups that are meaningful to them.

Inclusion reaches across all domains of life including health, wellbeing, education and employment. When we have an inclusive community, everyone benefits. Impacts of exclusion are felt far beyond the individual, with families and the broader community being negatively impacted by a non-inclusive community.

Everyone deserves to participate, have fun, be visible, heard and celebrated. We know people living with disability require everyone's support to ensure that they also enjoy the same access to assistance when needed, social infrastructure, services and information as others living in the community.



“People with disability include, but are not restricted to, those who have long-term physical, mental, cognitive, intellectual or sensory impairments. People with disability have specific needs, priorities and perspectives based on their individual identities including their gender, age, sexuality, race and cultural background, and can face additional barriers and inequities.” – Australian Disability Strategy 2021-2031.



What the Disability Inclusion Action Plan will achieve

This DIAP continues to work towards achieving the community's' vision:

Universal access and inclusion across the Northern Beaches that enables people living with disability to fulfill their potential as equal members of the community. (Northern Beaches Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021)

It supports people living with disability to feel included and be a part of community life.

Key Outcome Indicator:

Percentage of DIAP survey respondents who say they feel included most of the time in community life

In 2021, 77% of survey respondents indicated that they felt included some or all of the time. The DIAP is Council's tool to help us continue to improve the inclusion of all people.



Council's role in supporting inclusion and access

Local government plays an essential role in access and inclusion as a:

- **Role model** - Council has a key role to play as a leader and role model for best practice inclusion and access initiatives
- **Advocate** - Council is in a position to lobby State and Federal governments to secure funding and other forms of support for disability inclusion and access initiatives
- **Advisor** - Council is in a unique position to provide advice to non-government and community organisations and local businesses on local disability inclusion and access issues
- **Educator** - Council is able to provide information, education and training to the broader community on disability inclusion and access issues
- **Policy maker** - Council will influence disability inclusion and access outcomes through clear policies which prioritise key issues
- **Consent authority** - As the key development consent authority in the Northern Beaches Local Government Area (LGA), Council can support disability inclusion and access in residential and commercial zones through development compliance frameworks
- **Landowner** - Council has control over land it owns, and can facilitate disability inclusion and access through improvements to the public realm and community facilities
- **Service provider** - As a provider of community services, Council will support disability initiatives and encourage other services to be inclusive
- **Funder** - Council can fund and support disability services, events and initiatives offered by non-government organisations
- **Event planner** - Council will plan and run inclusive and accessible events
- **Employer** - As the biggest employer in the Northern Beaches, Council can influence inclusion and access outcomes through establishing best practice employment practices and committing to the meaningful employment of people with disability.

Disability in Australia

4.4 million

18% of all Australians are people
living with disability.



44.5%

Almost half of all people
living with disability
aged 65+

People living with disability are more than
twice as likely to not have a job
(10.3% compared to 4.6%)



53.4%

people 15 years and
over with disability
avoided common
situations **because**
of their disability
in the previous year ^

90%

the vast majority of disabilities are **not**
readily visible

Disability on the Northern Beaches



9,273

in our community **people need help**
in their day to day lives (3.7%)



10.7%

of the population **provide**
assistance to a person with
disability, long term illness or old age



60+

We know that prevalence of disability increases with age.
The Northern Beaches has **a larger proportion of people** over the
age of 60 than greater Sydney.

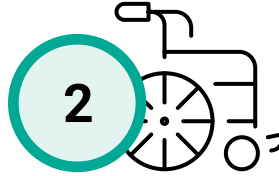
* Source (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release>). ^ Source (<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia-2020-in-brief/contents/how-many-people-have-disability>).

This Action Plan supports the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan. It sets out actions to be undertaken by Council to support the four focus areas of the plan.



Focus Area 1

Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours



Focus Area 2

Creating more liveable communities



Focus Area 3

Achieving a higher rate of meaningful employment



Focus Area 4

Providing equitable access to services through better systems and processes

How the plan was developed

Review of previous DIAP

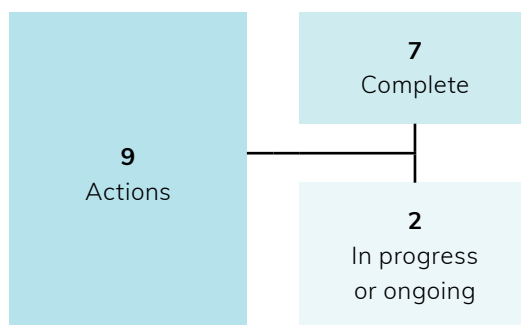
The development of this plan began with a review of the achievements and progress made on the previous DIAP 2017-2021.

Overall, since 2016 Council has made significant progress in understanding and meeting the needs of people living with disability.

Northern Beaches Council DIAP 2017-2021 had 78 actions across the four focus areas. Since the implementation of the Plan, Council has successfully achieved 92 percent of these actions.

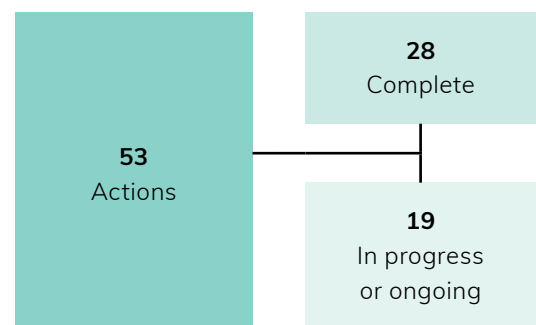
Focus Area 1

Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours



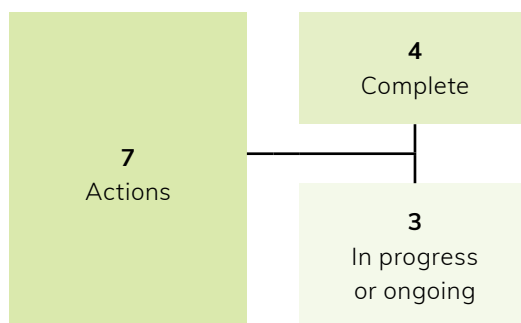
Focus Area 2

Creating livable communities



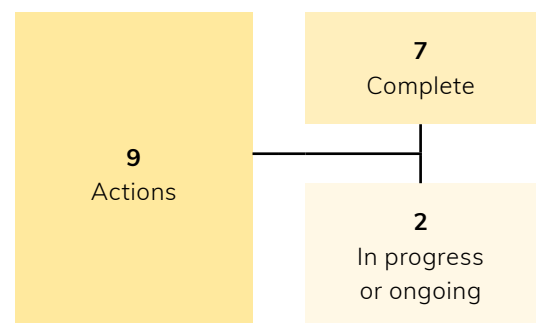
Focus Area 3

Supporting access to meaningful employment



Focus Area 4

Improving access to council services through better systems and processes



Consultation with the community

People living with disability were consulted about their experiences of living, working and visiting the Northern Beaches throughout the creation of this Plan. They were asked to share their ideas for making the Northern Beaches more accessible and inclusive.

Throughout October and November 2021, people living with disability, their family, carers, friends, service providers and other engaged and interested community members participated in the following activities to provide feedback on how Council can improve accessibility and inclusion on the Northern Beaches.

Consultation activities:

- Community survey - An online community survey that was open to all community members from 8 October 2021 - 7 November 2021
 - 37% identified as a person with a disability
 - 29% identified as a family member or friend of a person living with disability
 - 11% identified as a carer
- Vision board - community members shared their vision for an inclusive and accessible Northern Beaches on an online vision board.
- Workshop in a Box - service providers supported their clients to participate in a Workshop in a Box activity that gathered lived experience.
- Community conversation – several community members attended two workshops hosted by Council exploring their lived experience across the four focus areas.

What our community told us

People living with disability shared the reasons they love living, visiting or working on the Northern Beaches, including their love for the beach and natural environment, their connection to the community, and the infrastructure improvements they have seen made in the last few years that allow them to participate in community life.

“I love the connections I’ve made with people over the years. I would say it’s the community themselves who make me feel a part of the Northern Beaches.”

“Being able to enjoy most, if not all of what the Northern Beaches has to offer; from walks along the bay and ocean, or through the bush, to being able to access most venues including restaurants.”

“Northern Beaches is like an extended family. Everyone knows everyone.”

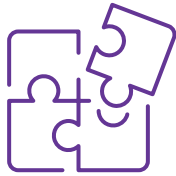
“The laid-back lifestyle - no one is too busy to give you a hand when you need it or even ask are you alright?”

People shared that they felt there was generally more awareness about disability within the community and commented on the continued improvement to physical access in places like Collaroy and at recently upgraded children’s playgrounds. Respondents said when they are in the community people generally try to assist them when they noticed they need help. Respondents also said that people assist them to make sure they have understood what they have said, including taking off their masks or finding another way to share information.

At the same time, people also highlighted that there needs to be more awareness and understanding of invisible or hidden disability.

Respondents highlighted the diversity within the cohort and the importance of recognising this diversity to understand the different abilities and barriers experienced by people living with disability.

Key themes that emerged during consultation



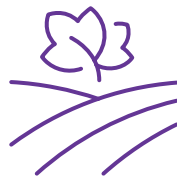
Access to what the
Northern Beaches
has to offer



Opportunities for
engagement



Opportunities for
employment



Focus on
infrastructure



Awareness and
education

How the consultation shaped this Plan

The actions included in the Plan respond to community feedback and represent what Council can directly contribute to over the next four years. Some actions that involve Council advocating for change.

We acknowledge that there are barriers to access and inclusion that exist outside Council's scope of influence. Some actions have been included that involve Council advocating for change. These actions ensure that we are supporting the community to realise change that is outside the control of Council.

The Plan also includes a number of actions from the previous DIAP 2017-2021 that are now embedded practices or ongoing actions.

Focus Area 1 - Positive community attitudes and behaviours

Aim: To build community awareness of the rights and capabilities of people with disability and support the development of positive attitudes and behaviour towards people with disability.

Attitudes and behaviours of the community towards people living with disability can present the greatest barrier to full access and inclusion. Negative attitudes towards people living with disability can have significant impact on their day to day lives and can affect education, employment, health and community participation.

Every third person in NSW who lives with disability has avoided situations due to disability in the past year – often avoiding visiting family, retail and hospitality venues, and other social situations (NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025).

Key achievements in the last five years:

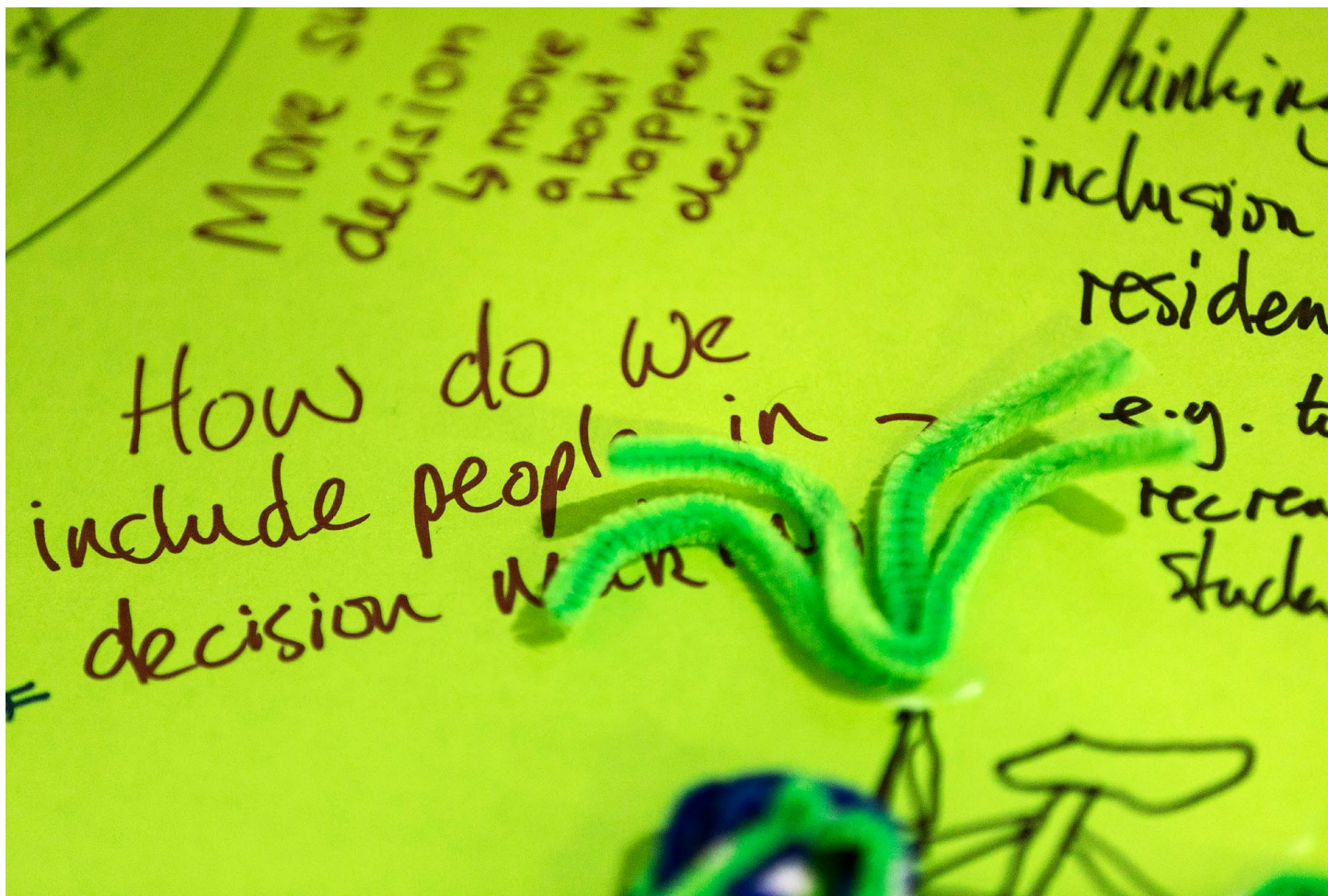
- Developed and supported a range of disability education and awareness initiatives including promotion of International Day of People with Disability
- Conducted a number of internal education and awareness training programs including:
 - Accessible and Inclusive Events Training
 - Disability Awareness online learning module for all staff and included in the New Starter induction program
- Established Access and Inclusion Awards encouraging local businesses to make their services more accessible
- Established Inclusive Event Guidelines.

We heard that:

- Most people think that negative attitudes and behaviours are influenced by a lack of knowledge and awareness
- People living with disability want the opportunity to share their stories and experiences with Council and the community.

You told us there are opportunities to:

- Ensure we utilise the expertise of people living with disability about accessibility and disability inclusion
- Advocate for improved transport options in hard-to-reach areas of the Northern Beaches.



Focus Area 1 – Behaviours and Attitudes

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA1.01	Build community awareness about disability and promote inclusion	Number of programs and events delivered each year	Community Development	Ongoing
FA1.02	Incorporate storytelling and other creative approaches into Council communications and engagement to increase awareness and understanding of disability and inclusion	New approaches implemented	Community Development, Communications	Ongoing
FA1.03	Engage the local disability sector to identify relevant actions and/or advocacy relating to community transport, services and support, lower cost activities or other identified priorities	Engagement undertaken and opportunities identified and realised	Community Development	Ongoing
FA1.04	Partner across Council to find ways to celebrate International Day for People with Disability each year	International Day of People with Disability celebrated each year	Community Development	Years 1 - 4
FA1.05	Investigate ways to ensure the grants program supports the improvement of disability inclusion and accessibility for the community	Improvements identified and implemented	Community Development	Year 2 & 3
FA1.06	Implement inclusive events guidelines across all Council run events	Percentage of events delivered each year that incorporate the inclusive event guidelines	Events	Ongoing
FA1.07	Include information relevant to people living with disability in mainstream communication	Number of Weekly Newsletters that include information targeted at people living with disability is increasing each year	Communications	Ongoing
FA1.08	Include images of people living with disability in regular marketing and communication materials produced by Council	Number of marketing and communication materials that include images of people living with disability is increasing each year	Communications, Graphic Design & Production	Ongoing

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA1.09	Review and improve training about inclusion and access for Council staff, in particular for staff in customer facing roles	Staff training updated and rolled out to organisation	Human Resources	Year 1
FA1.10	Deliver inclusive and accessible library programs that encourage connection for all people	100% of program planning and implementation is aligned to inclusive practices	Library Services	Ongoing
FA1.11	Explore the provision of devices that enable accessible library features in the home	Programs delivered	Library Services	Year 2
FA1.12	Increase the number of library materials offered in a range of formats and ensure the inclusive collection is maintained	Inclusive collection maintained	Library Services	Ongoing
FA1.13	Promote opportunities for local arts and cultural activities that are accessible and inclusive through the Culture Map live	Culture map includes accessible and inclusive activities	Arts & Culture	Ongoing
FA1.14	Implement and maintain the Inclusion Policy and Working Together Agreements between families and educators to support inclusion of children living with disability	Policy reviewed regularly and Working Together Agreements in place for all children living with disability using the service	Children's Services	Ongoing
FA1.15	Continue to provide inclusive and accessible childcare services for children living with disability	Number of children living with disability attending Council provided Long Day Care, Vacation Care, Pre-school, and Family Day Care services	Children's Services	Ongoing

Focus Area 2 - Creating liveable communities

Aim: To increase participation of people with disability in all aspects of community life. Use targeted approaches to address barriers in access to infrastructure, transport, social engagement, housing, learning, transport, health, social and cultural engagement and wellbeing.

Liveable communities are places where people have the opportunity to live, learn, work, play, to belong and to grow old. Liveable communities help to promote social inclusion and opportunity.

People living with disability encounter many barriers in the built environment and Council has a role to play in ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to access:



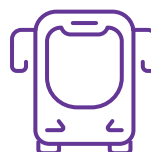
The built environment
and public spaces



The natural environment, in particular
our beaches and parks



Services, retail and hospitality
venues they need and want



Appropriate transport options

Creating liveable communities involves more than just increasing physical accessibility. Liveable communities are those where everyone has access to participate in community activities, decision making, housing and a range of opportunities for social engagement.

Council plays a key role in enabling and facilitating liveable communities. As a service provider, landowner and consent authority, Council can directly influence the accessibility and inclusivity of the LGA.

Where Council does not have responsibility, we can use advocacy and partnerships with other levels of government and organisations to support the needs of our community.

Key achievements in the last five years:

- Undertaken an accessibility audit of Council's public facilities and assets (ongoing)
- Conducted an annual review of accessible toilets
- Reviewed accessible parking provision
- Improved access to beaches and rockpools
- Implemented a playground renewal program with a focus on all abilities play
- Upgraded footpaths, kerbs, ramps and bus stops.

"I'm a carer and can see the many improvements made by Council, for example wider footpaths and general areas easily accessed."

We heard that:

- Community members recognise the significant improvements made to improve physical access to a range of public spaces and places
- Access to appropriate amenities is critical to being able to participate in the community
- Accessibility legislation, standards and guidelines provide the minimum expectations for access and inclusion but talking with people that have lived experience of existing and potential barriers will lead to the best outcomes.

You told us there are opportunities to:

- Improve connectivity between public spaces, Council buildings and amenities.

Focus Area 2 – Creating Liveable Communities

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA2.01	Improve consultation and engagement with people living with disability during the design and delivery of capital projects to better understand access requirements for users of infrastructure	Number of projects per year that have proactively engaged people living with disability is increasing	All asset owners	Ongoing
FA2.02	Ensure all new footpaths works are constructed to Council's standard specifications for width to enable safe and easy access and pram ramps are upgraded to continue to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility	% of New footpaths 1.5metre width	Transport & Civil Infrastructure	Ongoing
FA2.03	Advocate for improved transport options on the Northern Beaches	Advocacy undertaken	Transport & Civil Infrastructure	Ongoing
FA2.04	Deliver new or upgrade existing accessible parking spaces, working towards all accessible parking spaces being compliant with current legislation as part of Council's carpark renewal program	Number of compliant spaces delivered per year	Transport & Civil Infrastructure	Years 1 – 2
FA2.05	Ensure all bus stops adjoining new and renewal footpath capital works are DDA compliant and continue to deliver a proactive bus stop renewal program that makes existing bus stops DDA compliant	Number of DDA compliant bus stops built each year	Transport & Civil Infrastructure	Ongoing
FA2.06	Conduct road safety audits around identified schools each year to improve safety and identify areas of concern	4 road safety audits conducted around schools each year	Transport & Civil Infrastructure	Years 1 – 2
FA2.07	Provide ongoing education about safe utilisation of the road and pedestrian transport network including use of shared paths	Number of education programs delivered	Transport & Civil Infrastructure	Year 1

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA2.08	Improve access to unisex accessible toilets in public spaces and Council assets and incorporate adult change table facilities where possible	2 or more new/renewal amenities works include accessible facilities each year	Property	Ongoing
FA2.09	Implement a capital works program to improve accessibility to Council owned buildings	Number of buildings where access has been improved during capital projects each year	Property	Ongoing
FA2.10	Improve connectivity between community centres and surrounding infrastructure such as parking, transport hubs, amenities, etc	Transport & Civil Infrastructure, Parks & Recreation and Property to meet annually to discuss planned Capex and to coordinate programming of intended works	Property, Parks & Recreation, Transport & Civil Infrastructure	Ongoing
FA2.11	Investigate options around the use and implementation of Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK)	Year 1 - Options identified and preferred approach selected Years 2-4 - Preferred approach implemented	Property	Years 1 – 4
FA2.12	Undertake an audit of accessibility of Council owned buildings to ensure Council is an accessible place to work and prioritise recommendations of audit	Year 1 - audit completed Year 2 - 4 - Prioritise outcomes of audit and begin works	Property	Years 1 – 4
FA2.13	Investigate the inclusion of hearing loops in key Council facilities	Hearing loops installed in appropriate locations	Property	Ongoing
FA2.14	Investigate how Council could create quiet or safe spaces for people with sensory needs in public spaces	Report completed	Transport and Civil Infrastructure, Parks & Recreation, Property	Year 1
FA2.15	Improved access to beach rock pools at key locations including Bilgola Beach and Freshwater Rockpool	Locations identified and access improved	Parks & Recreation	Years 2 - 3

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA2.16	Identify more locations each year to improve access to the natural environment	3 or more locations identified and access improved to the natural environment each year	Parks & Recreation	Years 1 – 4
FA2.17	All playground upgrades are designed for all abilities	100% of playgrounds delivered are designed for all abilities	Parks & Recreation	Years 1 – 4
FA2.18	Work with businesses and the broader community to identify barriers to access in town and village centres	Number of improvements identified and implemented each year	Place & Economic Development	Ongoing
FA2.19	Improve access to walking tracks	2 or more walking tracks have improved accessibility each year	Environment & Climate Change	Years 1 – 4
FA2.20	Trial the use of QR codes to increase access to the natural environment	Trial of QR codes undertaken	Environment & Climate Change	Year 1
FA2.21	Ensure the Northern Beaches Community Engagement Policy and Strategy provides for equality of opportunity for people with a disability to participate in Council's community engagement and decision-making process	Update and implement Policy and Strategy	Community engagement	Year 1
FA2.22	Collate list of engagement channels to reach people living with disability that can be used in community engagement planning to determine appropriate approach and tools	List of stakeholder channels developed and distributed	Community engagement	Years 1 – 2
FA2.23	Advocate and plan for housing to meet the needs of our community through Council's Local Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy implemented	Strategic planning	Ongoing

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA2.24	Review and update requirements for universal design as part of the development of the Northern Beaches Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and the Development Control Plan (DCP)	LEP and DCP updated to include universal design guidelines	Strategic planning	Year 1
FA2.25	Include inclusive and accessible arts and cultural infrastructure in Place Plans and other key planning documents	Place Plans include recommendations about accessible arts and cultural infrastructure	Strategic planning	Ongoing
FA2.26	Identify and promote volunteering roles for people living with Disability	% of Council volunteer roles that are inclusive of people living with disability each year	Volunteering	Ongoing

Focus Area 3 - Supporting access to meaningful employment

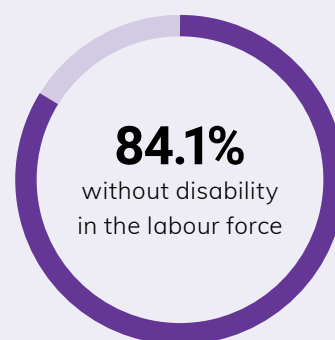
Aim: To increase the number of people living with disability accessing meaningful employment, enabling people with disability to plan for their future, exercise choice and control, and increase their economic security.

Employment supports people living with disability to have more autonomy over their lives, be financially independent and have a better standard of living. Paid employment can also increase mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Employment rates for people living with disability in Australia are significantly lower than those without disability across all sectors:

53.4% of people with disability participating in the labour force, compared with 84.1% of people without disability.¹

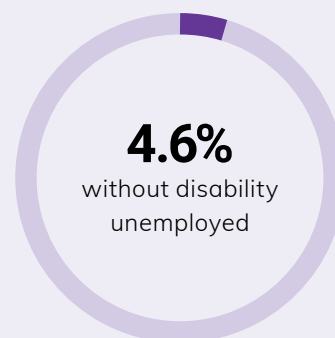
¹This lower rate of participation has remained unchanged for over 15 years.



People with disability are half as likely to be employed full-time (28%) than people without disability (55%).



People with disability are more likely to be unemployed (10.3%) compared for those without disability (4.6%).



Source (<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release>).

Key achievements in the last five years

- Developed guidelines for inclusive recruitment practices and the continued implementation of this is now business as usual.
- Continued to offer equitable employment and volunteering opportunities across Council
- Established inclusive workplace practices. One element of this is the development of the 'Working Remotely Toolkit' which assists in overcoming some of the access barriers to our facilities.

We heard that:

- There is a need to increase employer awareness and knowledge about how to remove barriers to employment for people living with disability
- Common practices in recruitment and hiring processes often cause people living with disability to be excluded from consideration
- There are often challenges in workplaces understanding the way adjustments and adaptations can be used to make workplaces more inclusive and boost employment opportunities for those living with disability
- Community services are critical for providing support for those living with disability seeking opportunities.

You told us there are opportunities to:

- Explore ways to promote and support the work of community services in increasing meaningful employment
- Reduce barriers to employment by looking to promote more diverse employment opportunities and pathways to access them.

Focus Area 3 – Meaningful Employment

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA3.01	Identify and build relationships with local Disability Employment Service (DES) providers to support people with disability	Number of relationships established/ programs implemented	Community development	Ongoing
FA3.02	Raise awareness about accessibility adaptations and inclusive hiring and employment practices with the business community through our regular communication pathways	Information distributed annually to the business community	Place & Economic Development	Ongoing
FA3.03	Investigate inclusive employer certifications to continue to make Council a more inclusive place to work	Inclusive employment certification identified and undertaken	Human Resources	Year 2
FA3.04	Review hiring and notification process to ensure inclusion of all abilities	Council hiring and notification process updated	Human Resources	Year 2
FA3.05	Provide employment transition opportunities for people living with disability	2 positions each year	Library Services	Ongoing



Focus Area 4 - Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

Aim: To ensure that people with disability can make informed choices about available services and to access mainstream Council services and other opportunities easily and efficiently.

People living with disability often face barriers navigating the systems and processes required to access the services and supports they need. Council has a significant role to play in the improvement of access to services and information given the range of services we provide, including general customer service, information requests, community feedback and complaints, facilities and programs, and decision-making processes.

Difficulty accessing information and systems can be impacted by:

- a lack of availability of different formats of information to meet diverse needs
- lack of awareness and understanding of customer facing staff members
- inflexible processes
- limited opportunities for feedback and input.

In recent years, new information and communication technologies and an increase in availability of alternative formats have improved access to information for everyone.

Key achievements in the last five years:

- Audited all of Council's media platforms, documents, forms and booking systems to identify strengths and gaps.
- Amended Council's website to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.
- Updated online information for consistency, readability and ease of use across customer service, compliance and planning business units.
- Continued promotion of the availability of accessible systems, processes, and formats.

We heard that:

- Most people are happy with the increased availability of online services and information that has occurred recently due to the COVID-19 response
- Respondents highlighted the impact of mask wearing on their ability to communicate effectively
- Signage and wayfinding is often difficult to understand.

You told us there are opportunities to:

- Explore the increased use and promotion of accessibility technology like hearing loops, videos and subtitles and captioning to increase access to information and services

Focus Area 4 – Systems and Processes

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA4.01	Investigate additional ways to promote existing accessible infrastructure and then develop and implement a plan to communicate with the community.	Plan developed and implemented	Parks & Recreation	Years 1 – 2
FA4.02	All relevant staff to undertake training on inclusive and appropriate language for communication and document writing	Training completed	Community Development	Year 2
FA4.03	Advocate and provide guidance to teams across Council about best practice in designing inclusive communication, marketing and written material	Internal advocacy and guidance provided	Communications & Community Development	Ongoing

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA4.04	Identify and distribute relevant information about events and opportunities supporting disability inclusion through council communication channels (including the Disability Newsletter)	Events and opportunities sourced and distributed monthly	Community Development	Ongoing
FA4.05	Provide referral services to connect people living with disability and their carers to service providers and community groups to increase community participation	Referral services provided	Community Development	Ongoing
FA4.06	Raise awareness of accessibility at Council run events	Attendee feedback on knowledge of event accessibility is increasing	Events	Ongoing
FA4.07	Ensure Council website is compatible with assistive communication technology and is disability friendly, including consideration of images, contrasts, language etc and utilising appropriate subtitles, graphics and transcripts for video content	Ensure Council website maintains AA rating under WCAG 2.0 and 2.1 standard	Communications	Ongoing
FA4.08	Ensure all written communication is Plain English and formatted in way that is accessible (font, size, colours etc)	All written communication is plain English	Communications, Graphic Design & Production	Ongoing
FA4.09	Relevant staff undertake training in writing to meet diverse needs of the audience	Training completed	Communications	Year 2

Code	Actions	Performance Measure	Responsibility	Timeframe
FA4.10	Engage people living with disability to investigate the need for alternative communication options such as hard copy, online, email etc	Engagement undertaken and opportunities identified and realised	Communications, Community Development	Years 1 – 2
FA4.11	Corporate writing and style guidelines are followed when preparing material to support community engagement projects including communicating with community members and stakeholders	All written communication is plain english and meets corporate writing guidelines	Community Engagement	Ongoing
FA4.12	Investigate the process to be recognised as a Communication Accessible organisation and report on proposed approach	Report completed and proposed approach implemented	Customer Service	Years 2 – 3

Delivering the Plan

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the Northern Beaches DIAP 2022-2026 is the responsibility of all areas of Council.

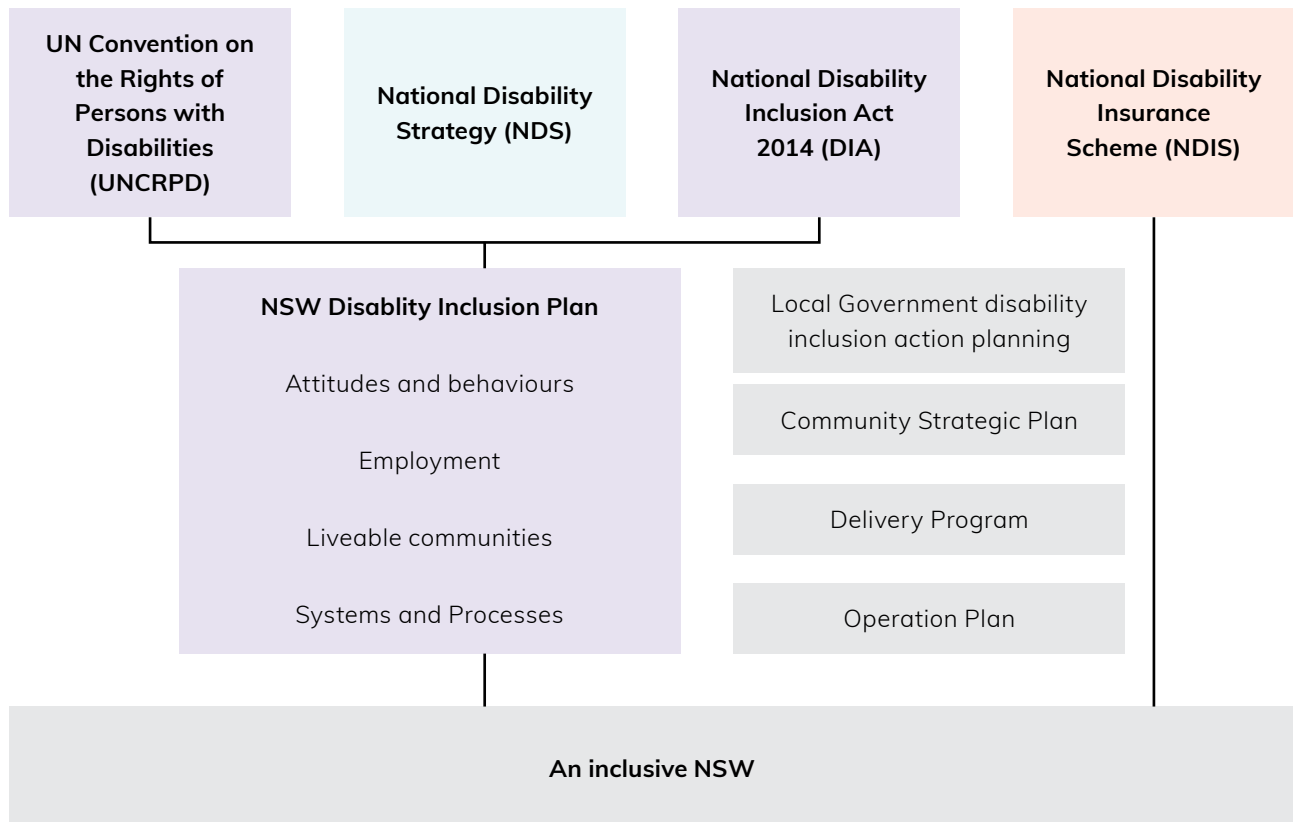
Each year, Council will report on its progress against the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 as part of its Annual Report. The section of the Council's Annual Report relating to the implementation of the plan will be provided to the Minister for Disability Services and the NSW Disability Council.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will continue to be reviewed and updated every four years.



Appendix 1

Relevant legislative and policy documents





northern
beaches
council