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## Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report

### Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022-2026 (Stage 1 of 2)

Consultation period: 6 October 2021 to 28 November 2021

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#### Contents

1.	Summary.....	2
1.1.	Key outcomes .....	2
1.2.	How we engaged .....	3
1.3.	Who responded.....	4
2.	Background.....	6
3.	Engagement objectives .....	6
4.	Engagement approach .....	6
4.1.	Reaching diverse audiences .....	7
5.	Findings .....	7
6.	How we used your feedback .....	9

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## 1. Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of stage one community and stakeholder engagement for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022-2026 conducted between 6 October 2021 and 28 November 2021.




We consulted 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. The opportunities have formed the basis for actions within the draft DIAP.

Over 250 people participated in this consultation stage and shared their experiences and suggestions for creating a more inclusive and accessible Northern Beaches. Key feedback themes are outlined below.

Throughout the consultation, people also shared the reasons they love living, visiting and working on the Northern Beaches. Key highlights were:






- love for the beaches and natural environment
- connection to the community
- infrastructure improvements they have witnessed in the last few years allowing them to participate in community life.

### 1.1. Key outcomes

 Total contributions across all activities <sup>1</sup>	252	
 How responses were received	Written comments (email/letter) Online self-select survey Online vision board Online workshop	Number received: 17 Completions: 194 Contributions: 30 Attendees: 11
 Feedback themes	Access to what the Northern Beaches has to offer Focus on infrastructure Awareness and education	Opportunities for employment Opportunities for engagement

<sup>1</sup> May contain multiple comments from one person

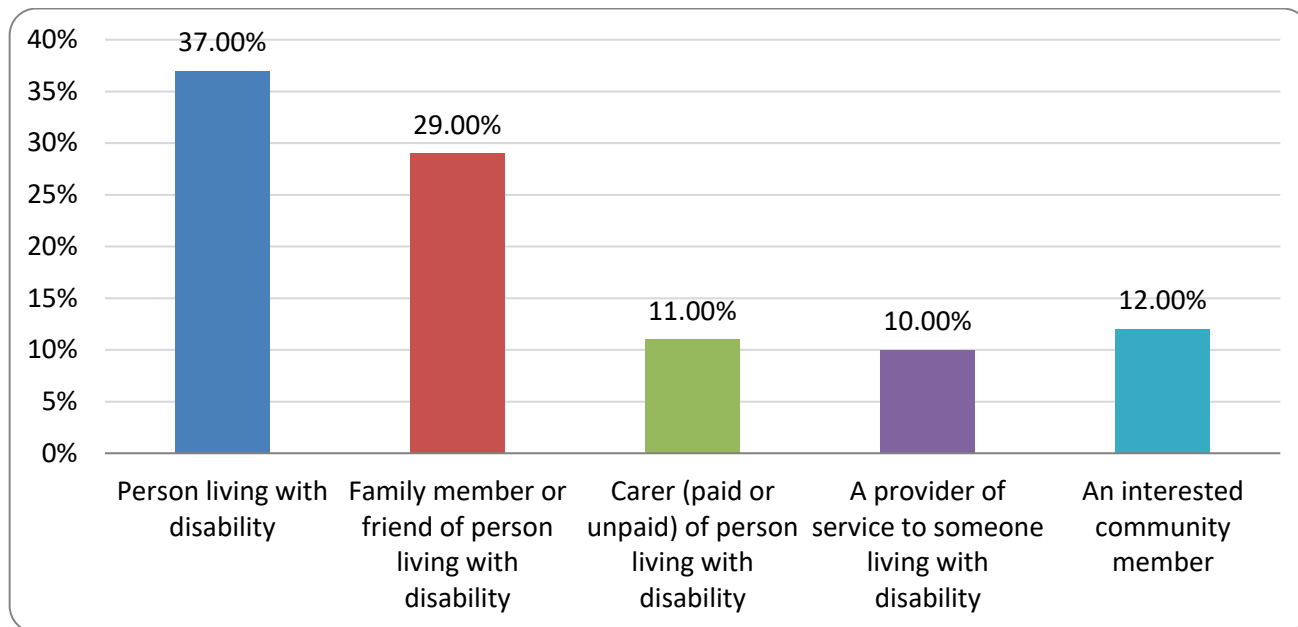
## 1.2. How we engaged

 Have Your Say visitation stats	Visitors: 2096	Visits: 2601	Average time onsite: 53 seconds
 Social media	Council Facebook posts: 2 (including one boosted to Instagram)		Reach: 49,736 Clicks: 606
	KALOF Facebook post: 1		Reach: 321 Clicks: 1
	Library Facebook post: 1		Reach: 1,872 Clicks: 5
	LinkedIn post: 1		Reach: 2,339 Clicks: 37
 Videos	Video with overview of consultation activities: 1		Views: 83
 Electronic direct mail (EDM)	Community Engagement (fortnightly) newsletter: 3 editions		Distribution: Approx. 22,000 subscribers
	Council (weekly) e-News: 2 editions		Distribution: Approx. 150,000 subscribers
	Disability Newsletter: 2 editions		Distribution: 1,286 subscribers
	Creative News: 1 edition		Distribution: 1,820 subscribers
	The Drift Library Newsletter: 1 edition		Distribution: Approx. 87,336 subscribers
	Stakeholder email: 2		Distribution: 65 people
 Face-to-face sessions	Online workshops (Teams): 2		Attendance: 11 participants

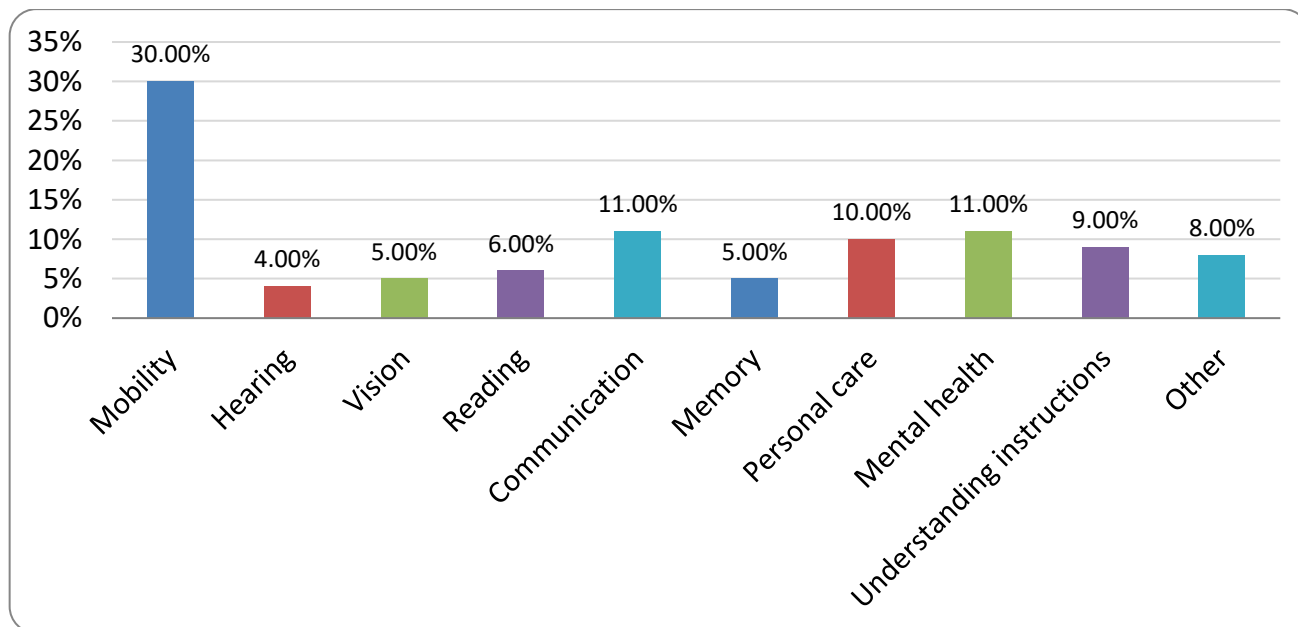
### 1.3. Who responded

The data represented below was gathered in the community survey and only includes those respondents who provided this detail.

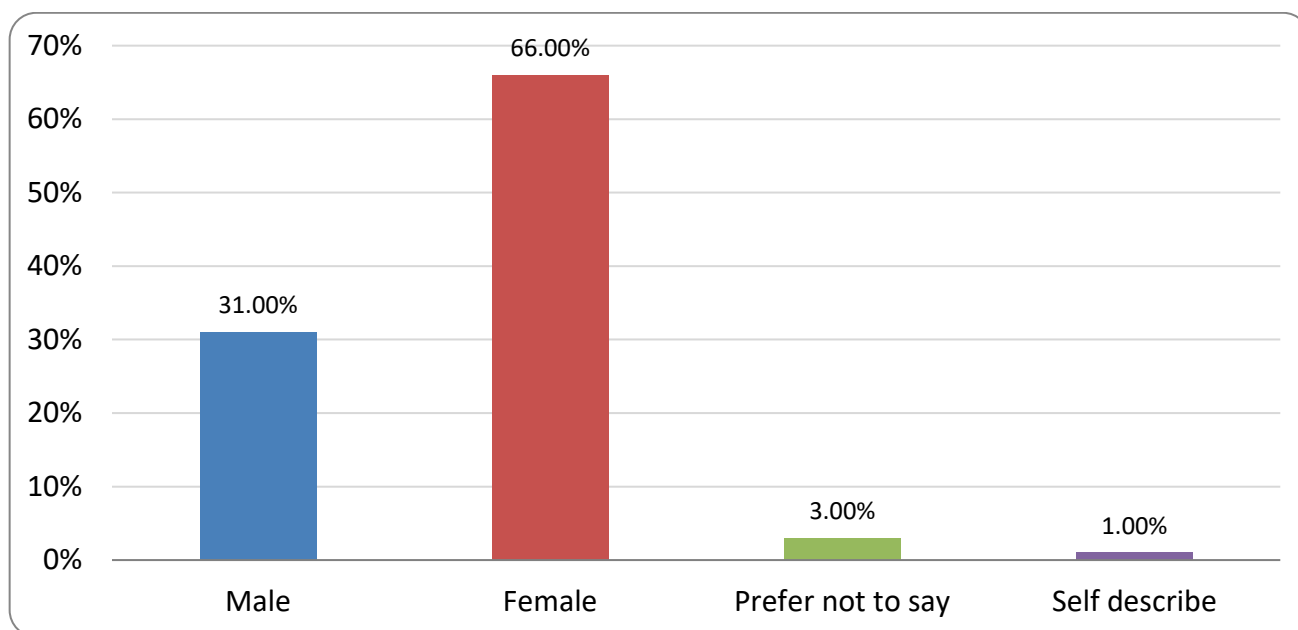
#### Description respondents



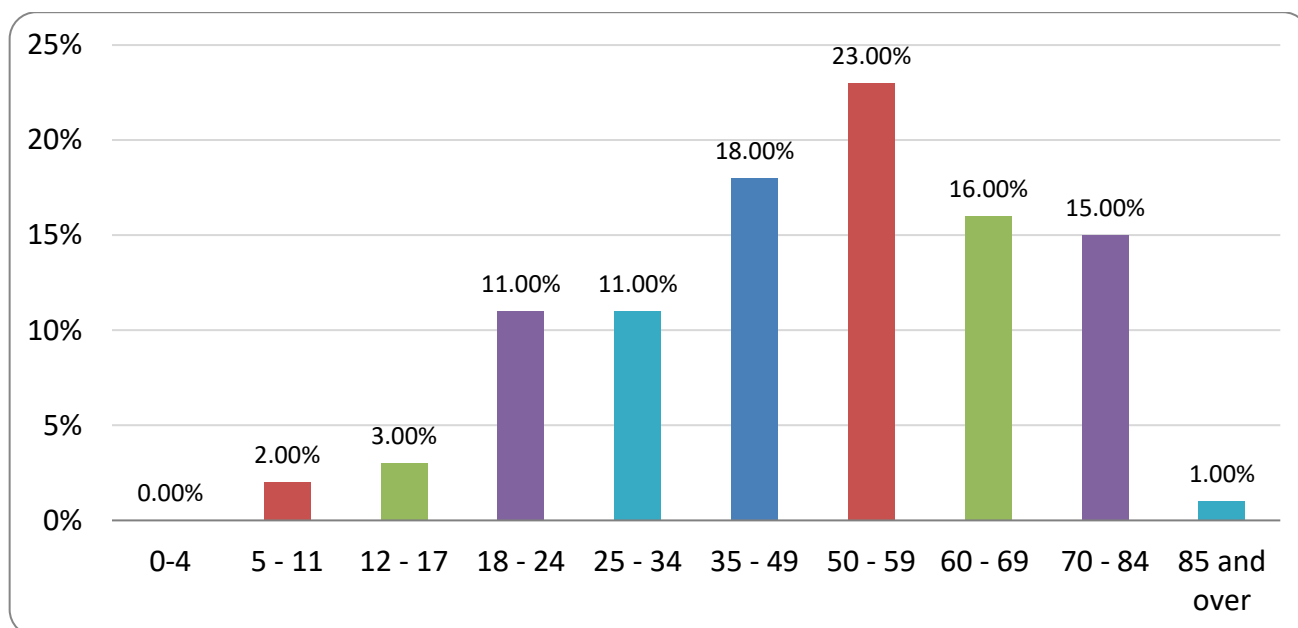
#### Areas identified as needing support or adaptations



## Gender



## Age group



## 2. Background

Building on the success of the previous DIAP 2017-2021, we are developing our next DIAP 2022-2026. The new DIAP will outline our plans to ensure people with disability feel included and can participate fully in their local community over the next four years. Our goal for the future is to further embed accessibility and inclusion principles in Council culture and processes.

DIAPs are required to align with the following four focus areas of the NSW Government Disability Inclusion Plan:

1. Develop positive community attitudes and behaviours.
2. Create liveable communities.
3. Support access to meaningful employment.
4. Improve access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

The Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan was devised on a two-stage approach:

- Stage 1: community consultation to gather people's experiences and ideas about how to make the Northern Beaches a more accessible and inclusive place to live, work and visit across the four focus areas.
- Stage 2: public exhibition of the draft DIAP 2022-2026 to understand level of support and suggestions from the community.

## 3. Engagement objectives

Community and stakeholder engagement aimed to:

- build community and stakeholder awareness of participation activities
- provide accessible information so community and stakeholders can participate in a meaningful way
- identify community and stakeholder concerns, local knowledge and values
- provide vulnerable and marginalised groups access to the engagement process.

## 4. Engagement approach

Community and stakeholder engagement for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022-2026 was conducted over a seven-week period, from 6 October 2021 to 28 November 2021, and consisted of a series of activities that provided opportunities for community and stakeholders to contribute.

The engagement was planned, implemented and reported in accordance with Council's [Community Engagement Matrix](#) (2017).

A project page<sup>2</sup> was established on our have your say platform with information provided in an accessible and easy to read format.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/diap-2022-2026>

To ensure we were providing the information as clearly as possible and asking the right questions, we asked a group of representatives from disability service providers for feedback on our engagement content prior to the start of the consultation.

The project was primarily promoted through our regular email newsletter (EDM) channels and social media. We also sent emails directly to a range of stakeholder groups.

We offered different ways for people to provide feedback, including:

- an online community survey, linked from the project webpage, asking about people's experiences of living with disability and what could make things better on the Northern Beaches
- a [vision board](#), embedded on a project sub-page, for those who just wanted to share a few words (or images) about what would contribute to an inclusive and accessible Northern Beaches
- Workshop in Box resources to help disability service providers or people with caring responsibilities facilitate a discussion about inclusion and accessibility in their own setting
- a fun and tactile Chatterbox activity to engage family, friends, participants and colleagues in a conversation about inclusion.

We created and embedded a video on the project page explaining the various consultation activities.

We held some online sessions for community members and service providers. This was an opportunity for people to ask questions and share their feedback with the project team in a more conversational manner. Some disability service representatives attended this session to support participants in their programs to engage in the discussion.

Email and written feedback were also invited. Contact details for the project manager were provided to allow people to speak directly with them and provide feedback over the phone.

We asked a uniform set of questions of participants in all activities. Results provide responses across a spectrum of demographics, expertise, experience and understanding of our local government area.

#### **4.1. Reaching diverse audiences**

As part of this initial consultation, we undertook community-wide and targeted engagement to identify and understand the diverse experiences and needs of people living with disability.

We included information about the consultation in various Council newsletters and social media. We also reached out to a range of internal and external stakeholders to ask them to promote the consultation to their networks.

With the NSW government COVID-19 restrictions impacting our ability to meet with people in person, we supported organisations in the disability sector by providing additional engagement tools for them to use with their service users.

## **5. Findings**

We consulted with people living with disability, their family, carers, friends, service providers and other engaged and interested community members on how Council could improve accessibility and inclusion on the Northern Beaches.

As part of this consultation, 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?”*

In their feedback, people expressed support for a range of Council initiatives implemented in the last four years since the first DIAP, including the recently completed physical access improvements in Collaroy, accessibility upgrades to children’s playgrounds and the increased availability of online services and information.

Key themes that emerged during consultation about how Council could further support inclusion and accessibility on the Northern Beaches included:

- access to what the Northern Beaches has to offer
- a focus on infrastructure
- awareness and education
- opportunities for employment
- opportunities for engagement

People said they want improved access to places such as our beaches and bush walks, playground, reserves and open spaces, health and community services, local businesses, shops/restaurants and Council facilities and events.

During the consultation, we heard various suggestions on how we could improve access to some of these, ranging from improved infrastructure to signage and communication aids.

Requests for infrastructure improvements were numerous and varied throughout the consultation, and key considerations included that improved:

- transport options and local pedestrian infrastructure (e.g. footpaths and crossings) will allow people with reduced mobility to be more independent in their daily activities
- access to appropriate public amenities/toilets is critical for many to being able to participate in the community.

While feedback suggests there is increasing awareness and consideration of disability, many comments indicated that more needs to be done to educate the community and Council staff about inclusive practices, including a focus on:

- education of employers about inclusive employment practices, including in recruitment
- invisible or hidden disability such as chronic pain and mental health conditions that are often misunderstood



- sensory needs, in particular the need for quiet spaces during busy events and gatherings
- people's ability and what they can do not just on supports required for people with disability.

Many people expressed a desire to be more involved in Council decision-making and offered to share their knowledge and experiences to help us make more informed decision. We were asked to implement earlier and more targeted consultation with people with disability in the planning of Council projects, programs and events to ensure a better outcome for our diverse community.

We were also asked to talk to people that have lived experience of existing and potential barriers to find ways to go beyond minimum accessibility standards.

## 6. How we used your feedback

An initial review of community feedback revealed a number of different ways for Council to support inclusion and accessibility on the Northern Beaches. We then collated and shared feedback with staff who read through the comments and identified further opportunities for improvements.

Council will explore how we:

- utilise the knowledge and expertise of people living with disability about accessibility and disability inclusion when planning and delivering programs, events and infrastructure projects
- advocate for improved transport options in hard-to-reach areas of the Northern Beaches LGA
- improve connectivity between public spaces, Council buildings and amenities.
- 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
- increase use and promote accessibility of technology like hearing loops, videos and subtitles and captioning to increase access to information and services
- make online services and information accessible to everyone using tools like Easy Read, Plain English and screen reader compatibility.

These opportunities have formed the basis for proposed actions across the four focus areas of the draft DIAP.

Document administration	
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Notes	Community and stakeholder views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Northern Beaches Council or indicate a commitment to a particular course of action.