



Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2026 - 2030



Northern
Beaches
Council



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of these lands
and show respect to Elders, past, present and emerging.

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Document information

First year of plan - 2026/27

Draft presented: May 2026 - 26DIAP0315

Adopted: TBD

Message from the Mayor

A more inclusive Northern Beaches for everyone



The Northern Beaches is known for its strong sense of community and connection to place. It is a place where people value independence, belonging and the ability to participate in everyday life alongside others.

When we spoke with people with disability, carers and their supporters, they described inclusion in very practical, everyday terms. Inclusion means being able to:

- move around safely
- go to the beach or pool
- enter shops and restaurants
- use toilets and parking without having to problem-solve
- ensure children can play sport, catch a bus, ride a bike and visit local shops independently
- be treated with respect and dignity
- access clear and reliable information about what is available.

When these things line up, people feel they belong. When access breaks

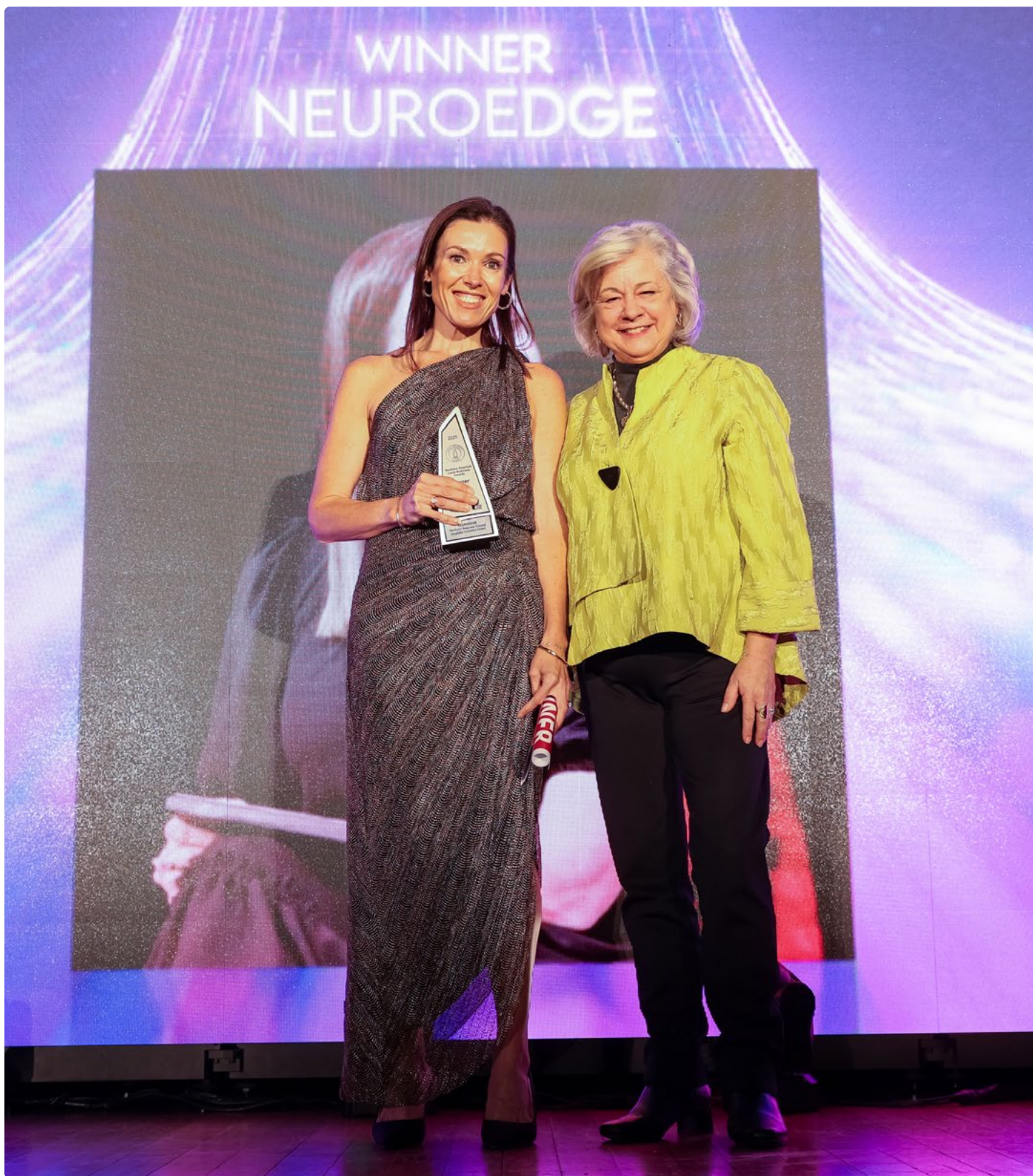
down, information is missing or attitudes are negative, that sense of belonging becomes fragile. Inclusion is not only about physical access, but also about attitudes, systems and the way we treat one another.

Thank you to the many community members who have contributed to the development of this action plan. By working together with people with disability, service providers and the wider community, we can continue to make the Northern Beaches a place where everyone can participate in everyday life, feel welcome, and belong.

Sue Heins

Mayor, Northern Beaches Council

The winner of the 2025 Disability Inclusion Business Award, NeuroEdge, is committed to transforming workplaces into truly inclusive environments.



Language used in this plan

In this document we use person-first language for example, 'people with disability'. This focuses on the person rather than their disability.

We acknowledge that many people prefer identity-first language, for example 'disabled people'. It is also important to acknowledge that some people may identify with a community with a shared identity.

Similarly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and multicultural communities may have a very different understanding of disability. In many languages, there is no word for disability in the way it's broadly understood in English.

We recognise and respect these individual and community preferences and will use them when applicable.

Alternative formats

We have written and formatted this plan so it can be accessed by assistive technology users. This plan is also available in Easy Read and as a Word document.

Disability inclusion on the Northern Beaches

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026–2030 (DIAP) sets out a practical approach to improving disability inclusion in planning, services and decision-making across the Northern Beaches.

The DIAP turns strategic commitments into clear actions that support fair access, participation and inclusion for people with disability.

It shows how local actions align with NSW Government laws and policies, including the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan*. This supports a more consistent and whole-of-organisation approach to disability inclusion.

In partnership with the community, Council has made significant progress over the last 8 years driven by the DIAP 2017-2021 and DIAP 2022-2026. Accessibility improvements include:

- better access to information
- event planning that has access and inclusion at its core
- increased physical access to buildings, places and spaces
- active travel improvements
- parks and playgrounds that enable participation for all
- programs and education campaigns that build community knowledge and awareness.

The actions focus on areas in which Council can make the greatest difference. They are informed by evidence, community engagement and lived experience, and aim to strengthen inclusive practice, improve accountability and build Council capability while responding to local needs.

The actions are clear and measurable to enable monitoring, evaluation and reporting that demonstrates real change for people with disability and their carers.

Davidson resident, Katherine believes it's important to be inclusive to people with disabilities so that everyone can enjoy the community.



Action plan on a page

Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030

Focus areas	 1. Developing positive community attitudes and upholding rights of people with disability	 2: Creating liveable and safer communities	 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence	 4: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes
Aims	Strengthening protections preventing abuse and ensuring people with disability feel safe, respected and supported when accessing services and public spaces	Improving access to places, information, services and transport so people with disability can participate fully in community, cultural and civic life	Expanding opportunities for economic participation, employment, skills development and independence	Embedding disability inclusion into policies, planning, service design and decision-making, supported by governance, data, accountability and workforce capability
Outcome measures	Proportion of people with disability who report they can access services and supports when needed	Proportion of people with disability who report being able to participate in community life without access barriers	Percentage of Northern Beaches Council employees who identify as a person with disability	Number of Council information resources available in Easy Read

Better Together 2040 outcomes



Safe Places



Equity and Inclusion



Resilient and adaptive social sector



Celebrating First Nations People



Value of all



Safe People



Sense of Belonging



Supportive Networks



Accessible Services, programs + facilities



Strong volunteering culture

Case for change

Disability inclusion remains uneven

Despite generally positive attitudes, people with disability still face barriers to everyday life. More than half of people with disability report avoiding community situations because of others' attitudes or behaviours. Discrimination remains an issue as around 10 percent of people with disability report experiences of disability discrimination each year and carers often experience poorer wellbeing¹.

National evidence shows while there are ongoing challenges with access to buildings and transport, digital inclusion and secure employment, 74 percent of people with disability reported no barriers to entering buildings or facilities without assistance in 2022, an improvement from 72 percent in 2015². This trend suggests that when accessibility standards, planning controls and universal design principles are applied consistently, barriers can be reduced and participation increased.

Public transport and employment are critical enablers of social and economic participation, with national data indicating that:

- One in seven people with disability aged five years and over cannot use any available form of public transport.³
- Employment gaps between people with and without disability remains significant.⁴
- There are signs of progress with ABS data showing that income from wages among people with disability increased between 2018 and 2022,⁵ indicating that when barriers are addressed and opportunities created, employment outcomes can improve.

Negative experiences have direct impacts on wellbeing, confidence and sense of belonging, and can discourage engagement with community spaces, services, and opportunities.

Disability is increasing and not always visible

An ageing population, increasing rates of dementia and the high number of people with non-visible disability mean inclusion needs to be part of everyday planning and services, not treated as a specialist issue.

Systemic change is needed

System design and service accessibility remain ongoing challenges with digital access a persistent inclusion issue, NSW legislation and policy require organisations to improve the way systems and services work for people with disability. This DIAP responds by focusing on practical, evidence-informed actions that embed disability inclusion into core business and service delivery.

¹Disability Gateway 2024, Community Attitudes To People With Disability

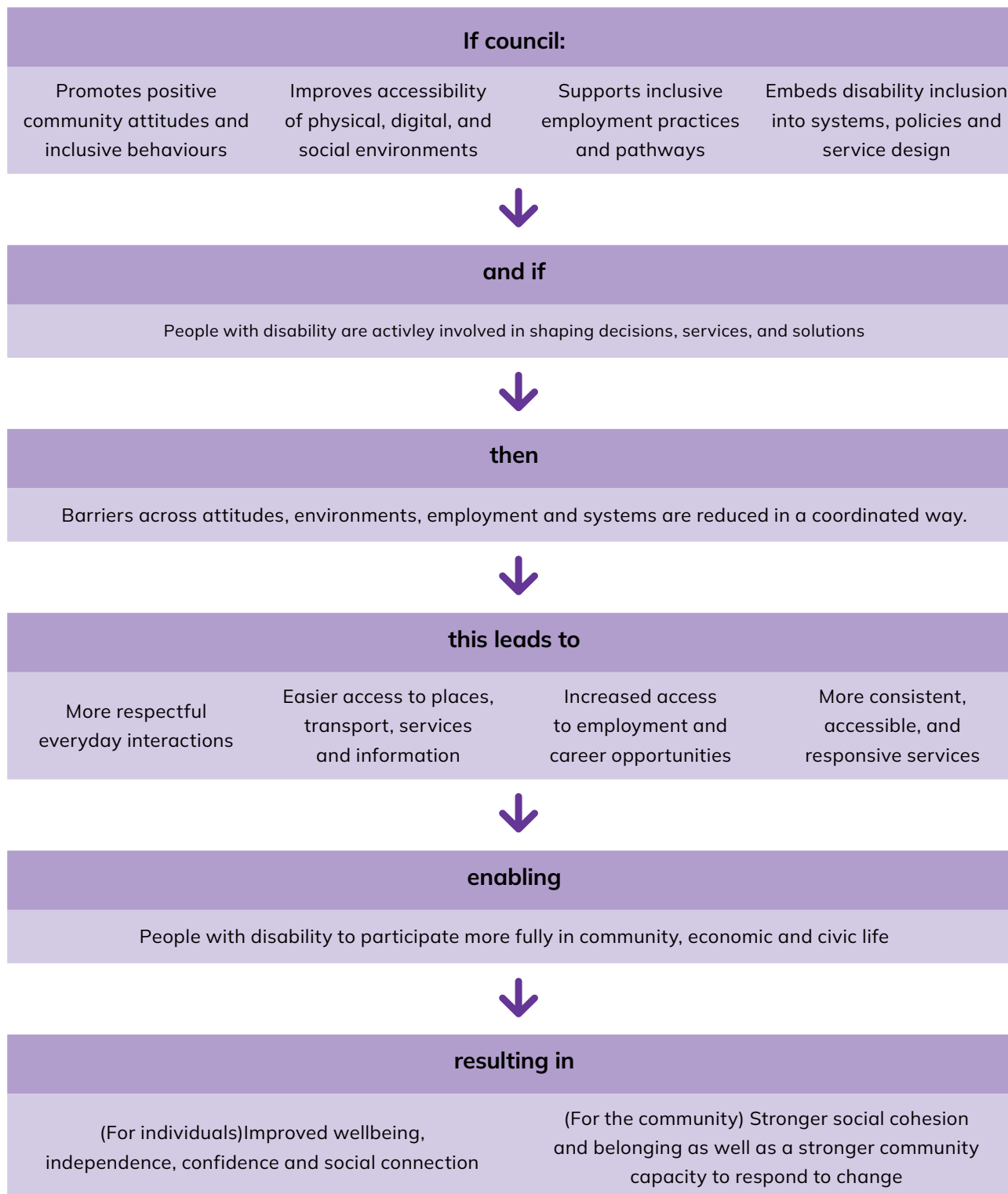
²Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. People With Disability In Australia: summary.

³Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. People With Disability In Australia: summary.

⁴Centre for Research Excellence in Disability and Health. Employment and Mental Health: summary.

⁵Australian Bureau of Statistics. Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: summary findings, latest release.

Our theory of change



Review of the previous DIAP

The development of this plan began with a review of the achievements and progress made on the previous DIAP 2022-2026.

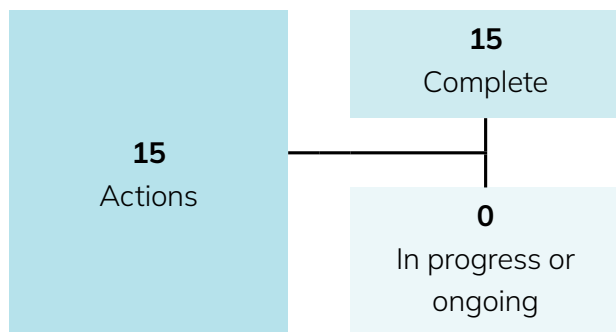
Overall, since 2022 Council has made significant progress in understanding and meeting the needs of people living with disability.

Northern Beaches Council DIAP 2022-2026 had 62 actions across the four focus areas. Since the implementation of the Plan, Council has successfully embedded or completed 87 percent of these actions with the remaining 13% progressing or ongoing.

Disability inclusion requires sustained effort over time. Many actions in this plan were intentionally designed to be ongoing to support long-term change rather than short-term completion.

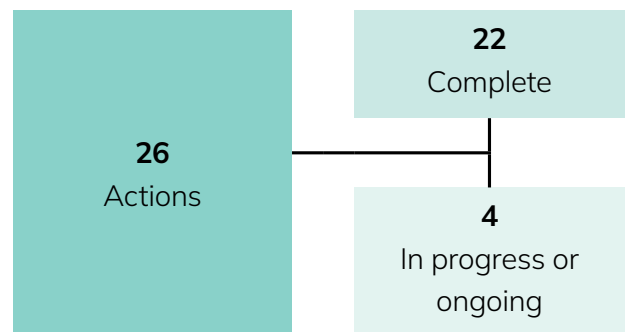
Focus Area 1

Positive community attitudes and behaviours



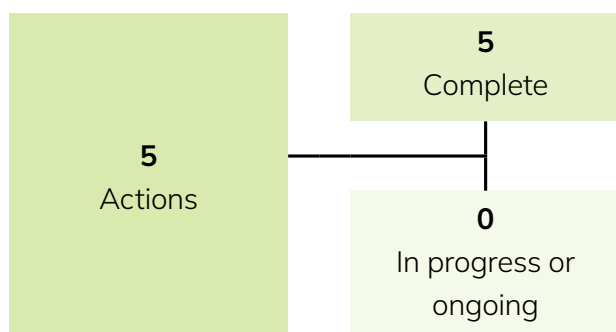
Focus Area 2

Creating liveable communities



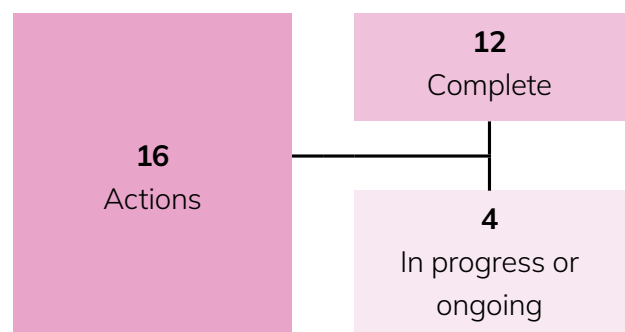
Focus Area 3

Supporting access to meaningful employment



Focus Area 4

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes



Warriewood Community Centre opened in 2026 with a range of accessibility features to support access and inclusion.



Involvement of people with disability

This DIAP is informed by community engagement carried out from **19 September to 26 October 2025**, data analysis and a review of current practice focused on engaging directly with people with disability and carers about their experiences of inclusion, access and participation.

Engagement included:

- an online **Your Say** survey with **66 responses**
- one-to-one interviews with people with disability and carers
- a workshop with service providers
- community-led discussions
- activities at the **Better Together Forum**
- online, email, and phone submissions.

**In Council's engagement
with people with disability**

42%

said they **always** or
mostly feel included

58%

said they **sometimes** or
do not feel included

People with disability are not a single group, and different types of disability create different barriers and support needs. Engagement and survey participants included people of different ages and disability types including:

- **intellectual disability** - where learning, decision-making and life transitions can require additional support
- **sensory disability** - including blindness, deafness and sensory processing differences, which can affect communication and participation in everyday environments
- **psychosocial disability** - arising from mental health conditions that significantly impact daily life, often compounded by stigma and service barriers
- **physical disability** - where mobility, transport, building access and self-care are key challenges.

These differences mean that inclusion cannot rely on one-size-fits-all solutions. Policy, services and engagement approaches must be flexible and responsive to a wide range of experiences.

Feedback was analysed across the different engagement methods and while not everyone was able to take part, the same issues were raised consistently, increasing the confidence in the findings.

Action Plan

This section sets out how each focus area will be delivered through clear and practical actions.

Each focus area outlines what is being addressed and the actions.

Together, the actions support delivery of the DIAP and embed disability inclusion into everyday business.

Actions are grouped as:

- **Continuing actions** are existing commitments or initiatives that remain important and will continue
- **New actions** respond to engagement findings and emerging issues
- **Linked actions** taken from other adopted strategies and plans.

Art program delivered at Manly Art Gallery and Museum by Studio A who are committed to empowering artists with disability.



Focus Area 1

Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability



Aim

Strengthening protections, preventing abuse and ensuring people with disability feel safe, respected and supported when accessing services and public spaces.

What makes this important

Public attitudes and behaviours can be among the most significant barriers to full access and inclusion for people with disability. They can impact a person's ability to exercise their rights and their access to opportunities to participate in everyday life.

Many disabilities are not visible, which can lead to misunderstanding, judgment and exclusion in everyday interactions. People with disability often avoid community settings due to fear of discrimination or past negative experiences, directly affecting their sense of safety, belonging and wellbeing.

Outcome measures

Outcome type	Measure	Trend	2026 Baseline
Strategic Outcome Measures	I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood - difference between the experiences of people with disability and the broader community	Reducing gap over time	8 percentage point gap (73% broader community, 65% people with disability)
	An opportunity for all – difference between the experiences of people with disability and the broader community	Reducing gap over time	0.5 point gap (6.5 broader community, 6.0 people with disability)
	A strong sense of community – difference between the experiences of people with disability and the broader community	Reducing gap over time	0.1 point gap (7.2 broader community, 7.1 people with disability)
DIAP Outcome Measures	Proportion of people with disability who report they can access services and supports when needed	Increasing	57% agree or strongly agree

Key Achievements the last four years:

- Promoted positive attitudes and increased community awareness of disability through Disability Services Expos, the annual Disability Inclusion Awards and targeted awareness activities.
- Amplified lived experience through inclusive storytelling and representation using interviews, social media and campaign content featuring people with disability. The social media promotions of the 2023, 2024 and 2025 Disability Inclusion Award winners had high audience engagement rates (reaching 60,000+ people each year), reinforcing positive messages about the importance of businesses catering for people of all abilities.
- Strengthened engagement with people with disability and the disability sector using the disability newsletter and mainstream Council communication channels. By 2025, our monthly disability e-newsletter The Wave had around 1,700 subscribers and disability stories have featured in our weekly community e-newsletter that reaches around 47,000 people.
- Celebrated inclusion and accessibility through partnerships and events including coordinated activities for International Day of People with Disability. The 2023 Disability Services Expo welcomed 48 stallholders.
- Embedded inclusion into grants, events and communications systems including prioritising disability inclusion in grant funding and implementing Accessible Event Guidelines. Grants supported 14 community-led inclusion projects over the life of the DIAP.
- Built organisational capability to support inclusive attitudes embedding disability awareness training into staff induction.

Community insights:

- Stigma, assumptions and low awareness still shape many community attitudes toward disability, particularly for those with invisible disabilities.
- Positive interactions are grounded in kindness and inclusion.
- More visibility of disability, better community education and meaningful involvement of people with lived experience in shaping decisions.

Continuing actions:

- Distribute the monthly business newsletter and feature inclusive business practices.
- Continue publication of The Wave disability newsletter.
- Deliver the annual Disability Inclusion Award for local businesses.
- Promote positive, respectful and accurate representations of people with disability across Council communications, campaigns, and imagery.
- Actively discourage ableist language, stereotypes, and assumptions through inclusive language guidance and public communication standards.
- Include information relevant to people with disability in mainstream communications.
- Include images of people living with disability in Council's regular marketing and communication materials.
- Implement and maintain the Inclusion Policy and Working Together Agreements between families and educators to support inclusion of children with disability in our early learning centres.
- Use the Accessible Event Guidelines to build the capacity of event organisers to deliver inclusive and accessible events on Council land.
- Promote inclusive business practices by profiling positive local business examples, including current and past award recipients, and amplifying lived experience perspectives across Council communication channels.

New actions - Focus area 1

#	Action	Timeframe	Success measure	Responsibility
1.01	Deliver community education to improve understanding of invisible disability and disability access rights	Years 1,2,3,4	Number of community education items delivered	Community Development
1.02	Deliver communications to improve understanding of assistance animals and legal obligations in food businesses	Years 1,2,3,4	Number of related stories in Council newsletters	Environmental Health
1.03	Provide staff training to ensure Council officers can correctly recognise assistance animals and respond appropriately and consistently when engaging with businesses and the community	Years 1,2	Staff training completed and webpages updated	Environmental Health
1.04	Introduce lived experience storytelling in the Annual Report to showcase how new infrastructure has improved community access and participation	Year 1	Lived experience accessibility story included in the Annual Report	Corporate Strategy
1.05	Investigate approaches to developing a visual asset library and supporting guidance to promote inclusive and respectful representation of priority populations across Council communications	Years 1,2	Recommendation developed on approaches to a visual asset library and supporting guidance	Graphic Design & Production
1.06	Investigate membership of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program and training options for Council front-of-house teams	Year 2	Investigation completed for the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program	Library Services
1.07	Promote the 'just ask us' approach to support accessibility and inclusion for Council events and activities	Years 1,2,3,4	'Just ask us' access support information included in Council event communications	Communications
1.08	Deliver writing workshops and training to support staff to produce accessible and inclusive documents	Years 1,2,3,4	Writing workshops and staff training delivered on accessible document writing	Communications

Linked actions from other Council strategies and plans

Action	Strategy/Plan
Increase a targeted range of program, events and exhibitions that reflect our commitment to inclusive and diverse programming	Library Strategic Plan
Support third party event delivery through capacity building, guidelines and toolkits, including accessibility	Event Strategy

Para swimmer and Northern Beaches Council 2026 Sports Person of the Year, Declan Budd, using the accessible pool entry at Manly Andrew 'Boy' Charlton Aquatic Centre. CREDIT: Karen Watson.



Focus Area 2

Creating liveable and safer communities



Aim

Improving access to places, information, services and transport so people with disability can participate fully in community, cultural and civic life.

What makes this important

A truly liveable community needs to be accessible, safe and inclusive for everyone, including people with disability. NSW government agencies and local councils will work to remove or reduce barriers in infrastructure, housing, education, transport, health and local facilities so that people with disability can access key services and supports and fully engage safely in their communities.

Physical barriers limit independence and reduce opportunities to participate in everyday community life, including social, cultural, and economic activities. Public transport and the built environment are particularly critical, as many people with disability rely on accessible infrastructure to move around their community and access essential services.

Outcome measures

Outcome type	Measure	Trend	2026 Baseline
Strategic Outcome Measures	Feeling safe in the local area – difference between the experiences of people with disability and the broader community	Reducing gap over time	0.1 point gap (7.9 broader community, 7.8 people with disability)
	Knowing where to go for help or services when needed – difference between the experiences of people with disability and the broader community	Reducing gap over time	7 percentage point gap (64% broader community, 57% people with disability)
	Access appropriate health services when needed – difference between the experiences of people with disability and the broader community	Reducing gap over time	0.2 point gap (6.8 broader community, 6.6 people with disability)
DIAP Outcome Measures	Proportion of people with disability who report being able to participate in community life without access barriers	Increasing	50% agree or strongly agree

Key Achievements the last four years:

- Strengthened inclusive consultation in capital works by embedding engagement with people with disability into community engagement plans.
- Improved pedestrian access and movement by delivering and upgrading footpaths, kerb ramps and pram ramps across the network. Around 90 percent of footpath renewal jobs achieved a width of 1.5 metres or more.
- Improved accessibility of transport infrastructure, delivering ongoing upgrades to a range of assets. Bus stop accessibility improved at 21 locations. Improvements included new boarding slabs, seating, tactile pavers, wheelchair ramp access and DDA-compliant works.
- Expanded access to public amenities and Council buildings delivering new and upgraded accessible toilets, adult change facilities, hoists, MLAK access and improved building access. at locations including Mona Vale Surf Club, Forestville Town Centre, Long Reef Surf Club, Shelly Beach, Little Manly Point, Rowland Reserve and Palm Beach Pavilion.

- Increased access to open space, natural environments and recreation, by improving pathways, boardwalks, playgrounds, rockpools, walking tracks and park infrastructure. New pathways and boardwalks have been delivered at Brick Pit Reserve, Frenchs Forest, Manly Dam, Freshwater Beach Reserve, Lynne Czinner Reserve and Manly Dam Main Picnic Area.
- Embedded accessibility into planning, place-making and service systems, including place plans, universal design planning controls, town centre management, volunteering role audits and library and community facility planning.

Community insights:

- Everyday spaces are still hard to navigate due to barriers in parking, footpaths, public facilities and recreation areas.
- Better pathways, kerbs, ramps, accessible parking and toilets and more consistent design standards would make a meaningful difference to independence and day-to-day wellbeing.
- Current activities do not meet the diverse needs of the community, with a heavy focus on outdoor or physical options.

- More arts, craft, social and indoor programs could be delivered in accessible venues.
- There is a need for activities that cater to a broader range of interests and abilities.

Continuing actions:

- Deliver capital upgrades that incorporate accessibility improvements to required or best-practice standards.
- Improve consultation and engagement with people with disability during the design and delivery of capital projects to better understand access requirements for users of infrastructure.
- Provide accessible and inclusive spaces and facilities, including hearing support, quiet spaces and sensory-friendly amenities.
- Deliver footpath renewals, new footpath programs, bus stop upgrades and lighting improvements.
- Promote community initiatives through newsletters and the community directory and provide small grants support for inclusion and accessibility for priority populations.
- Deliver a range of inclusive and diverse library events, programs and exhibitions that support participation and community connection and cohesion.
- Include accessibility information in library program and event communications.
- Work with businesses and the broader community to identify barriers to access in town and village centres.
- Enforce disability parking requirements across the local government area.
- Build staff knowledge of inclusive practices e.g. program staff with access and inclusion qualifications.
- Advocate and plan for housing to meet the needs of our community through Council's Local Housing Strategy.
- Identify and promote volunteering roles for people with disability.

New actions - Focus area 2

#	Action	Timeframe	Success measure	Responsibility
2.01	Curate inclusive and responsive library collections that reflect community needs and expectations and support lifelong learning and social connection	Years 1,2,3,4	Number of targeted initiatives to improve diversity in collections	Library Services
2.02	Increase community awareness of disability parking requirements and offences through road safety education activities.	Year 1	Disability parking offence information delivered in road safety education activities.	Strategic Transport
2.03	Increase ranger patrol presence at Shelly Beach and Little Manly to improve compliance with permit requirements.	Years 1,2,3,4	Number of proactive ranger patrols undertaken at Shelly Beach and Little Manly	Rangers
2.04	Review existing car parks to assess the provision and proportion of accessible parking spaces and their alignment with Australian Standards	Year 3	Accessibility audit completed for Council car parks	Transport & Civil Infrastructure Assets
2.05	Advertise and promote accessible facilities and hoist access to the Manly Andrew 'Boy' Charlton (MABC) outdoor 25m and 50m pools	Year 1	Outdoor pool communication materials updated to promote accessible facilities and hoist access	Sports & Recreation
2.06	Build staff capability through dementia-informed training and partnerships with specialist service providers to support customers with dementia at aquatic facilities	Year 1	Staff training delivered and service provider connections established	Sports & Recreation
2.07	Investigate grant opportunities to increase accessible programming options at MABC	Years 1,2,3,4	Funding applications submitted to support inclusive programming	Sports & Recreation
2.08	Explore including an accessible adult change amenity at MABC as part of any future major works to the site.	Years 1,2,3,4	Assessment completed for accessible adult change amenities at MABC	Building Assets - Planning, Design & Delivery

#	Action	Timeframe	Success measure	Responsibility
2.09	Identify, prioritise, and implement feasible accessibility improvements as part of the rockpool renewal program	Years 1,2,3,4	Accessibility improvements implemented at rockpools	Park Assets - Planning, Design & Delivery
2.10	Identify priority beach locations for accessible access and review existing provisions, including beach matting and wheelchair access	Years 2,3	Completed review and recommendations for delivery	Park Assets - Planning, Design & Delivery
2.11	Identify priority areas for accessibility improvements through the Reserve Renewal and Recreational Trail Renewal Programs where feasible	Years 2,3	Completed review and recommendations for delivery	Park Assets - Planning, Design & Delivery
2.12	Investigate the Accessible Australia grant to expand portable beach access equipment, guided by the review of current access provisions, suitable new locations, staff capacity and environmental priorities.	Years 2,3	Written recommendation explaining final decisions	Beach Services
2.13	Conduct an accessibility audit across the wharf network to identify access barriers and opportunities for improvement	Years 2,3	Accessibility audit completed for the wharf network	Transport & Civil Infrastructure Assets
2.14	Conduct a lighting audit across the wharf network to establish consistent standards and develop a network-wide lighting strategy and specification	Years 2,3	Lighting audit completed and network-wide lighting strategy and specification developed	Transport & Civil Infrastructure Assets
2.15	Identify opportunities for improvement at priority accessible sites to assess inclusive signage, wayfinding and sensory aids	Year 3	Priority accessible sites reviewed for inclusive signage, wayfinding and sensory aids, with improvement opportunities identified	Park Assets - Planning, Design & Delivery

#	Action	Timeframe	Success measure	Responsibility
2.16	Review and update public website information and images for public reserves and trails	Years 3,4	Public reserve website information and images reviewed and updated	Parks Operations
2.17	Deliver accessible and ambulant public amenities through approved capital works projects, addressing non-compliance and improving access where renewal or replacement is underway	Years 1,2,3,4	Accessible and ambulant public amenities delivered through approved capital works projects	Building Assets - Planning, Design & Delivery
2.18	Work with people with disability during planning or auditing of evacuation centres to identify accessibility issues and collaborate with emergency management agencies to prioritise improvements	Years 1,2,3,4	Number of evacuation centre accessibility audits completed with input from people with disability	Resilience & Natural Hazards
2.19	Embed the needs of people with disability into emergency evacuation planning and preparedness, including promotion of the P-CEP program in partnership with P-CEP facilitators	Years 1,2,3,4	Inclusion of disability considerations in annual Local Emergency Management Committee evacuation planning discussions	Resilience & Natural Hazards
2.20	Integrate research and consideration of accessibility and disability inclusion into Place Plans	Years 1,2,3,4	Accessibility and disability inclusion considerations documented within Place Plans	Strategic Planning

Linked actions from other Council strategies and plans

Action	Strategy/Plan
Strengthen transport options to support safe and efficient travel to and from events	Event Strategy
Develop and implement a flexible and responsive collection purchasing model which reflects community needs and expectations	Library Strategic Plan
Undertake a diversity audit of collections to benchmark and drive targeted collection development	Library Strategic Plan
Develop and implement an Access and Inclusion Plan	Library Strategic Plan
Implement designs that meet the needs of the community, now and in the future, i.e. designs that meet changes in demographics (e.g. multi-purpose buildings and open spaces, inclusive and accessibility designs)	Asset Management Plan
Support the actions of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan that considers improvements to the accessibility of Council's open space and outdoor recreation facilities including at beaches, ocean and inner waterways (including provision of suitable wheelchairs in agreed locations), rock pools and lagoons such as but not limited to: investigate how Council could create quiet or safe spaces for people with sensory needs in public spaces, identify more locations to improve access to the natural environment improve access to walking track and recreational fishing locations and more playgrounds designed for all abilities.	Open Space Strategy
Advocate for improved transport accessibility and diversity within and out of the Northern Beaches area	Resilience Strategy
Continue to work with priority populations, vulnerable communities and facilities (aged care, childcare and schools) to ensure they have plans in place to respond effectively to shock events	Resilience Strategy
Work with the emergency service organisations and supporting agencies to continue to improve emergency planning and response arrangements to reduce impacts on our community	Resilience Strategy

Focus Area 3

Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence



Aim

Expanding opportunities for economic participation, employment, skills development and independence.

What makes this important

Employment rates across all sectors are significantly lower for people with disability than for those without disability. Meaningful employment is vital to support people with disability to attain economic security, social interaction and mental health and increase opportunities to support individual choice and control. There are financial benefits for both individuals and for the economy by enabling people to have productive and fulfilling employment.

Barriers exist at multiple stages of employment, including recruitment processes, workplace design, access to reasonable adjustments and opportunities for training and career progression.

Outcome measures

Outcome type	Measure	Trend	2026 Baseline
Strategic Outcome Measures	Good job prospects – difference between the experiences of people with disability and the broader community	Reducing gap over time	0.1 point gap (5.3 broader community, 5.2 people with disability)
DIAP Outcome Measures	Percentage of Northern Beaches Council employees who identify as a person with disability	Increasing	1.2%

Key Achievements the last four years:

- Established relationships with 6 Disability Employment Service (DES) providers, identifying and promoting local providers through Council channels.
- Raised awareness of inclusive employment practices within the business community, by sponsoring the Disability Inclusion Award as part of the Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. Applications grew in 2025 and winners and highly commended businesses have been used as case studies.

- Strengthened Council's inclusive recruitment capability and embedding inclusive recruitment and selection training into regular staff development programs.
- Progressed Council's commitment as an inclusive employer, achieving Veteran Friendly Organisation status and progressing discussions and certification pathways related to disability-inclusive recruitment practices.
- Increased internal awareness of pathways to employment for people with disability and supporting teams to explore partnerships. Two annual Pioneer Clubhouse Officer roles continued at Dee Why and Warringah Mall library branches.

Community insights:

- Finding employment remains challenging, with barriers linked to assumptions, outdated recruitment practices and limited workplace flexibility.
- Workplaces should understand neurodiversity, offer adaptable roles and provide real pathways into jobs.
- Supporting and educating local employers would help open more inclusive opportunities.

Continuing actions:

- Maintain digital systems that are compatible with screen readers.
- Support staff capability through ongoing disability inclusion and unconscious bias training.
- Promote inclusive recruitment practices, including alternative interview formats and communication supports.
- Partner with group training organisation to deliver traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Provide reasonable workplace adjustments to ensure there are inclusive workplaces.
- Identify and build relationships with local Disability Employment Service (DES) providers to support people with disability.
- Raise awareness about accessibility adaptations and inclusive hiring and employment practices with the business community through our regular communication pathways.
- Provide employment transition opportunities for people with disability.

New actions - Focus area 3

#	Action	Timeframe	Success measure	Responsibility
3.01	Provide tailored volunteering and student work placement opportunities for people with disability	Years 1,2,3,4	Number of tailored volunteering or student placement opportunities supported for people with disability	Library Services
3.02	Review and apply the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and EN 301 549 Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services, to guide the design and delivery of Council's learning and development activities	Years 1,2,3,4	Inclusive training principles applied	Human Resources
3.03	Create a separate disability employment section on Council's careers pages	Years 1,2,3,4	Page created and accessed	Human Resources
3.04	Open employment opportunities for distribution to Inclusive Employment Australia providers via the NDRC employer engagement vacancy service to access the broader talent pool that candidates with disability represent	Year 1	Increase in applications and appointed candidates	Human Resources
3.05	Improve job advertisements: • Add an inclusion statement in the body of job advertisement • Update the job advertisements to include email address and / or contact number / person to allow candidates to: - discuss support or accessibility requirements - discuss alternative methods for lodging an application - ask questions around inherent requirements of the role	Years 1,2,3,4	Job advertisements updated	Human Resources
3.05	Investigate and implement a reasonable adjustment guideline and / or FAQ document using the information and templates found in the JobAccess Employer Toolkit.	Years 2,3,4	Guideline and / or FAQ implemented	Human Resources

Linked actions from other Council strategies and plans

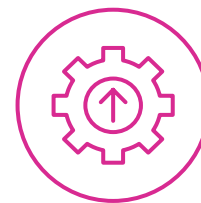
Action	Strategy/Plan
Review and refine employment policies to strengthen the delivery of accessible and integrated services for families	Children's Services Strategy

Studio A art program delivered at Manly Art Gallery and Museum. Photograph by Karen Watson, featuring Studio A. Artwork: Guy Fredericks and Chloe Watfern, Bleeding Hearts & Morning Glory, Manly Art Gallery & Museum, 2024. Social media: @studio_a, @studioasydney, @chloewatfern



Focus Area 4

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes



Aim

Embedding disability inclusion into policies, planning, service design and decision-making, supported by governance, data, accountability and workforce capability.

What makes this important

A common issue for people with disability is the difficulty in navigating systems and processes to access the services and supports they need. It is important that steps are taken to ensure people with disability have equal access to information and services.

Complex procedures, inaccessible communication and digital systems that do not meet diverse needs can create repeated barriers for people with disability, reducing independence, participation and trust in services.

Outcome measures

Outcome type	Measure	Trend	2026 Baseline
Strategic Outcome Measures	Wellbeing index – difference between people with disability and broader community.	Reducing gap over time	1.7 point gap (7.7 broader community, 6.0 people with disability)
	Financial circumstances index - difference between people with disability and broader community.	Reducing gap over time	1.5 point gap (6.6 broader community, 5.1 people with disability)
	Liveability index - difference between people with disability and broader community.	Reducing gap over time	4.5 point gap (65.8 broader community, 61.3 people with disability)
DIAP Outcome Measures	Number of Council information resources available in Easy Read	Increasing	16 Documents

Community insights:

- Strengthened systems for accessible information and referral, developing and maintaining practical tools such as the People with Disability Quick Reference Guide.
- Improved staff capability in inclusive communication, compiling and sharing inclusive language guidance and disability awareness training resources.
- Provided organisation-wide guidance on accessible communications, supporting teams to design inclusive written, digital and visual content.
- Maintained accessible and inclusive digital channels, achieving and sustaining WCAG 2.0 and 2.1 AA compliance for Council's website.
- Embedded accessibility into Council events and engagement, developing and implementing the Accessible Event Guidelines, increasing awareness and use of accessible features at events and incorporating accessibility questions into post-event evaluation. Post-event survey data showed awareness of accessible features rose from 33 to 38 percent, and use rose from 14 to 15 percent.

- Built emergency preparedness capability for people with disability, securing funding and delivering Person Centre Emergency Preparedness (PCEP) training.

Community insights:

- Finding reliable, accessible and practical information is still challenging.
- Details about services and activities are often unclear, difficult to locate or not provided in formats that suit different needs.
- Easy Read content, varied communication channels and regularly updated accessibility information would make a significant difference.

Continuing actions:

- Promote and support the use of Easy Read materials and one-page fact sheets in communications and consultation where appropriate.
- Use diverse and inclusive imagery in corporate documents and highlight infrastructure that improves accessibility.
- Ensure Council websites and digital platforms meet WCAG 2.1 AA requirements for captions, media controls and readability.
- Use plain English and clear written communication to support text-based access.
- Ensure all public-facing videos, including social media and web content, include accurate captions.
- Monitor and respond to complaints, compliments and feedback related to discrimination, disrespect or exclusion to inform continuous improvement.
- Identify and distribute relevant information about events and opportunities supporting disability inclusion through Council communication channels (including The Wave newsletter).
- Provide referral services to connect people with disability and their carers to service providers and community groups to increase community participation.
- Raise awareness of accessibility at Council run events.

Accessible ramp at Little Manly.



New actions - Focus area 4

#	Action	Timeframe	Success measure	Responsibility
4.01	Investigate the development of a capital project Accessibility Guideline for all capital projects	Year 2	Recommendation developed for an Accessibility Guideline for capital projects	Strategic Asset Management
4.02	Incorporate access and inclusion principles in Asset Management Plans	Years 1,2,3	Access and inclusion principles documented within Asset Management Plans	Strategic Asset Management
4.03	Integrate universal accessibility principles into transport planning, analysis and decision-making as part of the Integrated Transport Strategy	Years 1,2	Universal accessibility principles reflected in the Transport Strategy	Strategic Transport
4.04	Review and update the Procurement Manual, processes and templates to expand accessibility and inclusive practice requirements	Years 1,2	Procurement Manual and templates updated	Procurement
4.05	Review Customer Service processes and platforms to identify accessibility barriers and opportunities for improvement and establish an accessible customer service feedback pathway	Years 2,3	Customer Service accessibility review completed	Customer Service
4.06	Review and update existing Customer Service forms to enable accessible reporting of accessibility-related issues and barriers	Year 4	Customer Service forms updated or developed to support reporting of accessibility issues	Customer Service
4.07	Review the accessibility of information and communication platforms within library services	Year 1	Review of library services information and communications completed	Library Services
4.08	Update the web editor user guide to ensure event listings include clear, consistent, and relevant accessibility information, including (but not limited to) details such as parking, surfaces, hearing support, quiet spaces, alcohol free environments, and estimated attendance numbers	Year 1	Web editor user guide updated	Communications

#	Action	Timeframe	Success measure	Responsibility
4.09	Review and improve Council grant programs to increase accessibility and participation for people with disability and disability organisations, including accessible and Easy Read grant guidelines	Year 1	Grant guidelines reviewed and updated to include accessible and Easy Read formats	Corporate Strategy
4.10	Review and update community centre information to improve access and inclusion	Years 2,3, 4	Number of community centre information updated	Community Centres
4.11	Define the physical accessibility features available within community centres, review current offerings and plan for future improvements across the network	Years 1,2,3,4	Accessibility features identified in community centres	Community Centres
4.12	Review and update the Access Your Area map on Council website to ensure information remains current	Years 1,2,3,4	Access Your Area map reviewed and updated	Community Centres
4.13	Develop a community consultation toolkit to support the effective implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy and inclusive engagement practice	Year 1	Community consultation toolkit developed	Community Centres
4.14	Develop a process to capture and measure input from people with disability, their families and carers to identify more accessible ways to participate in Council initiatives	Year 1	Process documented and implemented	Community Centres

Linked actions from other Council strategies and plans

Action	Strategy/Plan
Increase accessibility at events	Event Strategy
Roll out the Engaging with Priority Populations toolkit to staff through internal Community Engagement training.	Community Engagement Strategy
Review and re-design services, branch layouts and workforce approaches to remove or reduce actual and perceived barriers to access	Library Strategic Plan

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

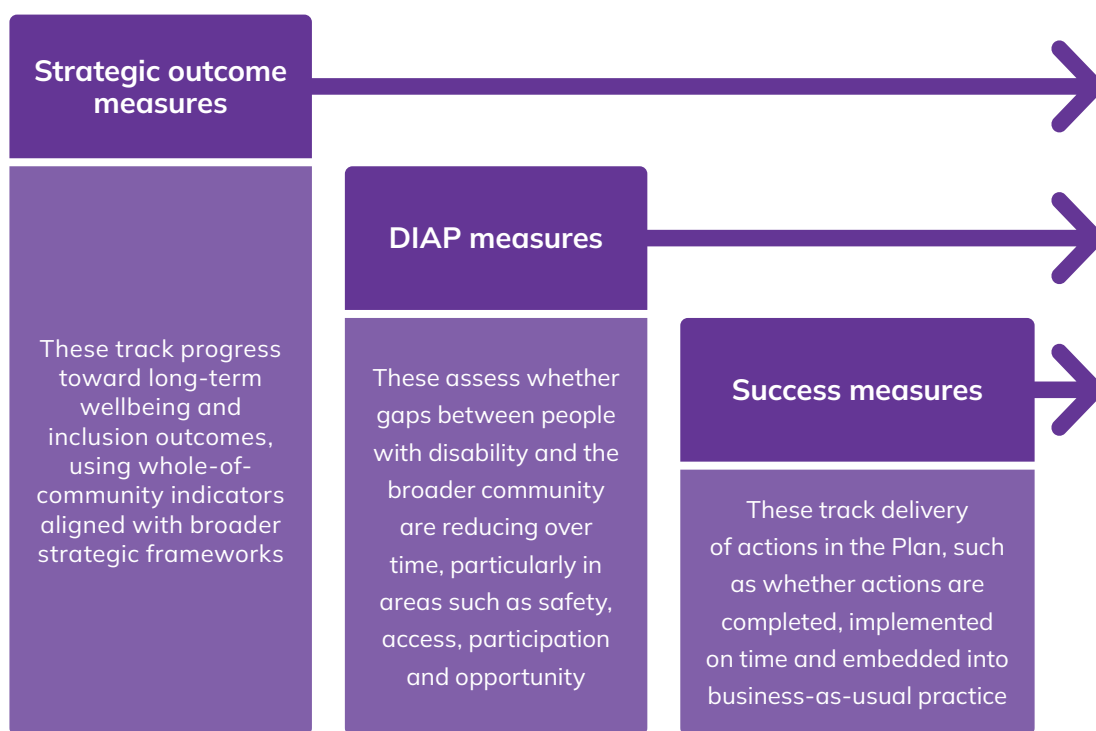
Disability inclusion remains uneven

Delivering the DIAP is a shared responsibility. Actions will be delivered across the 4 years, with timeframes reviewed annually.

Experience-based measures using existing community wellbeing indicators are prioritised to reflect lived inclusion for measuring progress across three connected levels identified in the action plan:

Results are analysed for comparison between people with and without disability to identify experience gaps and track change over time.

Progress is reported annually through Council's Annual Report, with a full evaluation at the end of the DIAP period.



Managing new and emerging issues

New issues or priorities identified during the life of the DIAP will be addressed through the operational plan, budget planning and approval processes.

This approach allows the DIAP to remain responsive to emerging risks, community feedback and policy changes, while maintaining clear accountability and oversight.

Accessible volunteering roles within the Library service enable people of all abilities to volunteer (Glen Street Library Volunteer). Photo credit: Glenn Street Library. Image © Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales. Courtesy of Louise Hawson.





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