**Inner West Council**

**Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025**

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statement

Council acknowledges the Gadigal and Wangal peoples who are the traditional custodians of the lands of the Inner West.

# Message from the Mayor

To be confirmed at publication.

# Summary

The Inner West Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-25 outlines Council's commitment to respecting the rights and improving opportunities for people with disability of all ages, to participate fully in community life. The plan is informed by:

* Council’s experience with improving access and inclusion
* Engagement with people with disability, their families, carers and support organisations
* Leading accessibility practice and the social model of disability
* Legal and policy guidance including the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability* andthe Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 and the NSW *Disability Inclusion Act* 2014.

# Understanding disability and accessibility

Understanding disability is based upon the social model of disability. Disability does not reside in the individual or as an inherent characteristic of a person, but rather as a restriction caused through society’s lack of accommodation in addressing that person's needs and rights such that they can participate on an equal basis with others.

People with disability are the largest and most diverse minority in the world, representing all abilities, ages, genders, races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations and socio-economic backgrounds. Disability is a complex, dynamic, multi-layered and evolving concept. It is often used to describe the interaction between impairment or health condition and the participation restrictions experienced by a person with impairment resulting from other external environmental, contextual, attitudinal and social factors.

Disability is a part of the human condition, and everyone will experience it temporarily or permanently at some point in their lives. As people age, the likelihood of an individual or their family member experiencing disability increases.

Accessibility refers to whether spaces, places, facilities, formats, material, or activities can be accessed independently and equitably by a person with disability in a way that is suitable to their disability related needs. Inclusion refers to a person with disability feeling welcomed and having their needs accommodated to enable them to participate fully.

# Profile: Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers update

The Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers illustrates the social exclusion affecting the almost 18% of Australians who live with disability, exclusion that is keenly experienced in education and employment.

People with a disability have lower educational attainments. In 2018, 33% of Australians aged 15 years and over with a disability completed high school (Year 12) compared to 72% for people without disability.

People with a disability of working age have a lower employment rate than people without a disability (53.4% compared to 84.1%). Just over one-quarter (28.3%) of people with disability were working fulltime, compared to over half (54.8%) of those without disability. In 2018, the median gross personal income of people with disability was $505 per week, less than half (49.7%) that of people without disability ($1016 per week).

People who provide care also have a lower employment rate: the labour force participation rate for primary carers (58.8%) and other carers (76.6%) aged 15 to 64 years was lower than that for non-carers (81.5%). Over one-third (37.4%) of primary carers had disability, twice the rate of non-carers (15.3%).

Almost one in 10 Australians with disability aged 15 years and over and living in households (9.6%) reporting they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their disability in the last 12 months. This has increased since 2015. Almost one in five people (18.9%) aged 15-24 years and (18.2%) 25-34 years experienced discrimination compared with 3.2% of those aged 65 years and over (up from 2.1%). There has also been an increase in the experience of discrimination for people 55 years (12.9%) and over since 2015 (9.4%).

People with a disability from diverse backgrounds are under-represented in their uptake of services. This is significant in the Inner West where 29% of people speak a language other than English at home. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are 1.7 times more likely to be living with a disability. Aboriginal children aged 0-14 years were more than twice as likely as non-Aboriginal children to have a disability and Aboriginal people aged 35-44 years were 2.7 times as likely as non-Aboriginal people of the same age to have a disability[[1]](#endnote-2).

# Themes of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan

The following themes are supported by community engagement and research. In each theme Council heard about what remains to be done, and these are accompanied by a description of key actions.

**1 Social inclusion**

**P**artnerships, collaboration, building capacity and increasing participation.

**What people said:**

Building the necessary pathways for social inclusion to flourish needs to be central to the Plan. Continued focus on sport and recreation infrastructure and program support, improving attitudes, awareness raising and actions that build partnerships that deliver higher participation.

A need to strengthen and improve local opportunity to engage in broader learning, leisure, volunteering and recreation. This includes creating space for people to be out and about and welcomed. A focus on improved inclusion and meaningful connection of children with disability; to their friends, peers, school and community. This was felt to provide a strong legacy towards a fully inclusive community.

**Actions:**

* A campaign to raise awareness of people with disability and their lived experience
* Council programs to provide an increased level of accessibility for people with disability and accommodate inclusive programs
* Build capacity with local sporting and recreation groups to attract participants with disability.

**2 Cultural Inclusion**

**A** focus on inclusive practice and opportunities for people with disability to engage in cultural expression.

**What people said:**

Expanded opportunities for artists, creatives, and audience members with disability to fully engage within the full creative life of the Inner West. Inclusion training, support and resource development to guide practitioners and providing access information to broaden choice and participation at venues and performances. A continued modelling of inclusive practice and platforms for representation, expression, and unique cultural identity as well as resetting representation of disability as a component of human diversity.

**Actions:**

* Increased investment in Council cultural programs and programming
* Increase the representation of people with disability in mainstream local art and culture through the annual grants program, Events programs, and Living Arts programming
* Continue to deliver and grow in partnership celebrations for International Day of People with Disability.

**3 Economic inclusion**

A focus on employment and participation in the local economy and businesses.

**What people said:**

Respondents highlighted that almost half of the disability community live at or below the poverty line. Affordability in fees and charges to help those most impacted by low and fixed income needs consideration. Higher employment levels are also fundamental to social inclusion.

The relationship with housing and specifically affordable and accessible housing is critical to ensure local people can make use of any improved employment options. Access to the local economy as active consumers remains a high priority.

**Actions:**

* Grow employment of people with disability in the Inner West commencing with a disability employment roundtable
* Host a series of business engagement workshops to facilitate welcoming customers with disability
* Establish an internal staff with disability network and introduce traineeships, leadership and mentoring opportunities.

**4 Inclusive planning, infrastructure and environment**

Improved design creating more inclusive infrastructure.

**What people said:**

Physical whole of journey access through developing infrastructure, public spaces, parks, premises, community facilities and venues. Complimentary access that supports a disability friendly environment, including improved welcoming attitudes and that reduce attitudinal barriers to inclusion. Design expectation on public infrastructure, spaces, facilities and proposed uses must be informed by co-design, accurate access data and realistic scoping of pragmatic solutions to facilitate inclusion.

Improving the accessibility of transport and transports hubs/railway stations remains a high priority. That includes improvements to existing services as well as new offerings to enable affordable door to door transport options that accommodate people with higher support needs.

**Actions:**

* Establish an integrated overall council program to improving the accessibility of infrastructure, venues and facilities through project planning
* Follow a life cycle approach with disability inclusion from whole of Inner West planning instruments, through to operational design guidance, and the creation of project plans and designs for specific infrastructure, and master plans for major precinct redevelopment
* Accessible active transport and infrastructure supporting public transport to include new and emerging personal mobility devices.

**5 Civic, engagement, and digital Inclusion**

Council’s communication and engagement are accessible to all and facilitate participation.

**What people said:**People experience a lack of reliable information on accessibility or access features. This makes essential pre-planning and choice difficult. In addition, with Council communications, both the accessibility of format as well as the ease at which the information is understood, can be difficult. Council’s community engagement needs to be more consistently accessible in terms of the method, timeliness, and ways in which content is matched to the audience need. The experience of people with disability participating in Council’s Local Democracy Groups also needs to be more inclusive.

**Actions:**

* Evaluate and renew the Council community engagement and communication for people with disability
* Publish information on access features for Council's community and recreation facilities.

**6 Access and Inclusion are embedded in our systems and processes**

Leadership is informed by inclusive values and whole of council approaches to access and inclusion

**What people said:**

Human rights-based training for key staff is needed to maintain the awareness and understanding of inclusion built throughout the previous plan and initiatives. Inclusion needs to be more strongly represented in corporate reporting and deliverable outcomes for access and inclusion.

The pandemic brought new challenges and opportunities for people with disability, their families, carers and support workers. Clearer appreciation of access and inclusion within emergency planning protocols is necessary to ensure people are not left behind or exposed to higher risk.

**Actions:**

* Training for staff on disability rights, access and inclusion needs
* Leading practice accessibility through clear objectives, measures and deliverable outcomes for access and inclusion in Council project management
* Improve preparedness for emergencies or disasters that provides for accessibility and inclusion adjustments

# The Action Plan

| **Project Level** | **Action Level** | **Responsibility** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Create opportunities to increase participation and representation of people with disability, and awareness of disability issues | 1.1 A campaign to raise awareness of people with disability and their lived experience | Strategic and  Corporate  Communications  Manager |
|  | 1.2 Improve preparedness and management of emergencies that deliver equitable outcomes for people with disability | Senior Manager Operations |
|  | 1.3 Engage on and address the identified support and service needs of people with disability including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, children and young people, people from diverse backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ people. | Community Wellbeing Manager |
|  | 1.4 Advocacy on with the NSW and Commonwealth Governments on support and service needs of people with disability | Social and Cultural Planning Manager |
|  | 1.5 Accommodate National Disability Insurance Scheme participants in health, wellness, recreation programs and water-based recreation | Senior Manager Sport and  Recreation |
|  | 1.6 Build capacity with local sporting and recreation groups to attract participants with disability | Parks and  Recreation  Planning Manager |
| 1. Increased investment in Council cultural programs and programming | 2.1 Increased focus on cultural engagement in annual grants program, events programs, and living arts programs | Events Manager, Living Arts Manager and Community Wellbeing Manager |
|  | 2.2 Deliver education and support that improves access and whole of journey planning for events, activities and programming | Events Manager, Living Arts Manager and Community Wellbeing Manager |
|  | 2.4 Increased provision of accessible events and programs | Events Manager, Living Arts Manager and Community Wellbeing Manager |
|  | 2.5 Grow celebrations for International Day of People with Disability | Community Wellbeing Manager |
|  | 2.6 Support the community to increase Disability Pride awareness | Community Wellbeing Manager |
|  | 2.7 Increase the representation of people with a disability in local art and culture | Living Arts Manager and Social and Cultural Planning Manager |
| 1. Grow economic inclusion of people with disability | 3.1 Convene a Disability Employment Roundtable | Community Wellbeing Manager Social and Cultural Planning Manager |
|  | 3.2 Create 100 jobs for people with disability in the Inner West by end 2022/23 | Community Wellbeing Manager  Social and Cultural Planning Manager |
|  | 3.2 Establish an internal staff disability network and introduce additional traineeships, leadership and mentoring opportunities. | Senior Manager People and Culture |
|  | 3.3 Host a series of business engagement workshops to facilitate welcoming customers with disability replaces grants program | Economic  Development Team Leader |
| 1. Establish a program to improve the accessibility of infrastructure, venues and facilities | 4.1 New infrastructure planning and design has beyond compliance, leading practice accessibility articulated by clear objectives, measure and deliverable outcomes for access and inclusion in project management | Senior Manager Capital Works and Senior Manager Engineering |
|  | 4.2 Create a rolling program of accessibility audits, wayfinding and inclusive operation of council property and create a staff knowledge community to share learnings and insights | Property and Strategic Investments Manager and Manager Facilities Management |
|  | 4.3 Apply *Everyone Can Play* design principles in playground, recreation planning/programs, plans of management for parks and facilities upgrades to guide a beyond compliance approach | Parks and Recreation  Planning Manager |
|  | 4.4 Revise the Pathways to Inclusion guide to address shared zones, cycleways and emerging mobility and wayfinding technologies | Senior Manager  Planning |
| 1. Inclusive design, planning, capacity building and partnerships | 5.1 Follow a life cycle approach with disability inclusion from whole of Inner West planning instruments, through to operational design guidance, and the creation of project plans and designs for specific infrastructure, and master plans for major precinct redevelopment | Senior Manager  Planning |
|  | 5.2 Advocate for and design accessible active transport and infrastructure supporting public transport to include new and emerging personal mobility devices | Traffic and Transport Manager Senior Manager  Planning |
|  | 5.3 Improve continuity of access through Plans of Management for public spaces | Senior Manager  Planning |
|  | 5.4 Adopt liveable housing controls, at either gold level or adaptable, and increase supply of specialist disability accommodation | Senior Manager  Planning |
|  | 5.5 Build capacity with local sporting and recreation groups to attract participants with disability | Parks and  Recreation  Planning Manager |
|  | 5.6 Create a template for inclusion planning to guide local sporting and recreation clubs in improving access. | Parks and  Recreation  Planning Manager |
|  | 5.7 Continue to provide training to staff on disability rights, access and inclusion needs | Senior Manager People and Culture |
| 1. Improve accessibility of Council community engagement and communication with people with disability | 6.1 Provide leading practice Local Democracy Groups | Corporate Strategy and Engagement  Manager |
|  | 6.2 Evaluate and renew Council's community engagement framework | Corporate Strategy and Engagement  Manager |
|  | 6.3 Evaluate and renew the accessibility of Council communication | Strategic and  Corporate  Communications  Manager |
|  | 6.4 Publish information on access features for Council's community and recreational facilities, events, aquatic centres, libraries and cultural venues. | Strategic and  Corporate  Communications  Manager |

# How the DIAP developed

The engagement was promoted through YourSay Inner West from 12 May to 30 June 2022. From 11 May to 30 June opportunities for engagement were provided:

* Booked phone interviews with Council staff during the engagement period
* Access Advisory Committee online meeting on 11 May
* Responding via YourSay Inner West survey
* Individual and group online workshop on 26 May
* A drop-in session at Haberfield Library on 1 June
* A disability support organisations community forum at Ashfield on 2 June
* A public forum at Ashfield 29 June

Email promotion through relevant Inner West Council databases and contact lists including:

* Local disability networks including former access committee members
* Local disability support agencies and peak groups
* Interested residents and those involved in previous inclusion planning
* Council community services networks
* Inner West Disability Forum e-list
* Local Democracy Group members
* Radio for the Print Handicapped and local radio
* Social media advertising.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)