

2022/2026

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# DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

**NARRABRI SHIRE**  
DISCOVER THE POTENTIAL

## **Narrabri Shire Council wishes to acknowledge all those who contributed to the development of this plan.**

We are grateful to those people with a disability, their carers, service providers, and community members who attended focus group meetings, individual interviews, or participated in the community workshop or filled out a survey.

Your contribution has enabled Council to identify community priorities and opportunities to be incorporated into the Disability Inclusion Action Plan towards an inclusive and accessible community.

### **DISCLAIMER**

Any information provided by Narrabri Shire Council in this document is provided in good faith. The inclusion of works or services in these documents is no guarantee that those works will be carried out by the indicative date or at all. This may be due to a number of factors including changing circumstances or priorities, adverse weather conditions or failure to obtain grant funding. Any person seeking to rely on any information contained in these documents relating to works or services is urged to contact Council.

### **DOCUMENT CONTROL**

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# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Narrabri Shire Council is committed to working towards a strong and equitable community that is accessible and inclusive of everyone. I sincerely thank everyone that took the time to contribute to the development of this important plan.

The 2022/2026 Disability Inclusion Action Plan (the Plan) aligns the Shire's guiding principles of equity, fairness, genuine participation, and equal rights in the 2022/2032 Community Strategic Plan, with important key priorities identified through the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW).

The Plan addresses a series of actions designed to actively address barriers faced by people with a disability by building on work previously undertaken by Council and harnessing new and emerging opportunities. The Plan establishes practical ways Council, and the community can ensure that local services, facilities and programs are inclusive and accessible. The Plan places a particular focus on community priorities, as identified through conversations held with people with a disability, their families, carers, and service providers.

The Plan recognises the underlying social responsibility of Local Government to promote the value of diversity and inclusion and to protect the rights of people with a disability.

Council is pleased to work with the NSW Government to improve access and inclusion for people with a disability and looks forward to all members of our community enjoying increased opportunities to participate in all aspects of life.

Yours faithfully,

Cr Ron Campbell

**Mayor**





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

**“Narrabri Shire Council acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters, and communities of people of the Gamilaraay/Gamilaroi/Gomeroi/Kamilaroi Nation, and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.**

**Narrabri Shire Council acknowledges the various spellings of ‘Gamilaraay, Gamilaroi, Gomeroi, and Kamilaroi’ and as valid and interchangeable, guided by the Shire’s Local Aboriginal Land Councils.**

**The Narrabri Shire has a rich history of culture. Council endeavours to unite the Community in preserving the unique heritage, celebrating community strengths and diversities, and achieving social justice by redressing past wrongs through Aboriginal Reconciliation**

**Council recognises the valuable contribution to the Narrabri Shire made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and looks forward to a future of mutual respect and harmony.”**

# STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Narrabri Shire Council (Council) is committed to promoting and developing an inclusive and accessible Shire for everyone, now and in the future. Throughout this document, those who have a disability (either temporary or permanent), will be referred to those who are 'living with disability' and does not include those who care for a person with a disability and those who have a family member with a disability, unless specified otherwise.

Council seeks to meet its legislative obligations under the following legislation to create truly inclusive communities:

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Disability Discrimination Regulations 2019* (Cth)
- *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW)
- *Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014* (NSW)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
- *Anti-Discrimination Regulation 2019* (NSW)

Council will do this by providing equitable opportunities for people who work, live and visit the Shire and commits to:

- Maintaining an ongoing dialogue and genuine consultation with people with a disability, their families, and carers;
- Improving inclusion and access to Council's facilities, programming, services, and public spaces; and
- Increasing awareness and understanding of access and inclusion issues within Council's workforce and the broader community.

The 2022/2026 Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2022/2026 DIAP) establishes a framework and priorities, as identified throughout community consultation sessions, to guide Council in developing a genuinely inclusive and accessible Shire.

The 2022/2026 DIAP is Council's second Disability Inclusion Action Plan. For the 2022/2026 DIAP, Council has extended its scope to embed inclusion and access as core considerations across all Council managed services and processes to deliver meaningful outcomes for people with a disability, their families, and carers.

Implementation of this plan will ensure ongoing improvements in the accessibility of Council facilities and services, public spaces and the development of inclusive programming and accessible information and continue to strengthen Council's ongoing commitment to inclusion and access.

## **SOME OF THE DISABILITY INCLUSION ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE 2017/2021 DIAP**

The 2017/2021 DIAP was successfully implemented and help shaped Council's forthcoming Operational Plans to help the Shire become more inclusive and accessible for all. Some of the more significant achievements and outcomes from the 2017/20221 DIAP are as follows:

- Created and successfully facilitating the Access and Inclusion Committee.
- Council's Community Grants Fund Policy and application process was reviewed to improve focus on access and inclusion.
- Successfully developed the Narrabri Shire Accessible Business Brochure that was distributed throughout the business community to increase awareness in the business community around inclusion.
- Strategies adopted to ensure that all capital works projects are consistent with inclusion and accessibility requirements (in addition to the relevant standards and legislation).
- Access and inclusion standards have been embedded into the Tourism Precinct Master Plan.
- Narrabri Shire Libraries have made available autism friendly resources to hire by the community.
- Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy was reviewed to ensure it is in line with accessibility and inclusion requirements.
- Council continues to liaise with employment agencies to provide opportunities for people with a disability to increase their engagement of and understanding of Council employment opportunities.
- Easy Read, Audio and Electronic Versions of the 2017/2021 DIAP were developed and distributed.
- Large cross section of Council staff undertook training to become a Dementia Friend to raise awareness of and better assist customers with dementia.

# UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) defines disability as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions;
- total or partial loss of a part of the body;
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness;
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body;
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour.

And includes disability that:

- presently exists;
- previously existed but no longer exists;
- may exist in the future; or
- is imputed to a person (meaning it is thought or implied that the person has disability but does not).

Disabilities can present themselves in many forms and can result from a variety of ways (such as accidents, illnesses, or genetic disorders). A disability may affect mobility, ability to learn, or ability to communicate easily, and some people may have more than one. A disability may be visible or hidden, permanent or temporary or have minimal or substantial impact on a person's day-to-day life.

Whilst some people are born with disabilities, many develop disabilities throughout their lifetime. For example, a person may acquire a disability through an accident, or may develop a disability as they age. There is a strong relationship between age and disability; as people grow older, there is a greater tendency to develop conditions which cause disability as presented in Figure 1 below.

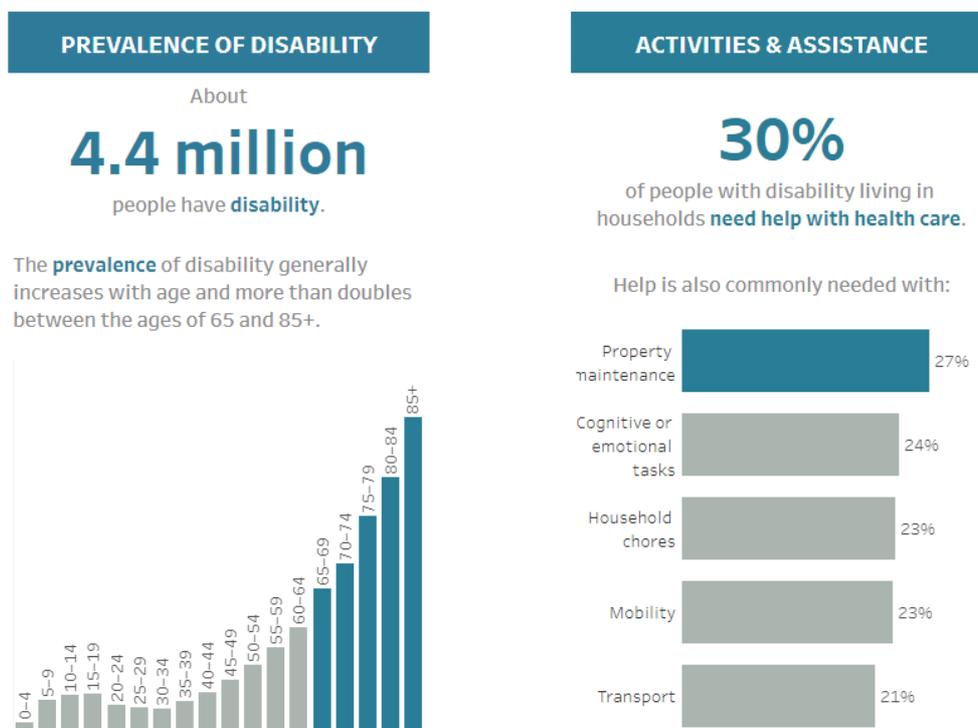


Figure 1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020, September 23). *People with disability in Australia*. Retrieved from AIHW: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/people-with-disability> [14/4/2022]

## Who Are People with Disability?

Disability is a part of human diversity. Over four million people in Australia, (equating to nearly one (1) in six (6) people), have a disability; with an increased prevalence of disability in the ageing population as the risk of disability is greater in older age groups.<sup>1</sup> People with disability purchase consumer goods, have jobs, go on holidays, access information, and contribute to society in the same way that people without disability do; the difference is that people with disability often encounter significant barriers while trying to do the things that many of us take for granted.

## Types of Disability

18% of the Australian population have a disability.<sup>2</sup> Of people with disabilities, an estimated 32% have severe or profound disability and 23% have mental or behavioural disabilities.

The breadth of impairments and medical conditions covered by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (DDA) are outlined below:

- Physical - affects a person's mobility or dexterity;
- Intellectual - affects a person's abilities to learn;
- Mental Illness - affects a person's thinking processes;
- Sensory - affects a person's ability to hear or see;
- Neurological – affects the person's brain and central nervous system;
- Learning disability;
- Physical disfigurement; or
- Immunological - the presence of organisms causing disease in the body.

To be deemed a disability, the impairment or condition must impact daily activities, communication or mobility or a combination of these and has lasted or is likely to last six (6) months or more.

People with disability are part of every aspect of our community: all ages, all socio-economic backgrounds and all cultural backgrounds. No two people's experience with the same disability is the same.

The only thing that distinguishes a person with disability is they may require some form of adaptation or adjustment to enable them to live in the same way as people without disability.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020, December 8). *Disability and ageing Australian population patterns and implications*. Retrieved from AIHW: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/disability-and-ageing-australian-population/contents/summary> [14/4/2022].

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2020, September 23). *People with disability in Australia*. Retrieved from AIHW: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia>.

# Employment and People with Disability

According to the National Disability Strategy (2011):

*“Work is essential to an individual’s economic security and is important to achieving social inclusion. Employment contributes to physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and a sense of identity. Income from employment increases financial independence and raises living standards.”*

Unfortunately, the rate of people living with disability that are unemployed is disproportional to those without disability. Approximately 48% of working aged people with a disability are employed compared with 79% of people without disability. Of the people with disability who are employed, there is representation across many occupations. Professionals, managers, and administrators are the largest occupational grouping, and this represents 22% of people with disability in employment. Clerical sales and service workers are the second largest grouping representing approximately 14%, and other occupational categories include labourers, technicians and trades workers.<sup>3</sup> 88% of employed people with disability do not require additional support from their employer to work and 83% of employed people with a disability do not need time off from work because of their conditions. However, 95% of working age people with disability who are unemployed or not in the labour force have more difficulty finding work.

## BARRIERS TO DISABILITY INCLUSION

There are multiple barriers that can make it extremely difficult, or even impossible, for people with disability to function. Some of the most common barriers are:<sup>4</sup>

### 1. Attitudinal Barriers

Created by people who only see a person’s disability. These attitudinal barriers can be witnessed through bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, and fear. These barriers include low expectations of people with disabilities and contribute to other barriers.

### 2. Environmental Barriers

Inaccessible environments, natural or built, create disability by preventing inclusion. Examples of architectural or physical barriers include (but are not limited to):

- Footpaths and doorways that are too narrow for a person using a mobility device to enter;
- Desks that are too high or too low for a person who is using a mobility device; and
- Poor lighting that makes it difficult to see for a person with low vision or for a person who lip-reads; and
- Doorknobs that are difficult to grasp for a person with impairments to their motor skills (such as those with arthritis, injury, or congenital anomalies).

### 3. Institutional Barriers

Includes many laws, policies, practices, or strategies that discriminate against people with disabilities. Examples of organisational or systemic barriers include (but are not limited to):

- Denying reasonable adjustments to qualified individuals with disabilities, so they can perform the essential functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform; and
- Public transport being inaccessible to people with disability, which acts as a barrier in their day-to-day lives and reduces the ability of people with disabilities to participate fully in community life.

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<sup>3</sup> Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. (2022). Employment. Retrieved from afdo: <https://www.afdo.org.au/about-australians-with-disability/employment/> [14/4/2022]

<sup>4</sup> Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. (2022). Social Model of Disability. Retrieved from afdo: <https://www.afdo.org.au/social-model-of-disability/> [14/4/2022]

#### 4. Communication Barriers

These are often experienced by people who have disabilities that affect hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension, and who use alternative ways to communicate (that often differ to those used by people who do not have a disability). Examples of communication barriers include (but are not limited to):

- Written messages may be inaccessible to people who are blind, or vision impaired from receiving the message because of:
  - Small print or no large-print versions of material, and
  - No Braille or electronic versions for people who use screen readers.
  - Auditory messages may be inaccessible to people who are deaf or have hearing loss from receiving the message because:
    - Videos do not include captioning or Auslan.
    - Complicated messages may be inaccessible to people with a cognitive disability from receiving the message because of the use of:
      - technical language,
      - long sentences, and
      - words with many syllables which are not provided in Plain Language or Easy English<sup>4</sup>

# LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

There is a range of Commonwealth and State legislation that actively supports access and inclusion for people with a disability making discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful.

**Australia has voluntarily signed the United Nations (UN) Convention Optional Protocol on the Rights of people with a disability. Under international law, Australia is bound to comply with their provisions and to implement them domestically:**

*"...and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.*

## INTERNATIONAL

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

## COMMONWEALTH

- [Australian Human Right Commission Act 1986](#)
- [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#)
- [Disability \(Access to Premises Standards – Buildings\) Standards 2010](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [National Art and Disability Strategy 2009](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme 2013](#)
- [National Standards for Disability Services 2014](#)

## NSW

- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1977](#)
- [Carers \(Recognition\) Act 2010](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Act 2014](#)
- [Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002](#)
- [Local Government \(General\) Regulation 2005](#)
- [Local Government Act 1993](#)
- [NSW Government Disability Inclusion Plan](#)

# THE CASE FOR INCLUSION

**Inclusion benefits everyone.**

As a community we are stronger with a diverse range of viewpoints, perspectives, and abilities. We are enriched through activities that advocate for and support inclusion.

Inclusion reduces disadvantage, isolation and discrimination and is the foundation of a connected and cohesive community. There are strong economic reasons for increasing the inclusivity for our communities and significant financial gains for both individuals and the business community when people are more engaged in meaningful, productive, and fulfilling employment.

Inclusion is only possible when communities are inclusive for all people, including those with physical, intellectual, cognitive, sensory disabilities and people with lived experience of mental health issues. Inclusive communities' benefit everyone by:

- Allowing for interaction and engagement of all members within the community;
- Reducing social isolation and improving mental health for people with a disability;
- Increasing economic gains for local business by expanding their customer base; and
- Improving physical health opportunities and outcomes for all.



*"The new path along the creek and along the track at the West Lake is fabulous!"*

*-Community Member-*

# ABOUT THE PLAN

## Background

Council's DIAP is a four (4) year framework outlining key strategies and actions to be delivered by Council in its commitment to disability access and inclusion. The plan will assist in removing barriers and enable people with a disability to participate fully within their community.

Developing, implementing, and monitoring the DIAP within Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) Framework allows Council to deliver improved services, facilities and programs to support people with a disability and their carers over the next four (4) years. The relationship between the DIAP and the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework is demonstrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Relationship between the DIAP and Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

## Purpose

The purpose of the DIAP is establish strategies and actions for Council and the community to deliver, to enable people with disability to have greater access to information, services and facilities throughout the Shire.

The plan focuses on the following four (4) key areas which require consistent efforts from government agencies and the wider community to meet the needs of people with a disability, their carers, older people, people with a temporary injury and parents with young children:

1. *Promoting positive community attitudes and behaviours;*
2. *Creating liveable communities;*
3. *Supporting access to meaningful employment; and*
4. *Improving access to services through better systems and processes.*

The focus for Council over the following four (4) years will therefore be to increase access to community information, upgrade facilities and improve how services are delivered to remove barriers to access and inclusion within the Narrabri Shire.

The relationship between the national disability inclusion planning agenda and Local Government is shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Disability Planning Agenda flow diagram

The most recent legislation and amendments reflect a shift towards the view that, while a disability may affect the way that a person interacts with others and their environment, it should not define a person nor limit their capacity to become an integral part of the community.

Although the rights of a person with a disability have been defined as the same rights as those of all people since the early 1990s, it is understood that upholding these rights must include promotion of individual choice, universal access to services and facilities and inclusive communities that enable full participation in social, political, and economic aspects of life. It is important that all levels of government approach access and inclusion equitably to achieve greater fairness of outcomes and result in equality for all.

These cultural and philosophical developments are embedded in the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth) (NDIS Act) and the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) which are complementary pieces of legislation that deal with funding of specialist support systems and community responsibility and response respectively. The *NDIS Act* defines how reasonable and necessary supports are provided for all people with a disability. The Act is administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) which implemented the NDIS in the Hunter New England area in 2016/2017.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) promotes the view that 'inclusion' is not only a goal for service providers and organisations (both public and private), but also a responsibility of the whole community. It legislates for the rights of people with a disability to full participation in every-day life, with enhanced community connection, independence, empowerment, and wellbeing. It is the role of Local Government through a DIAP to promote and support inclusion in their communities.

## Guiding Principles

The vision for Narrabri Shire within the Narrabri Shire Community Strategic Plan is:

***“The Narrabri Shire will continue to be a strong and vibrant regional economic growth centre providing a quality living environment for the entire community.”***

Council has, through the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework identified four strategic directions which underpin planning for the next 10 years through the 2022/2032 Community Strategic Plan:

1. **Society** - An empowered, inclusive, and connected community
2. **Environment** - A sustainable and compatible natural and built environment
3. **Economy** - A strong, diverse, and sustainable economy
4. **Civic Leadership** - Council as strong leaders for the community

## The role of Council

Council's role in the implementation of the DIAP will include:



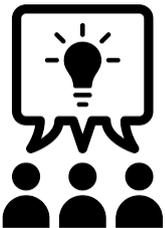
**PROVIDER:** through the provision of essential community services and infrastructure delivery

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**ADVOCATE:** by promoting and lobbying on behalf on the community to achieve desirable outcomes

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**FACILITATOR:** by assisting interaction and forming strategic alliances to promote sustainability

# ACCESS AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

The Access and Inclusion Committee (the Committee) provides advice to Council on the development, implementation and review of Councils policies, strategies and plans regarding the inclusion of people with a disability.

The Committee brings together a wide range of community members and service providers encompassing a diverse scope of expertise. The Committee will:

- Monitor the implementation of the 2022/2026 DIAP;
- Provide advice and recommendations on Council policies, procedures and processes that impact on access and inclusion matters;
- Assist in the obtainment of funding for actions and projects identified in the 2022/2026 DIAP; and
- Assist Council in identifying opportunities to educate our community and raise awareness on access and inclusion matters.



# CONSULTATION

Council undertook community consultation within all major towns within the Shire, as well as publishing a survey that was able to be completed both online and in person. Community and stakeholder engagement in the development of the 2022/2026 DIAP has been key in identifying community priorities and addressing inclusion in all areas of Council's operations. Ideas and contributions of both individuals within the community as well as Council staff have been invaluable in informing strategies and actions within the 2022/2026 DIAP. A total of 80 community members were engaged face to face during community consultation sessions, 15 Council staff were spoken to about their specific areas and 70 survey responses received. In total, 165 people were engaged in the development of the 2022/2026 DIAP.

## Community Consultation Sessions

### **BOGGABRI | Open Community Consultation Session**

10.00am, 12 April 2021

Boggabri RSL, 77 Laidlaw Street, Boggabri NSW 2382

### **WEE WAA | Open Community Consultation Session**

10.30am, 13 April 2021

Wee Waa Bowling Club, 69 Alma Street, Wee Waa NSW 2388

### **NARRABRI | Open Community Consultation Session**

10.00am, 15 April 2021

Narrabri Bowling Club, 176 Maitland Street, Narrabri NSW 2390

### **NARRABRI | Service Provider Workshop**

9.30am, 19 April 2021

The Crossing Theatre, Tibbereena Street, Narrabri NSW 2390

### **NARRABRI | Drop in Session**

11.00am, 19 June 2021

Multipurpose Room, Narrabri Aquatic Centre, Tibbereena Street, Narrabri NSW 2390

## Focus Group Session

### **Developing Positive Community Attitudes and Behaviours**

10.00am, 20 April 2021

The Crossing Theatre, Tibbereena Street, Narrabri NSW 2390

### **Creating Liveable Communities**

10.00am, 21 April 2021

The Crossing Theatre, Tibbereena Street, Narrabri NSW 2390

### **Supporting Access to Meaningful Employment**

10.00am, 22 April 2021

The Crossing Theatre, Tibbereena Street, Narrabri NSW 2390

### **Improving Access to Mainstream Services**

10.00am, 23 April 2021

The Crossing Theatre, Tibbereena Street, Narrabri NSW 2390

## Disability Access and Inclusion Survey

The Disability Access and Inclusion Survey was published on Council's Website, promoted via Council's social media and made available in hard copy from Council's Administration Building and the Narrabri Shire Visitor Information Centre. It drew responses on a range of key issues allowing Council to better understand the community, the types of disabilities and areas of support required locally. A total of 70 surveys were received with some key learnings identified within the four (4) focus areas. These key learnings have been embedded into the 2022/2026 DIAP.

### Identified Community Priorities

Several key themes were consistently identified throughout all of the consultations undertaken and in feedback received with issues raised across paths of travel, parking, access to facilities and businesses as well as access to meaningful and mainstream employment. Key issues and community priorities have been embedded into the 2022/2026 DIAP to guide and inform Council on ensuring it continues to work towards an inclusive and accessible community.

#### Some of the key community priorities identified across the Shire are:

- Footpaths and kerb ramps are uneven and difficult to navigate for people with a disability;
- Businesses can be difficult to access, sometimes not at all;
- Lack of footpaths connecting community to service centres;
- Grandstands and sports grounds are not easily accessible;
- Lack of functional disability parking and lack of pedestrian crossings;
- The community is supportive of people with a disability, but there needs to be greater understanding of what it means to be truly inclusive;
- Lack of services within the Shire's smaller towns and villages, including mental health services;
- There needs to be better employment opportunities for people with a disability and awareness of the benefits that people with a disability can bring to the workplace;
- Council facilities need to be more accessible and brought up to current standards
- Lack of inclusive/targeted activities, playgrounds and programmes;
- Lack of educational offerings for kids with a disability or additional needs; and
- There needs to be a better approach to distributing information so that everyone can have access to it when they need it, including better signage.

*"People are supportive, but don't always understand what it means to be inclusive".*

*-Community Member*

# STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key themes and strategies for the 2022/2026 DIAP are:

## 1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

- 1.1 Improve staff awareness of disability issues in the community to provide responsive services for customers living with disability
- 1.2 Improve awareness of disability inclusion across the Shire
- 1.3 Establish partnerships which address community wide barriers to access and inclusion
- 1.4 Provide information in a manner and format which is inclusive
- 1.5 Celebrate positive inclusive practices and successful outcomes

## 2. Creating liveable communities

- 2.1 Continue upgrade Council assets to meet the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act*, relevant Australian Standards, and the National Construction Code
- 2.2 Contribute to liveable and accessible public spaces
- 2.3 Advocate for programs which aim to increase social inclusion and community connections
- 2.4 Develop an innovative approach to assisting people with a disability to navigate the Shire
- 2.5 Advocate for innovative and inclusive spaces, services, and programmes
- 2.6 Review provisions of mobility parking spaces within main CBD areas of the Shire
- 2.7 Keep the local business community informed of opportunities to be more inclusive and accessible
- 2.8 Deliver inclusive events and implement strategies to ensure continuous improvement in this area

## 3. Access to meaningful employment

- 3.1 Develop employment opportunities within Council for people with a disability
- 3.2 Improve organisational capacity to support a diverse workforce and support those living with disability (including carers)
- 3.3 Provide volunteering opportunities for people with all abilities to increase employment opportunities

## 4. Equitable access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

- 4.1 Ensure Council undertakes accessible and inclusive community engagement
- 4.2 Promote a culture of responsive customer service
- 4.3 Continuously improve Council's regulatory processes to achieve outcomes those living with disability
- 4.4 Champion inclusive events and community programs

## FOCUS AREA 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

*Attitudes towards, and beliefs about people with a disability are important determinants of social inclusion. Council is committed to championing positive attitudes and behaviours that embrace diversity and is respectful of the disability community.*

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
<b>1.1 Improve staff awareness of disability issues in the community to provide responsive services for customers with a disability</b>	1.1.1 Develop and implement procedures for all front-line customer service staff to improve service delivery and complaints handling for people with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures developed and implemented</li> <li>Increased satisfaction of dealing with Council's customer service</li> </ul>	2023/2024	Manager Community Relations	Strategy 4.3.1: Ensure policies and procedures are effective and implemented in accordance with legislative requirements and best practice principles
	1.1.2 Implement disability awareness training for all staff and include in Council's onboarding process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability awareness training included in onboarding for all new staff</li> <li>Appropriate training identified, implemented, and delivered</li> <li>Increased understanding and empathy from Council staff</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.3.3: Deliver reliable and quality services through innovation and continuous improvement
	1.1.3 Disability awareness training for councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporated into Councillor onboarding and standard e-learning lessons</li> <li>Increased awareness of appropriate behaviour and empathy from councillors</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Human Resources  Senior Management Team	Strategy 4.2.4: Deliver high quality and informative customer service
<b>1.2 Improve awareness of disability inclusion within the Shire</b>	1.2.1 Use Council's social media, publications, events and sponsorship opportunities to promote inclusion of all people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased Council publications/social media embracing diversity</li> <li>Increased feeling of inclusion by all people</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Community Relations	Strategy 4.1.3: Increase awareness of Council's role in the community including the services and facilities provided

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
<b>1.3 Establish partnerships which address community wide barriers to access and inclusion</b>	1.3.2 Partner with community organisations and groups to promote events, activities, and services as inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with community groups, industry and service providers as appropriate events are identified</li> <li>Increased inclusiveness of events</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Community Development	Strategy 3.2.3: Develop and support a variety of events and tourism opportunities in the Shire
	1.3.3 Develop publicly available disability inclusion guides to assist community, cultural and sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability Inclusion Guide produced</li> <li>Increased accessibility and enjoyment of events</li> </ul>	2023/2024	Manager Community Development	Strategy 1.1.1: Support, encourage and enhance health and wellbeing services and programs across the Shire
	1.3.4 Support the development of a Disability Interagency Committee to assist in identifying and lobbying for service gaps within the disability sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community led Disability Interagency Committee established</li> <li>Decreased service gaps in the disability sector</li> <li>Improved access to services for people with disabilities</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Community Development	Strategy 4.2.2: Work cooperatively and appropriately with external parties to advocate for the community's best interests
<b>1.4 Provide information in a manner and format that is inclusive</b>	1.4.1 Utilise and promote best practice principles for inclusive communication (both written and verbal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and promote best practice principles for inclusive communication</li> <li>Improved communication and understanding for all parties</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Council Wide	Strategy 4.3.1: Ensure policies and procedures are effective and implemented in accordance with legislative requirements and best practice principles
<b>1.5 Celebrate positive inclusive practices and successful outcomes</b>	1.5.1 Promote Councils projects that improve access to services, facilities, and public places through a range of Council communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotions occur when available</li> <li>Increased access to and useability of services, facilities and public places</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Tourism and Manager Community Relations	Strategy 3.2.2: Promote the Shire as an attractive environment to invest, visit and live

## FOCUS AREA 2: Creating liveable communities

*Council will contribute to, and advocate for a liveable and welcoming Shire, to create and support communities in which people have the opportunity to live, learn, work and play, to feel safe, to belong, to raise a family and grow older. To create opportunities for social connection and engagement and improve the quality of personal, social and business interactions, that enhance everyone's social and emotional wellbeing.*

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
2.1 Continuously upgrade council assets to meet the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> , relevant Australian Standards, and the National Construction Code	2.1.1 Perform initial audit of all Council managed and publicly accessible assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a list of assets and what improvements are required to ensure they are <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> (DDA) Compliant and abide by AS1428.1</li> <li>Improved knowledge of Council assets and how they can be improved</li> <li>More accessible assets</li> </ul>	2024/2025	Manager Property Services	Strategy 4.3.2: Sustainably manage Council's finances, assets and workforce
	2.1.2 Identify and prioritise public buildings that require access audits in accordance with Australian Standard 1428.1 – Access to Premises standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise buildings which have been identified and accessibility audits completed</li> <li>Public buildings are easier to access and people with disabilities can be more easily included in their use</li> </ul>	2024/2025	Manager Property Services	Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure an accessible Shire for all
	2.1.3 Review the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan to ensure all pedestrian transport infrastructure works undertaken by Council are in accordance with current legislation and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan review completed</li> <li>Increased ability of disabled community to access and enjoy the Shire</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Design Services	Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure an accessible Shire for all

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
<b>2.2 Contribute to liveable and accessible public spaces</b>	2.2.1 Assess the need for specialised disability training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff who require training are identified and specialist training is delivered</li> <li>Staff are provided with the resources to provide more inclusive services</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.2.4: Deliver high quality and informative customer service
	2.2.2 Provide safer and more accessible pedestrian transport infrastructure (such as pathways) through innovative design approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and implement features (such as appropriate ramps, fencing and bollards) to make the Shire's pedestrian transport infrastructure network safer</li> <li>People with disabilities can participate in and experience the community in a easier and safer way.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Parks and Opens Spaces  Manager Road Services	Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure an accessible Shire for all
<b>2.3 Advocate for programs which aim to increase social inclusion and community connection</b>	2.3.1 Advocate for and participate in accessible and inclusive community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive and accessible projects, initiatives, and events identified and supported where possible and appropriate</li> <li>Include access and inclusion considerations in all event applications</li> <li>Increased visibility and prevalence of accessible and inclusive events</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Cultural Facilities	Strategy 3.2.3: Develop and support a variety of events and tourism opportunities in the Shire
	2.3.2 Promote the benefits of accessible business practices through Business and Industry associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business/Industry associations identified, and benefits promoted</li> <li>Increased business opportunities for people with disabilities</li> <li>Easier access to goods and services</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Economic Development	Strategy 3.1.2: Actively engage with and support capacity building opportunities for local businesses and innovators
	2.3.4 Raise awareness for local sporting, recreation, and cultural programs with the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources developed and distributed</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 1.1.1: Support, encourage and enhance health and wellbeing

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
	aim of increasing inclusion and access across represented sporting codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with disabilities having an increased ability and inclusion in sports and sport communities</li> </ul>			services and programs across the Shire
<b>2.4 Develop an innovative approach to assisting people with a disability to navigate the Shire</b>	2.4.1 Investigate the implementation of an online accessibility map (existing or developed) that enables people of all abilities to navigate communities with greater confidence, independence, and dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility map developed and integrated into current Council platforms (for example. Council websites, on social media)</li> <li>• Increased visibility and participation in community by people of all abilities</li> </ul>	2023/2024	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 4.3.3: Deliver reliable and quality services through innovation and continuous improvement
	2.4.2 Develop Accessibility Tourism Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Strategy Developed</li> <li>• Increased welcoming for and tourism from people of all abilities</li> </ul>	2023/2024	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 4.1.1: Ensure all operations are pre-planned and executed in the best interests of the community
	2.4.3 Integrate accessibility information into the Visit Narrabri promotional material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a "Visit Accessible Places" brochure</li> <li>• Include information regarding a tourist's destinations accessibility into the next review of the Explore Narrabri Visitor Information Guide</li> <li>• Increased accessibility and tourism from people of all abilities</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 3.2.2: Promote the Shire as an attractive environment to invest, visit and live
<b>2.5 Advocate for innovative and inclusive spaces, services, and programmes</b>	2.5.1 Ensure that the Tourist Hub Development includes inclusive and accessible play spaces and disability standards are considered throughout all phases of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourist Hub concept and design contains inclusive and accessible play areas</li> <li>• Increased ability of children of all abilities to socialise and relax in play spaces</li> <li>• Develop and design safer and more inclusive play spaces</li> </ul>	2023/2024	Manager Parks and Opens Spaces, Manager Road Services	Strategy 1.2.2: Develop, maintain, and enhance quality community spaces and facilities

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
	2.5.2 Investigate the feasibility of an Assisted Household Waste Collection Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted Household Waste Collection Service successfully investigated</li> <li>Improved health and amenity of people who may find disposal of household waste difficult</li> </ul>	2024/2025	Manager Waste Services	Strategy 4.3.3: Deliver reliable and quality services through innovation and continuous improvement
	2.5.3 Advocate for a School for Specific Purpose (SSP) to be established in Narrabri to provide specialist and dedicated support for students with moderate to high learning needs and who meet the NSW Department of Education disability Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community needs analysis undertaken, viability of a School for Specific Purpose has been examined and presented to the NSW Department of Education</li> <li>Improved access to education and education support for higher needs students</li> <li>Future improved livelihood prospects</li> </ul>	2023/2024	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 3.1.4: Advocate for and support diverse education and personal development opportunities to ensure available skills meet local demand
<b>2.6 Review provisions of mobility parking spaces within main CBD areas of the Shire</b>	2.6.1 Undertake an audit of disabled access parking spaces to maximise access and inclusion outcomes that meet standards and functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit undertaken</li> <li>Strategies to maximise outcomes identified</li> <li>Improved disabled access parking spaces and people who need them can use them more easily</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Design Services	Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure an accessible Shire for all
<b>2.7 Keep local business community informed of opportunities to be more inclusive and accessible</b>	2.7.1 Council to provide funding information to the local business community to improve inclusion and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants identified and distributed</li> <li>GrantGuru platform developed and launched</li> <li>Businesses can upgrade their facilities to improve inclusion and accessibility</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 3.3.2: Revenue from grants and funding programs is maximised and responsibly managed

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
<b>2.8 Deliver inclusive events and implement strategies to ensure continuous improvement</b>	2.8.1 Develop a program of events that encourage and increase attendance and participation of people with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council events are inclusive, and programming supports attendance of all people across the shire</li> <li>• Increased accessibility and inclusivity to enable more people with living with disability to attend and participate in more events</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Cultural Facilities	Strategy 3.2.3: Develop and support a variety of events and tourism opportunities in the Shire

## FOCUS AREA 3: Access to meaningful employment

*Council will be a leader in promoting and developing a diverse workplace and culture, leading by example as an employer committed to social justice and inclusion.*

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
<b>3.1 Develop employment opportunities within Council for people with a disability</b>	3.1.1 Develop inclusive employment opportunities by removing any barriers identified within the recruitment processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies reviewed and in line with legislative requirements and identified barriers removed</li> <li>• Increased understanding of the perceptions and needs of people living with disability throughout Council's operations.</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.3.2: Sustainably manage Council's finances, assets, and workforce
	3.1.2 Work with Disability Employment Services to assist in the recruitment and retention of people with a disability, injury, or health condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Employment Services engaged</li> <li>• Decrease of people being unable to remain employed due to a disability, injury, or health condition</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.3.2: Sustainably manage Council's finances, assets, and workforce
	3.1.3 Develop and conduct Recruitment Workshops for people of all abilities to increase understanding the local government recruitment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment workshops developed and implemented</li> <li>• Increased understanding of the perceptions and needs of people living with disability throughout Council's operations.</li> <li>• Increased ability of people to understand and participate in the local government</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.3.2: Sustainably manage Council's finances, assets, and workforce
	3.1.4 Develop an Easy Read fact sheet for people considering applying for a job with local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy read fact sheet developed and distributed</li> <li>• Increased opportunity for people of all abilities to seek employment at the Council</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.3.2: Sustainably manage Council's finances, assets, and workforce

	3.1.5	Promote work experience opportunities for students and people with a disability to encourage employment opportunities within Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work experience program developed and implemented; work experience opportunities provided</li> <li>• Increased opportunity for people of all abilities to seek employment at Council</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 3.1.4: Advocate for and support diverse education and personal development opportunities to ensure available skills meet local demand
<b>3.2 Improve organisational capacity to support a diverse workforce and support those living with disability (including carers)</b>	3.2.1	Engage with staff who identify as having a disability to better understand and meet their needs and identify needs and support required for carers for people with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary internal survey developed and distributed</li> <li>• Improved ability of staff living with disability to feel comfortable at work and fulfill their obligations</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.3.4: Provide a safe and healthy working environment
	3.2.2	Facilitate specialist training to managers and supervisors to support staff with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist training identified and provided</li> <li>• Staff with disabilities feel supported</li> <li>• Managers and supervisors are provided with the tools to assist staff with a disability feel comfortable at work and do their work</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Human Resources	Strategy 4.3.4: Provide a safe and healthy working environment
<b>3.3 Provide volunteering opportunities for people with all abilities to increase employment opportunities</b>	3.3.1	Review volunteering policy to ensure Council volunteering opportunities are accessible and inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Reviewed</li> <li>• Increased opportunity for people of all abilities to participate in Council processes</li> <li>• Increased inclusion of new volunteers</li> </ul>	2021/2022	Manager Governance and Risk	Strategy 1.3.2: Empower the community's volunteers

	<p>3.3.2 Undertake a marketing campaign to encourage a diverse range of people to volunteer for Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing Campaign undertaken and volunteer base for Council has increased, including people with a disability</li> <li>• Increased opportunity for people of all abilities to participate in Council processes</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Manager Tourism and Community Development</p>	<p>Strategy 1.3.2: Empower the community's volunteers</p>
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## FOCUS AREA 4: Equitable access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

Council will continue to improve its capacity to assist our community to gain access to information and council services. Council encourages the community to actively participate and partner with Council for improved decision making and service delivery.

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
<b>4.1 Ensure Council undertakes accessible and inclusive community engagement</b>	1.1.1 Review Community Engagement Strategy and processes to deliver improved access and participation in community consultation sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review completed</li> <li>Increased variety of types of people with different ability levels giving their perspectives</li> </ul>	2023/2024	Manager Governance and Risk	Strategy 4.2.1: Communicate and engage with the community regarding decision-making
	4.1.2 Identify key Council publications and communications that can be made into multiple formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Council publications and communications reviewed</li> <li>People with different ability levels can find a suitable format</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Community Relations	Strategy 4.3.3: Deliver reliable and quality services through innovation and continuous improvement
	4.1.3 Improve the community directory to include information on accessibility included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Directory reviewed and accessible options identified</li> <li>More accessible options available and people can access that when making decisions</li> </ul>	2024/2025	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 4.1.3: Increase awareness of Council's role in the community including the services and facilities provided
	4.1.4 Provide links on Council's website to relevant disability inclusion information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website reviewed and updated accordingly</li> <li>More accessible disability resources</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Tourism and Community Development	Strategy 4.1.3: Increase awareness of Council's role in the community including the services and facilities provided
<b>4.2 Promote a culture of responsive customer service</b>	4.2.1 Include accessibility as an indicator on the biennial customer satisfaction survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Satisfaction Survey includes accessibility as an indicator</li> <li>Improved satisfaction when dealing with Council customer service from people with disabilities</li> </ul>	Biennial	Manager Community Relations	Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure an accessible Shire for all

STRATEGY	ACTION	OUTCOME	DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY	CSP LINKS
	4.2.2 Promote the National Relay Service to customer service teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Service Team understands and uses the National Relay Service</li> <li>Hard-of-hearing people can better access customer service over telephone</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Manager Community Relations	Strategy 4.2.4: Deliver high quality and informative customer service
<b>4.3 Continuously improve regulatory processes within the organisation to achieve outcomes for those living with a disability</b>	4.3.1 Audit project management process to ensure disability standards and guidelines are considered for capital works projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability Standards become a consideration for all capital works projects from inception</li> <li>Increased ability to access buildings and use them for people with disabilities</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Projects and Assets	Strategy 1.2.3: Ensure an accessible Shire for all
<b>4.4 Champion inclusive events and community programs</b>	4.4.1 Review and update Council's event management processes and procedures to include access and inclusion criteria and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event management processes and procedures updated and distributed</li> <li>Events will be more inclusive and accessible</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Cultural Facilities	Strategy 3.2.3: Develop and support a variety of events and tourism opportunities in the Shire
	4.4.2 Review and update Councils Events Application to include accessibility considerations within site plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site plan requirements include accessibility requirements</li> <li>Events will be more inclusive and accessible</li> </ul>	2022/2023	Manager Cultural Facilities	Strategy 3.2.3: Develop and support a variety of events and tourism opportunities in the Shire
	4.4.3 Include if a person is living with disability as an indicator on the biennial customer satisfaction survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data obtained through Council's Community Satisfaction Survey.</li> <li>The ability to better understand the quantified need for increased inclusivity in townships across the Shire</li> <li>Better visibility for people with disabilities</li> </ul>	Biennial	Manager Community Relations	Strategy 4.2.2: Work cooperatively and appropriately with external parties to advocate for the community's best interests

# IMPLEMENTATION

The actions in this plan are designed to allow for flexibility in how the outcomes will be achieved over the life span of the plan. Indicative timeframes for the commencement of actions or projects have been identified as part of the planning process. Commencement dates for projects will be confirmed annually as they are further developed, and budgets and resources are allocated for their delivery.

# GOVERNANCE

Narrabri Shire Council is committed to inclusion and the incorporation of the actions into the Delivery Program and Annual Operational plans. The annual report will provide information on achievements based on the measurable outcomes for each of the actions. The implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025 will be overseen by the Tourism and Community Development Team, assisted by the Access and Inclusion Committee. Relevant sections within Council will be required to ensure implementation and/or consideration of actions relevant to their sections. Progress and outcomes will be reported annually as part of the Narrabri Shire Annual report with a copy being provided to the Minister for Family and Community Services as required under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW)

# MONITORING PROGRESS

Council will regularly measure and report against the action within this plan. However, over the life span of the plan projects and priorities may change to be in line with changing community needs and expectations. Identified projects may not be required and new opportunities may emerge. Regular monitoring and annual progress reporting will consider:

- The quality and success of implementation of actions to date
- Modification of strategies as required to achieve specific objectives within the plan

# MEASURING SUCCESS

The Access and Inclusion Committee review progress of actions quarterly and monitors performance and outcomes against the objectives of the plan. The Annual report reporting on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025 will be open for the community to view and respond to. Council is committed to ongoing and regular consultation with the community in measuring the success of the objections and actins set within this plan.

# Contact Us

If you have any questions regarding this Plan or the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, please visit the Integrated Planning and Reporting page on our website ([www.narrabri.nsw.gov.au](http://www.narrabri.nsw.gov.au)) or contact us via:



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