

Inner West Council

Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023–2026

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statement

Inner West Council acknowledges the Gadigal and Wangal peoples, who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which the Inner West is situated. Council pays its respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

Message from the Mayor

I am pleased to present the second Inner West Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan. It represents our ongoing commitment to realising an accessible and inclusive Inner West and builds on the foundations and success of the first plan 2017–2022. Council takes great pride in being the first Local Council to raise the Disability Pride flag in celebration of the world's largest and most diverse minority. Alongside those living with disability, their community leaders, allies, families, and support organisations this public acknowledgment is helping change the way disability is seen and appreciated.

This plan reflects the issues and priorities raised by local people with disability and will help advance key issues like employment of people with disability. There are many challenges and opportunities to achieving inclusion and I am excited to work together with our community to improve life for everyone.

General Manager's foreword

Council's achievements include delivering more accessible infrastructure, facilities, and programs. We know there is more to do and continue to build solutions and improvements into our day-to-day practice. Some initiatives have already commenced, in November 2022 we held a Disability Employment Roundtable gathering local business leaders together to look towards better employment opportunities for people with disability. This is just the start and I commend members of Council's Access Advisory Committee for their valuable input throughout the development of the plan and to staff for their leadership throughout the project. We acknowledge that any inclusion journey is only possible with the involvement of people living with disability. To all those who contributed to this plan I thank you, for sharing your stories, wisdom and experience that is essential to make the Inner West a better and more inclusive place. I invite you to join me with enthusiasm as we deliver more over the next 3 years.

Background

The Inner West Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023–26 is a requirement of the NSW *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, and it builds on Council's first plan that commenced in 2017. This second Disability Inclusion Action Plan describes Council's commitment to improving opportunities for people with disability to participate fully in community life. The plan responds to community priorities, legal requirements, and policy guidance.

In 2008 the Commonwealth Government committed Australia as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Council has had regard to the following articles of the convention in drafting this Plan:

- combatting stereotypes and prejudices limiting the opportunities of persons with disabilities, and promoting the capabilities of persons with disabilities (Article 8)
- identifying and removing barriers and obstacles so that persons with disabilities can access their environments, transport, facilities, services, information and communication technologies (Article 9)
- creating environments, services and programs that enable persons with disabilities to be included in the community and to live independently (Article 19)
- ensuring access to an adequate standard of living by providing access to housing, services and assistance for disability related needs (Article 28)
- promoting access to information by providing information in accessible formats and technologies (Article 21)
- ensuring equal access to education, work and employment (Article 24 and 27)
- ensuring persons with disabilities can participate in the political, civic, cultural and recreational life of the community (Articles 29 and 30).

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* is Commonwealth legislation that provides protection against discrimination on the basis of disability and creates the statutory framework for governments and businesses to provide equal access to the benefits enjoyed by all Australians. The *Disability Discrimination Act* gives effect to the International Convention and establishes the legal basis for several national standards that define minimum accessibility requirements including standards for:

- accessible public transport
- education

- access to premises and buildings.

Council's Plan gives effect to the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act*.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* establishes the legal requirement for Council to create a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Finally, the Disability Inclusion Action 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.

Understanding disability and accessibility

Understanding disability is based upon the social model of disability which underpins the United Nations Convention. The Convention states that 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.

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.

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.

How many people are living with disability?

Almost 18% of Inner West residents live with disability, that is almost 38,000 residents.

According to the 2021 Census:

- one third of people with disability complete high school compared to two thirds without disability
- people with disability have a lower employment rate than people without a disability (53% compared to 84%)
- people who provide care to those living with disability also have a lower

employment rate: the labour force participation rate for primary carers (59%) was lower than that for non-carers (81.5%)

- almost one in 10 Australians with disability reported they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their disability in the last 12 months
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are 1.7 times more likely to be living with disability. Aboriginal children were twice as likely as non-Aboriginal children to have a disability and Aboriginal people aged 35-44 years were almost 3 times as likely to have a disability
- people with 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.

How the Disability Inclusion Action Plan developed

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed after reviewing the outcomes of the first plan. Workshops with staff helped identify achievements, remaining barriers and opportunities. This informed a discussion paper prepared to aid the community engagement.

Council then consulted the community on their experience, ideas and priorities. The engagement was promoted through YourSay Inner West from 12 May to 30 June 2022. From 11 May to 30 June a range of opportunities for engagement were provided to ensure community consultation:

- booked phone interviews with Council staff
- Access Advisory Committee online meeting on 11 May
- individual and group online workshop on 26 May
- drop-in session at Haberfield Library on 1 June
- disability support organisations community forum at Ashfield on 2 June
- public forum at Ashfield 29 June.

Email promotion through relevant Inner West Council databases and contact lists to more than 90 organisations and 50 individuals including:

- local disability networks and disability support agencies and peak groups
- the Access Advisory Committee and other Local Democracy Group members
- residents and those involved in previous inclusion planning
- community services networks
- Inner West Disability Forum
- *Radio for the Print Handicapped* and local radio
- social media advertising.

More than 800 people reviewed the draft Plan on exhibition.

The Action Plan

1. Social inclusion

Action Area I: Create opportunities to increase participation and awareness of disability issues

Issues identified:

- Building the necessary pathways for social inclusion to flourish needs to be central to the Plan
- Focus on improved inclusion and meaningful connection of children with disability, to their friends, peers, school, and community
- Focus on sport and recreation infrastructure and program support to improve attitudes, awareness raising and actions that deliver higher participation for all
- Strengthen and improve local opportunities to engage in broader learning, leisure, volunteering, and recreation
- Create space for people to be out and about and included and welcomed.

Actions	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measure
1.1 A local campaign to raise awareness of people with disability and their lived experience	Strategic and Corporate Communications Manager	2024-2025	Existing	Key campaign messages are delivered and become familiar to the Inner West community Increasing percentage of people recognise campaign themes when surveyed at events
1.2 The needs of people with disability are explicitly included in local emergency management planning	Director Infrastructure	2023-2024	Existing	People with a range of disability and needs participate in emergency management planning

Actions	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measure
<p>1.3 Council community development and programming includes the diverse needs of people with disability including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • children and young people • LGBTIQ+ people • people from diverse cultural backgrounds • women 	Community Wellbeing Manager	2023-2024	Existing	People with disability are explicitly included in strategy engagement, community engagement and in programming
1.4 Advocacy with the NSW and Commonwealth Governments on support and service needs of people with disability	Social and Cultural Planning Manager	2023-2026	Existing	Council develops advocacy submissions with the Access Advisory Committee, and releases these publicly
1.5 Increased participation of people in health, wellness, recreation programs and water-based recreation	Senior Manager Sport and Recreation	2023-2025	Existing	Increase National Disability Insurance Scheme participants enrolled in Council recreation programs Satisfaction of participants with disability with recreation programs
1.6 Progress planning for new tidal swim site at Callan Park includes accessibility for people with disability	Parks Planning and Ecology Manager	2024-2025	Existing plus grant funding	People with disability engaged in the design development
1.7 Plan for the delivery of a new accessible canoe/kayak launching facility at Mackey Park on the Cooks River	Parks Planning and Ecology Manager	2023-2024	Grant funding	Canoe launching facility completed by December 2024

Actions	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measure
1.8 Build capacity with local sporting and recreation groups to attract participants with disability	Parks and Recreation Planning Manager	2023-2025	Existing	Delivery of an annual Activate Inclusion Sports Day Number of training, assistance and information sessions provided to local groups and report on outcomes. Target of 2 per year

2. Cultural inclusion

Action area 2: Council cultural programming is accessible to people with disability

Issues identified:

- Expanded opportunities are needed for artists, creatives, and audience members with disability to fully engage within the full creative life of the Inner West
- Promote inclusion training, support and resources are needed to guide practitioners, and provide access information to broaden choice and participation at venues and performances
- Promote leading inclusive practice to share opportunities for representation, expression, and exploring the unique cultural identity of disability
- Broaden the representation of disability as a component of human diversity to support inclusion.

Actions	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measures
2.1 Increased focus on cultural engagement for people with disability in annual grants program, events programs, and living arts programs	Events Manager, Living Arts Manager and Community Wellbeing Manager	2023-2025	Existing	Increase participation of people with disability in cultural programs, delivered by Council and its partners, measured through participation surveys and the Culture Counts app
2.2 Audio descriptions created for twenty existing Perfect Match artworks, and all subsequent works	Living Arts Manager	2023-2026	Existing	20 audio descriptions delivered by June 2024 All subsequent works have audio descriptions developed as part of their creation
2.3 Introduce quiet sensory spaces at major Council events	Events Manager	2023-2026	Existing	Number of major events each year with a designated quiet space
2.4 Deliver celebrations for International Day of People with Disability	Community Wellbeing Manager	2023-2026	Existing	Audience satisfaction with annual activities increases Increased number of performers with a disability

2.5 Promote Disability Pride awareness	Community Wellbeing Manager	2024-2025	Existing	Number of promotions for Disability Pride
2.6 Support Mental Health month and awareness of those living with mental health issues	Community Wellbeing Manager	2024-2026	Existing	Number of Council activities held during mental health month

3. Economic inclusion

Action area 3: Grow economic inclusion of people with disability

Issues identified:

- Increasing employment participation is fundamental to economic inclusion
- Affordability of fees and charges needs consideration, half of the disability community live at or below the poverty line
- Increased supply of affordable and accessible housing is critical to economic participation
- Increased access to the local businesses as consumers remains a high priority.

Actions	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measures
3.1 Implement the key recommendation from the Disability Employment Roundtable by supporting local business to create 100 jobs for people with disability in the Inner West by end 2025	Social and Cultural Planning Manager, Economic Development Team Leader and Senior Manager People and Culture	2023-2025	Existing	Number of local employers matched with leading practice support and employing people with a disability Workshops held to facilitate and link support to employers
3.2 Allocate \$100,000 in 2023/24 to map employment opportunities that could be identified for trainees with disability and others, establish an internal staff disability network, introduce additional traineeships, expand leadership and mentoring opportunities, and promote reasonable adjustment policies	Senior Manager People and Culture	2024	\$100,000 additional plus existing	Employee network established by June 2024 Council increases traineeships for people with disability from 3 to 6 Increase in number of staff identifying that they live with disability from current baseline

3.3 Provide business engagement advice and support to facilitate welcoming customers with disability	Economic Development Team Leader	2024	Existing	Number business operators participating in training
3.4 Identify a pilot location in partnership with business chamber partners to trial outcomes of the welcoming customers with disability business engagement initiatives	Economic Development Team Leader	2024-2026	Existing	Pilot location identified by December 2024 and trial commenced by June 2025 3.3.1.2 Operational Plan

4. Inclusive planning, infrastructure and environments

Action area 4: Improve the accessibility of local infrastructure, venues, parks, and facilities

Issues identified:

- More inclusive design of infrastructure, public spaces, parks, premises, community facilities and venues is required to improve the physical whole of journey access experience
- Improved welcoming attitudes that reduce attitudinal barriers to inclusion are needed as compliments to disability friendly environments
- Co-design, detailed access assessment and realistic scoping of pragmatic solutions facilitate inclusive outcomes
- Improving the accessibility of transport and transports hubs/railway stations remains a high priority
- Increased active and public transport options that deliver affordable door to door transport options are needed, particularly for people with higher support needs.

Actions	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measures
4.1 Review all Council facilities and identify accessibility gaps so remediation can be prioritised for all capital upgrades	Director, Infrastructure	2024-2026	Existing	Leading practice accessibility features identified for inclusion in all Council’s infrastructure upgrade projects Number of projects completed with improved access per year Staff learning community established to share experience and learning
4.2 Master planning for the upgrade of Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre has beyond compliance, leading practice accessibility	Senior Manager Capital Works, Manager Engineering,	2024-2026	Existing	Leichhardt Park Aquatic Centre delivers leading practice accessibility

	and Property and Strategic Investments Manager			
<p>4.3 Deliver access improvements to council community facilities and halls as part of asset management and master planning programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newtown Neighbourhood Centre access ramp and toilets • Inner West Sustainability Hub, accessible parking, and pathways • St Peters Town Hall new access ramp • Dawn Fraser Baths new access path from accessible parking space to entry and scoping solutions to other access issues in collaboration with the Access Advisory Committee • Balmain Town Hall accessibility improvements to the library and hall including the main entry into the library. • Petersham KU new access ramp 	Senior Manager Capital Works, Property and Strategic Investments Manager	2023-2025	Existing	Priority access improvements are completed at each location by December 2025

<p>4.4 Implement the Public Toilet Strategy priorities to deliver new accessible facilities including at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birchgrove Park • Camperdown Memorial Rest Park • HJ Mahoney Reserve • Gladstone Park • Leichhardt Oval No.2 • Mackey Park Amenities • Pioneers Memorial Rest Park • Tempe Reserve 	<p>Parks Planning and Ecology Manager and Senior Manager Capital Works</p>	<p>2024-2026</p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>Eight new accessible public toilet facilities completed by June 2026</p>
<p>4.5 Investment in annual footpath renewal and Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan priorities to improve accessibility of pedestrian pathway networks considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program of priority works to end 2025/26 • Footpath and pedestrian crossing maintenance • New raised pedestrian crossings • New and upgraded kerb ramps • Kerb ramp improvements as part of nearby footpath renewals 	<p>Manager Engineering and Senior Manager Capital Works</p>	<p>2023-2026</p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>Proportion of Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan actions delivered</p> <p>Additional measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of new or remediated kerbs • number of new raised pedestrian crossings • metres of new or remediated footpath
<p>4.6 Improve shared zones, cycleways to accommodate emerging mobility and wayfinding technologies into design and practice</p>	<p>Traffic and Transport Planning Manager</p>	<p>2024-2025</p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>Increased satisfaction with pathways, precincts, and active transport provisions among people with disability</p>
<p>4.7 The GreenWay delivers leading practice accessibility</p>	<p>Senior Manager Capital Works</p>	<p>2023-2026</p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>Satisfaction with accessibility of GreenWay among people with disability 4.3.1.4 Operational Plan</p>

4.8 Apply <i>Everyone Can Play</i> design principles in playground, recreation planning/programs, plans of management for parks and facilities upgrades to guide a beyond compliance approach	Parks Planning and Ecology Manager	2023-2026	Existing	<i>Everyone Can Play</i> design principles incorporated in project scopes and planning Increased satisfaction with new participation opportunities among children and young people with disability
4.9 Construct one inclusive playground in every ward, starting with King George Park, Rozelle	Capital Works Manager	2023-2026	Existing	An inclusive playground is created in King George Park by August 2024 Children and young people participate in the co-design of the playground
4.10 Create new accessible park at Lewis Herman Reserve	Capital Works Manager	2023	Existing	Satisfaction with accessibility features of the new park
4.11 Participation in three-year public mobility parking sensor trial	Traffic and Transport Planning Manager	2023-2024	Existing and grant funding	Availability of 180 public mobility parking spaces is monitored and made available via an online application

5. Civic, engagement, and digital Inclusion

Action area 5: Inclusive design, planning, capacity building and partnerships are developed

Issues identified:

- Increase reliable information on accessibility or access features, to support trip pre-planning and choice
- Increased accessibility in housing approvals
- Increased planning responsiveness to the needs of people with disability
- Human rights-based training for key staff is needed to maintain the awareness and understanding of inclusion built throughout the previous plan and initiatives.

Based on their lived experience during this time people with disability believed that 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	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measures
5.1 Adopt 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	2023-2026	Existing	Satisfaction with accessibility of public domain, town centres and major precincts increases, particularly around path of travel Resident and business connection to neighbourhoods increases

5.2 Advocate for and design council accessible active transport and infrastructure supporting public transport to include new and emerging personal mobility devices	Traffic and Transport Planning Manager Senior Manager Manager Planning	2023-2026	Existing	Provisions for new and emerging personal mobility devices included in Active Transport Strategy and Public Domain Masterplans Number of masterplans providing access for personal mobility devices
5.3 Advocate to Transport for NSW on Metro West, Metro Southwest and heavy rail transport access programs including Lewisham, Stanmore, and Tempe Stations and on bus service offerings	Traffic and Transport Planning Manager	2023-2026	Existing	Access improvements delivered to local stations for people with disability
5.4 Advance liveable housing controls, at either gold level or adaptable	Senior Manager Manager Planning	2024	Existing	Advocate for an increased level of liveable housing in development assessment considerations including with a gold or platinum outcome 2.4.2.1 Operational Plan
5.5 Initiate discussion with developers and disability housing providers to increase supply of specialist disability housing	Senior Manager Manager Planning; Director, Planning	2024-2026	Existing	Increase in specialist disability accommodation provider discussions
5.6 Work with state sporting organisations to assist their delivery of adaptive sports programs and inclusion planning	Parks Planning and Ecology Manager	2023-2025	Existing	Number of training, assistance and information sessions provided to local groups and report on outcomes Template created and promoted to local groups
5.7 Continue internal training program on disability rights, and access and inclusion	Senior Manager People and Culture	2023-2026	Existing	Disability rights training included in Council learning calendar Promote disability awareness online training for all new staff

				Number of Council employees trained in disability awareness
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6. Access and inclusion in systems and processes

Action area 6: Improve accessibility of Council engagement and communication with people with disability

Issues identified:

- Access and inclusion included in Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework strategy and reporting
- Inclusion of the voices of people with disability in advisory processes
- Improved accessibility of communications
- Improved accessibility of digital tools
- Improved customer service that meets real needs.

Actions	Lead team	Timeline	Resources	Measures
6.1 Provide participatory democracy opportunities for people with disability	Corporate Strategy and Engagement Manager	2023	Existing	User experience engagement with people with disability informs improvement program Satisfaction with accessibility of Council communications improves
6.2 Evaluate and renew the accessibility of Council's website	Senior Manager Customer Experience and Innovation	2023-2024	Existing	User experience testing with people with disability informs accessibility audit program Satisfaction with accessibility of Council communications improves
6.3 Evaluate and renew the accessibility of Council written communication	Senior Manager Customer Experience	2023	Existing	Corporate communications reflect leading practice in access and inclusion 5.3.1.1 Operational Plan Satisfaction with accessibility of Council communications

	and Innovation			5.3.1.3 Operational Plan
6.4 Implement Customer Service Charter	Senior Manager Customer Experience and Innovation	2023	Existing	Increased satisfaction with Council customer service among people with disability
6.5 Publish information on access features for Council's facilities, events, aquatic centres, libraries, and cultural venues.	Strategic and Corporate Communications Manager	2023	Existing	All council facilities/activities have accessibility information available on Council's website Increased events listing accessibility features