



2019/20 Annual Report on implementation of the

Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021

Introduction

In 2017 Council adopted a Inclusion Action Plan (IAP) for people with a disability. The plan prescribes Council's four-year program of support and improving inclusion for people with disability as part of its core business; to removing barriers to access and participation; and addressing discrimination based on disability. This report highlights key achievements for the third year of the plan.

The Plan also gives expression to Council's commitment to uphold and promote the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Plan is aligned to Council's Community Strategic Plan as a means of building the strategies into the everyday activities of Council.

The IAP is divided into 6 outcome areas with strategies, actions and measures to chart our achievements and progress.

1. Education, Recreation and Social Inclusion

- In a move unprecedented for any Australian Council, all three of our major aquatic centres have leading practice accessibility features coming online, either through new builds (in the case of Ashfield Aquatic Centre) or through significant investment in refurbishment or master planned redevelopment (in the cases of Enmore and Leichhardt). Major pools will all be accessible via hoists, and/or ramps. Each facility features an adult accessible changing room with ceiling hoist and change table to enable access to our pools and spa/sauna facilities via free aquatic chairs. Dedicated bookable accessible parking is also being added. Hearing loops are included throughout the new Ashfield facility, along with new accessible wayfinding features.
- In addition, the attached gymnasium facilities at Ashfield and Leichhardt offer tailored programs and professional training support for people with disability.
- Australia's oldest ocean baths, the historic Dawn Fraser Baths, in Birchgrove have also been redeveloped with new accessibility features added.
- In partnership with SportsNSW and PCYC Marrickville the Activate Inclusion Day was held as part of International Day of People with Disability activities. Some 300 children aged 5-18 from local schools were involved. The event provided a launching point to engage with local sports groups on inclusion practice and introduce many children to local opportunities. Over 10 sporting codes were present providing modified indoor and outdoor sports. Another is being planned for 2020.
- Local sporting clubs have used the accessible equipment library including outdoor matting at their events.
- Council facilitated meetings of the Inner West Disability Forum attended by 28-50 service representatives. Topics were: Legal Rights and People with Disability during COVID 19, National Pandemic planning committee and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse and Neglect of people with disability.

- Staff are working with Inner West Domestic Violence Committee to develop a respectful relationship program in partnership with the Intellectual Disability Rights Service.
- Staff have been active in the development of Council Policy regarding ensuring accessibility to online programs and information, notably as a response to COVID-19.
- A working group was established of youth and disability alliance to make youth services more disability friendly and disability services more youth friendly.
- Council has hosted a peer social networking group for Sydney Epilepsy Jacaranda Club and has actively supported 2 Dementia Cafe groups in the LGA. Staff also continue to support peer networking groups including the centre for disability studies social networking group, Gig Buddies, CDC and others who have moved to 1:1 support during COVID-19.
- Mental Health Month was celebrated with staff bulletins on mentally well workplaces, an awareness raising gig at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre with over 300 people engaging, a meet your neighbour services networking event was held with over 50 services attending.

2. Cultural Inclusion

- The Library team have worked to make the online content delivered by Library as a result of COVID inclusive. This has included new work on captioning content and / or providing transcripts (within existing budgets).
- The library has delivered programs for people with disability of all ages, along with families with a disability, this includes the installation of hearing loops at the new Marrickville Library and participating in a radio interview describing the library specifically for vision impaired and blind listeners.
- An expanded International Day of People with Disability Film Festival program was held over two nights incorporating a comedy debate, feature film, a series of short films and panel discussion on film representation. The program was curated and created by and with people living with disability to model inclusive practice and provided a platform for the voices and stories of those with disability.
- Council has established an access equipment library to enable greater inclusion at festivals, events and involving public art. This will be complimented by an accessible events guide under development. Staff training purposefully developed for council by Accessible Arts was delivered this year with the content focussed on improving access and inclusion for the whole of community experiencing art that is produced, sponsored, auspiced and created in partnership with Council.

3. Economic Inclusion

- Specialist accessibility advice is provided for planning proposals and development application assessments to ensure leading practice inclusion features are designed into new precincts and developments.
- Council has invested significant time in building relationships between property developers and providers of Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) which is supported through funding from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The scheme enables providers to purchase apartments from developers that have been built to SDA standards, enabling people with disability to live independently in the Inner West and to more easily access employment and economic inclusion more broadly.

- COVID has delayed engagement with local businesses on further initiatives about access improvements.

4. Inclusive Planning Infrastructure & Environment

- Adoption of a Public Toilet Strategy which gives effect to new practice beyond compliance including in gender neutral signage, adult accessible change facilities and strategic direction on accessibility location and priority access.
- Significant engagement on inclusion and access planning created plans to guide upgrades and redevelopment of aquatic facilities.
- Council staff continue to work with NSW Government to improve accessibility of public transport. Discussions regarding upgrades to Petersham railway station have taken place and it is envisaged the project will commence within the next year.
- The Inner West Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) was adopted by Council this year. Its implementation will include a new Pedestrian Access & Mobility Plan (PAMP) by end June 2021.
- Works required to improve accessibility of bus stops as per the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT) have been completed at all identified bus stop sites for 2019/20.
- Audit undertaken for all Council owned carpark, including mobility parking bays. Lennox Street, Marrickville carpark redevelopment included 3 mobility parking bays and 38 additional mobility parking spaces were installed in the LGA this financial year.
- The Affordable Housing policy has generated 4 adaptable units as part of Council's portfolio managed by a community housing provider. Units will be used to accommodate people with disability and their families who qualify as key workers under the program. More accessible housing will be added to Council's affordable housing portfolio over time.

5. Civic Inclusion, Engagement and Information

- Council provided links to organisations and information to assist people with disability through COVID-19. Letters to Commonwealth and State ministers were sent advocating for greater recognition and response to the expressed and urgent needs of people with a disability during the initial stages of COVID. It is noted that the Disability Royal Commission has reported on this issue.
- Council maintains a variety of communication channels to keep people informed including digital and print media, as well as targeted email lists and promotional or advertising products. In addition, a range of media releases and newsletters around inclusion and access were issued throughout the year.
- Easy read and plain English documents are now incorporated in Council's style guide.
- Council with input from members of the Access Advisory Committee made a submission to the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act* review.

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

- An accessible events guide and equipment library have been developed to assist staff in delivering more inclusive practice. Together they will assist in breaking down common and persistent barriers for people with disability to participate. The initiatives are being trialled with staff engaged in planning and running events and a wider roll out will be progressed next year.

- E-learning continues to be available to all staff via Inner Me - Disability Aware: An awareness and inclusion program by Cerebral Palsy Alliance
- Advocacy during the COVID period has focussed on highlighting health and support priorities of people with disability and their families, providing information during the health crises and supporting participation including through the online environment.
- Customer service team now provide inhouse training on the National Relay Service.
- Council's Access Advisory Committee meets quarterly. During COVID information and discussion continues online with the group as required.

Initiatives planned for the year ahead

Due to COVID there has been limited capacity to address and complete all scheduled actions this year. However new opportunities have arisen in provision of online content, service platforms and workplace flexibility. This reset has enabled Council to imagine new ways of working and connecting with community.

Council will extend its current IAP for 12 months due to COVID disruption, and the delayed Council elections. This period will be used to reflect, engage community and develop a new plan aligned with the new Community Strategic Plan to commence from 1 June 2022. Emergency planning responses and post pandemic recovery will receive a higher recognition as a central theme and work to maximise opportunities to effectively include people with disability to ensure safety, social and economic health and participation is achieved.