



## **2020/21 Annual Report on implementation of the**

### **Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021**

#### **Introduction**

In 2017 Council adopted an Inclusion Action Plan 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 fourth 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.

This is Council report on achievements under the plan in 2020/21.

#### **1. Education, Recreation and Social Inclusion**

- Australia's oldest ocean baths, the historic Dawn Fraser Baths, in Birchgrove have been redeveloped with new accessible entry and change room facilities. Additional accessible water entry solutions and a holistic site access assessment are underway and will be completed in 2022. On completion this will make the baths the oldest and (with Watsons Bay) the only other harbour tidal bath to be accessible.
- In collaboration with community members with lived experience, Council has created a suite of social stories and information linked to the new community facilities at Ashfield Aquatic Centre, Dawn Fraser Baths and Marrickville and Haberfield libraries. This information is being produced to improve access to these facilities for people on the autism spectrum.
- Council has continued to resource in partnership the Inner West Disability Forum, Aboriginal Workers Circle, Aged Services Interagency, Domestic Violence Network, Youth Alliance, Child and Family Network, to improve access to local services for people with disability and their carers.
- Staff presented a Right and Respectful Relationships course to the Inner West Schools expo - the program was created in partnership with Intellectual Disability Rights Service and UNSW to roll out to Inner West schools and local services. Council has provided ongoing support and advocacy for service providers to improve the access and inclusion of their services to people with a disability.
- Staff continued to work with headspace Ashfield and Camperdown to ensure diverse and inclusive provision of mental health services and support initiatives for young people of the inner west. Council is supporting the newly established Inner West Mental Health interagency, facilitated by Stride a dedicated specialist mental health service provider based in LGA.
- Council hosted the annual Mental Health Month meet your neighbour with over 70 services participating in information sharing and networking via the digital landscape.

- Due to COVID most spaces for hire have been shut for the majority of the year and peer support networking (in person) also dropped slightly. However, Council continues to foster spaces for groups such as the Jacaranda Epilepsy Group and the Centre for Disability Studies peer social networking group.

## **2. Cultural Inclusion**

- Council partnered with Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Services to raise awareness of Mental Health Month with a short video competition, resulting in 17 submissions produced by people who live and work in the Inner West and are available via Council's YouTube channel  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0rwDvo4RSxZdv\\_k24OlwMJpMOCujRofF](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0rwDvo4RSxZdv_k24OlwMJpMOCujRofF).
- International Day of People with Disability was celebrated with an Inclusive Film Festival held at Petersham town hall and live streaming via zoom. The event was ticketed to the COVID safe capacity and 95 people dialled in online. The event included a panel discussion, 3 entertainment acts as well as a feature film. Access features included: audio description, live captioning, Auslan and ramped stage for the panel.
- An accessible events guide was completed to assist staff in preparing festivals, events and involving public art and outlines how to use Council's access equipment library.
- Staff and external hirers utilising council's *What's On* tool on the website are required to describe access features if hosting programs and events in Community Venues. The above access guide and equipment library support Council programming staff.
- Training was delivered on how to provide audio captioning to enhance experiencing art that is produced, sponsored, auspiced and created in partnership with Council.
- The Library continues to be an inclusive place for people with a disability in the library. Areas have included the installation of hearing loops at Haberfield Library and training staff in their use, delivering inclusive programming including with relevant themes, providing a range of items in the collection that assist people with a disability such as large print, digital collections that can be amended and collections that cover a range of topics for people living with a disability and their family or support workers.
- Council provided support, funding and made space available in the Newtown town centre to host the inaugural Disability Pride event (a first for NSW). This initiative evolved from the Access Advisory Committee members and was a great success. The event was created by and with people living with disability as an important platform for the voices and stories of those with disability to be heard during COVID.

## **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 continues to build relationships between property developers and providers of Specialist Disability Accommodation 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 access employment and economic inclusion more easily.

#### **4. Inclusive Planning Infrastructure & Environment**

- Adoption of the new Inner West Council Pedestrian Access & Mobility Plan and completion of the 2020/21 PAMP and Accessible Kerb Ramps works programs.
- Council has worked intensively to create, expand and maintain accessible pathways including through Inner West wide condition mapping for the new PAMP, developing new Public Domain Guidelines, attention to how waste bin collections occur and close work on approved uses on footpaths.
- Mobility Parking requests are actioned in a timely manner following council Local Traffic Committee process. This year 34 additional mobility parking spaces were installed.
- The 2020/21 Bus Stop accessibility modifications program has now been completed.
- Inclusion and access planning advice is routinely provided now on Council's capital works projects to guide upgrades and redevelopment of council facilities.
- Council staff continue to work regularly with NSW Government to improve accessibility of public transport. Planning and engagement on Petersham, St Peters and Stanmore railway station upgrades including lift installations has commenced and council staff now participate on these projects' teams.
- The Community Asset Needs Study notes that accessibility issues extend beyond commonly cited Australian building compliance regulations and recommends Council go "beyond compliance" and consider other attitudinal and behavioural forms of inclusion in addition to physical accessibility assessments. It suggests that the eight principles contained within the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities be utilised to carry out future mobility assessments of the public domain environments between Council-owned facilities and transport hubs, as well as the assets themselves. The assessment would include principles and practical design advice, as well as looking for opportunities to achieve "beyond minimum compliance" across the community asset network. This will provide added flexibility and future proof Council assets for an ageing, diverse and growing community.

#### **5. Civic Inclusion, Engagement and Information**

- Council provided links to organisations and updated information to assist people with disability through COVID-19. In addition, 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. A range of media releases and newsletters around inclusion and access were also issued throughout the year.
- Easy read and plain English documents are incorporated in Council's style guide.
- Council commissioned research on the experience of people with disability participating in our Local Democracy Groups. The report outlines recommendations to improve communication methods within these Council advisory groups and in broader community engagement to achieve greater participation and harness a diversity of skills and experience into our systems.
- The Social Strategy Local Democracy Group this year developed a set of co design principles and this approach will also advance inclusion outcomes.

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

- An accessible events guide and equipment library have been completed 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. A trial of these initiatives has begun with staff engaged in planning and running events with a wider roll out to be considered 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. Staff continue to be active and advise on matters regarding accessibility to online programs and information, notably as a response to COVID.
- Council's Access Advisory Committee meets quarterly and online with the group as required. Discussion on Councils Draft Healthy Ageing and Cultural Strategies provided feedback to aid development.
- A review of the planning controls for the unjustifiable hardship assessment process will be undertaken in the preparation of the Inner West Development Control Plan due to commence later in 2021.

### **Initiatives planned for the year ahead**

- Due to COVID there has been limited capacity to address and complete all remaining 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 complete a review of the current IAP, conduct a further round of staff training on the rights of persons with disability and engage the community to inform development and adoption of a new plan to commence from 1 July 2022. Emergency planning responses and post pandemic recovery will feature as central themes that can maximise opportunities to effectively include people with disability and ensure safety, social and economic health and participation is achieved.