

## Creating a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022–2025

### Introduction

Council needs your engagement and input to create a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The new Plan will be informed by:

- Council's experience with our last five-year plan
- leading accessibility practice and the social model of disability
- legal and policy guidance including NSW *Disability Inclusion Act*, the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act* and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

The following sections detail what has been achieved under the existing plan and what remains to be done in each of six themed areas.

**1: Education, recreation and social inclusion:** our focus is on partnerships, collaboration and increasing participation.

*Highlights and achievements:*

- Council aquatic centres have leading practice access features including adult accessible change rooms, the largest number of any Council in Australia. Gym equipment and programs cater specifically for people with disability and have active members with disability
- Dawn Fraser Baths upgrade continues with accessible water entry and a holistic site access assessment to be completed in 2022. On completion this will make the baths the oldest of only two accessible harbour tidal baths in Sydney.
- Collaboration with people on the autism spectrum created a suite of social stories and information to assist access to Ashfield Aquatic Centre, Dawn Fraser Baths and Marrickville and Haberfield libraries
- A partnership with Intellectual Disability Rights Service and UNSW developed the *Rights and Respectful Relationships* course for Inner West Schools and local services
- *Activate Inclusion Day* partnership with Sport NSW provided a launching point with local sports groups on inclusion practice and introduced some 300 children and young people to local opportunities.

### What's needed?

Continued focus on sport and recreation infrastructure and program support, improving attitudes, awareness raising and actions that build partnerships that deliver higher participation.

- Apply *Everyone Can Play* design and planning principles in playground upgrades
- Application of inclusion needs and a *beyond compliance* approach in creating Plans of Management for parks and facilities
- Build capacity to attract NDIS participants in health/wellness programs
- Build capacity with local sporting groups to attract participants with disability
- Create a template for inclusion planning to guide local sporting clubs in improving access.

**2: Cultural Inclusion:** a focus on creating and modelling inclusive practice and opportunities for people with disability to engage in cultural expression

**Highlights and achievements:**

- Disability led library events, Auslan supported story time, speakers series with authors with disability
- Improved audio captioning on Council resources
- Audio descriptions introduced for artworks
- Accessible Equipment Library and Events Guide created
- Mental health month short video story telling competition with Sydney Local Health District
- Inclusive Film Festival to celebrate International Day of People with Disability
- Inner West Disability Pride event created (a first for NSW)

Event access guides, accessible formats and audio description training provides a solid base to guide more inclusive practice for cultural activities and events. The Inclusive Film Festival remains a key opportunity to position disability issues, model inclusion and provide a platform for representation, expression, and unique cultural identity.

**What's needed?**

Expanded opportunities for artists, technicians, and audience members with disability to fully engage within the creative life of the Inner West. Focussed planning for inclusion and resetting representation of disability as a component of human diversity. Providing access information to broaden choice and participation at venues and performances.

**3: Economic inclusion:** a focus on employment and improvements to the accessibility of the local economy and small business

**Highlights and achievements:**

- The *Excellence in Access Award* introduced as part of the Inner West Local Business Awards
- Specialist accessibility advice provided to ensure leading practice inclusion features incorporated into new precincts/developments
- Relationships built between property developers and providers of Specialist Disability Accommodation.

**What's needed?**

For Council, attention to employment of people with disability and building disability confidence in the workplace.

- Introduce traineeships, leadership and mentoring opportunities
- Establish an internal staff with disability network

Purposeful engagement with local businesses, supports to aid accessibility and enhance initiatives to booster inclusive local employment.

**4: Inclusive planning, infrastructure & environment:** a focus on improved design guidance leading to more inclusive and beyond minimum compliance infrastructure

**Highlights and achievements:**

- Access maintained to one platform at Tempe Station and lift upgrades at Petersham and Stanmore stations as a direct result of Council advocacy
- Public Toilet Strategy giving strategic direction on new beyond compliance practice, gender neutral signage, adult accessible change facilities and on accessibility locations
- Works to improve accessibility of bus stops as per the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport
- Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan and completion of the 2020/21 Plan and Accessible Kerb Ramps works programs.
- Inclusion and access planning advice provided now on Council's capital works projects to guide upgrades and redevelopment of council facilities.
- The Community Asset Needs Study recommends Council go "beyond compliance" and incorporate other attitudinal and behavioural forms of inclusion in addition to physical accessibility assessments.

Progress through resident co-design, critical access advice and participation on Project Working Groups within Council has improved outcomes. Early engagement and uptake of beyond compliance advice at the scoping and concept stage delivers better results. More productive engagement with the NSW Transport Access Program and delivery of new accessible stations is critical. However persistent pathway and public domain design issues impede access.

### **What's needed?**

Clear effective policy settings, development controls and scoping in asset management processes. Elevate inclusive outcomes from minimum and ad hoc provision into holistic precinct planning to realise connectivity and opportunity. It is critical that assumptions and expectation on facilities and proposed uses is informed by co-design, accurate access data and realistic cost estimates to facilitate inclusion. There is a strong need for housing to enable people with disability to live more independently in the Inner West and access employment and broader economic inclusion.

- Review of Tree Masterplan, Urban Design Guidelines, Local Approval Policy
- Ensure continuity of access is addressed in Plans Of Management
- Realise needs of people with disability in Cycling Strategy, active transport and infrastructure supporting public transport to include new/emerging personal mobility devices
- Partner with Guide Dogs NSW and other agencies to revise the Pathways to Inclusion guide to address shared zones, cycleways and emerging mobility and wayfinding technologies
- Adopt liveable housing controls either gold level or adaptable
- Set target for increased Specialist Disability Accommodation in the area.

**5: Civic Inclusion, engagement and Information:** a focus on policy, procedure and supports to ensure Council's communication and engagement are accessible to all and facilitate participation

### **Highlights and achievements:**

- Advocacy with Commonwealth and State ministers on greater recognition and response to the expressed and urgent needs of people with a disability during early COVID period
- Submission to the NSW Disability Inclusion Act review and *National Disability Strategy* from the Access Advisory Committee
- Easy read and plain English documents were incorporated in Council's style guide.

- Research report on the experience of people with disability participating in the 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 developed a set of co design principles and this approach will also advance inclusion outcomes.

### **What's needed?**

Accessibility and engagement research recommendations for increased accessibility of information to users. This action area could be reframed 'civic inclusion'.

- Facilitate meaningful co-design opportunities
- Introduce consistent, accurate information on accessibility features of facilities, events and programs through targeted (nominal 10%) increase in improvements per year.

**6: Access and Inclusion are embedded in our systems and processes:** a focus on leadership and culture change to imbed inclusive values, build coordinated and consistent whole of council approaches to access and inclusion

### **Highlights and achievements:**

- Australian Human Rights Commission: *Upholding the rights of people with disability* training sessions including to senior staff
- Staff diversity survey conducted and employment targets for people with disability included in Council executive performance agreements
- Accessible events guide and equipment library developed to assist staff deliver inclusive practice.
- Advocacy during COVID highlighting health and support priorities of people with disability and their families, providing information, and supporting participation online.

The Australian Human Rights Commission training was highly successful and engaged staff with new possibilities and approaches and is being repeated.

### **What's needed?**

- Further rights-based training for key staff
- Build stronger connection with corporate reporting, planning and budgets.
- Set clear objectives, measure and deliverable outcomes for access and inclusion