

AGENDA



INNER WEST COUNCIL

SOCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP

11 October 2017

6.30pm

Location: **Ashfield Civic Centre, 260 Liverpool Rd, Ashfield - Level 6**

RSVP: please RSVP to Gabrielle Rennard

gabrielle.rennard@innerwest.nsw.gov.au or 9392 5820

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Item No: Item 5

Subject: **Summary of Recommendations from Previous Strategic Reference Group Meeting**

Prepared by: Gabrielle Rennard, Community Wellbeing Manager

SUMMARY

To advise the Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group of the status of the recommendations from the previous meetings.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information in the summary of recommendations be received and noted by the Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group.

Background

The first meeting of the Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group was held on 8 February 2017.

This report is being provided by way of keeping the reference group members informed and updated with regards to any recommendations arising from the meetings.

Financial Implications

Nil

Attachments

Status of Recommendations from Strategic Reference Group Meetings 2017

	<p>Feedback regarding the Council's Statement of Vision and Priorities document included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noting that not all community members have access to the internet and face to face engagement is important. - There was some discussion regarding the use and removal of words "Passionate" and "great" in the vision statement. Noting that such words are subjective and not able to be quantified. - The group acknowledged that as the newly formed Inner West Council area we need to build on the history of the previous regions and create connections with and across the new LGA. <p>Recommendation That a snapshot of the Inner West community demographics be provided at the next Strategic Reference Group meeting.</p> <p>Recommendation The Strategic Reference Group request an update on the process, timeframe and development of Council's new webpage, for the next meeting, acknowledging its importance for communication with community members.</p>	<p>Feedback noted and will be incorporated as part of the CSP engagement Council's Statement of Vision and Priorities adopted by Council 28 March 2017</p> <p>Feedback noted and Vision to be considered as part of the CSP engagement Council's Statement of Vision and Priorities adopted by Council 28 March 2017</p> <p>Feedback noted and will be incorporated as part of the CSP engagement Council's Statement of Vision and Priorities adopted by Council 28 March 2017</p> <p>Adopted Presentation provided 12 April 2017 SRG meeting</p> <p>Adopted Presentation provided 14 June 2017 SRG meeting</p>
<p>Item 8 - Inner West Council – Draft Inclusion Action Plan</p>	<p>The strategic reference group noted the report, presentation by staff and the invitation to provide feedback on the Inclusion Action Plan during the public exhibition period.</p>	<p>Adopted</p>

	Item 9 - Inner West Council – Forthcoming Events	<p>The Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group noted and acknowledged the diverse array of programs, events and initiatives that are being delivered by the Inner West Council.</p> <p>The link to full details of events: http://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/art---events/whats-on</p> <p>Question on Notice: How will the Council be involved in the Invictus Games?</p>	<p>Adopted</p>
12-Apr-17	<p>The April meeting did not have a quorum present so the meeting did not proceed.</p>	<p>Gabrielle Rennard provided a demographic overview of the Inner West Local Government out of interest to those in attendance. The group provided the feedback for consideration of Inner West Council with regard to the Inner West Community Strategic Plan</p>	
14-Jun-17	Item 7 - Inner West Council – socially inclusive programs, partnerships and initiatives update	<p>The Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group noted:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the diverse array of socially inclusive programs, partnerships and initiatives that are being delivered by the Inner West Council. - the recent adoption of the Inner West Council Homelessness Policy and determined to contribute wherever possible to assisting with the development of strategies to address the issue of homelessness in extreme weather events. Members suggested that church halls may have potential to be utilised. The SRG further noted that the issue of homelessness is broader than rough sleeping; and that there is a growing concern particularly for the number of homeless elderly women. - the information provided regarding the NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout 2017 and are aware of contacting Redfern All Blacks to discuss any potential volunteer opportunities with the event. 	<p>Adopted</p>
	Item 8 - Community Strategic Plan	<p>That the Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group note:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the process for development of the Community Strategic Plan and determine how members would like to participate in the process. 	<p>Feedback noted and will be incorporated as part of the CSP engagement</p>

Item 9 - Other Business	<p>The Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group support the recommendation from John Williams a local resident and former member of the Leichhardt Heritage Committee. That Inner West Council consider installing a memorial for Peter Bonsall-Boone (Bon) who passed away in May 2017. Bon and his partner Peter de Waal were Balmain residents, partners for 50 years and true pioneers and fighters for equality who were present at the dawn of Mardi Gras in 1978. Bon and Peter were undertook brave and tireless work which has undoubtedly made life better for LGBTQI people who come after them.</p>	<p>Adopted Concept to be presented to the LGBTIQ Working party and Councils Leadership Team for consideration</p>
	<p>The Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group nominated Sara Graham to be the chairperson for the 9 August meeting.</p>	<p>Adopted</p>
9-Aug-17 Item 7 - Inner West Council – socially inclusive programs, partnerships and initiatives update	<p>The Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group noted:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the diverse array of socially inclusive programs, partnerships and initiatives that are being delivered by the Inner West Council. - that the Rainbow Roundtable is to be held Tuesday 29 August 2017 at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. The members agreed to share this information with their networks and encourage interested community members to book attendance. 	<p>Adopted</p>
Item 8 - Other Business	<p>Gabrielle to electronically forward SRG members further information about the screening of the documentary Defiant Lives.</p>	<p>Adopted</p>
	<p>Council staff member from planning and development services to be invited to a future meeting to discuss potential opportunities for accessibility improvements to shopfronts.</p>	<p>Adopted - Kerry Hunt presenting to 11 October 2017 SRG meeting</p>

Item No: Item 7
Subject: Access and Inclusion
Prepared by: Gabrielle Rennard – Community Wellbeing Manager

SUMMARY

The Inner West Council is delivering a diverse range of socially inclusive programs, partnerships and initiatives broadly across the local government area for the benefit of the broader community.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the strategic reference group:-

- 1) Note that Councils expression of interest for regular hall hire of Council venues for 2018 are now open with applications being received until 23 October 2017. That the SRG share this information with networks and the broader community.
- 2) Provide input into further developing i-PUG (intergenerational pop up games), including what games or activities to involve as well as suggesting how to make the i-PUG best work for our community including preferred locations within parks and public spaces across the inner west.
- 3) Note the diversity of access and inclusion activities that are being delivered by the Inner West Council and provide further feedback as appropriate.

Background

Inner West Council has a diverse range of programs, initiatives and opportunities where the broader community can access, engage and participate. The community can access the comprehensive calendar of activities via the 'What's On' page on Councils website at <http://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/art---events/whats-on>. The website provides further detail on each activity, bookings if required, undertake searches on types of activities or one can search for a specific program or event.

The following is by no means exhaustive information but rather a snapshot of some of the current initiatives, points of access and community wellbeing programs.

2018 Council venue hire

Expressions of interest for regular hire of Council community venues for 2018 are now open: applications will be received until 23 October 2017. Information about what venues are available across the local government area, fees and application forms are available through Council's website at

<https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/news-hot-topics/news/announcements/expressions-of-interest-for-venue-hire>

Council aims to provide a wide range of activities across our community venues that benefit people of all ages, levels of interest and skills. The expression of interest process aims to ensure fair access and equity within the hiring of Council's community facilities.

Event Tent

The concept is a safe space at festivals where people can have some quiet time, borrow some access equipment and access aids that may assist people with disabilities. It is recognised that access has become a mainstream requirement, it impacts on a wide cross-section of society, including families with young children, one in five people who live with disability, their carers or assistants and families, and Australia's rapidly ageing population.

The Event Accessibility and Inclusivity concept has been developed by Ability Links NSW, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW and Inner West Council is partnering with Ability Links to have the Event Tent piloted in festivals and events over the next 6 months. Ability Links will provide the tent, including with Council logo and will provide a staff resource for each of the pilot locations. Council will promote the Event Tent and Pilot partners will consider and make recommendations regarding ongoing operations, including the capacity of event holders and/or volunteer organisations to contribute operational resources including any requirement for volunteer/staff presence in the course of the event.

The aim of this project is to promote social inclusion by taking tangible steps towards supporting a wide cross-section of the community to attend and participate more fully in community events. The secondary aim is to raise disability awareness within the community. People with specific challenges (accessibility guests) may choose not to attend an event unless they feel they can be confident that their needs will be met - they will make a decision depending on the level of accessibility and inclusion, and the quality and range of activities therefore made available to them.

Who is an accessibility guest?

- People with mobility needs (e.g a person using a wheelchair, cane, walking frame, or crutches)
- People with sensory challenges (e.g light or sound sensitive)
- Older people
- People with temporary injuries or illnesses
- Parents with prams and young children
- People with sight or hearing impairments
- People living with physical or intellectual disability

i-PUG

The idea for a moveable intergenerational pop up games or i- PUG eventuated through a suggestion from the Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group.

The idea of intergenerational pop up games is an expansion of the Magic Yellow Bus which is a pop up free activities and community information service held at local parks for children aged six weeks to 12 years and their families. The Social Inclusion SRG wanted to expand that idea for seniors and older children who might not have a grandparent.

Council staff were inspired by the idea and as a result are launching the i-PUG at Grandparents Day Event on 4 October 2017 at Addison Road Community Centre. Staff have purchased some portable seating, tables and some games that could be enjoyed by 13 year olds to 113 years olds. All of the games are about activity and improving health and wellbeing by getting up and getting out and participating in some social games. There is also bocce or boules, croquet and badminton.

Council is open to further input on what other games or activities to include as well as any suggestions on how to make the i-PUG best work for our community.

The launch will also be used as an active consultation where staff will be talking to participants and have attendees complete an ideas survey so we can build the concept to reflect the local needs and community. It is hoped that i-PUG could be activated at various locations, parks and public spaces across the inner west.

Our team at Inner West Council is passionate about health and well-being in all stages of life. We hope that providing and expanding on the concept of an intergenerational pop up games in locations around the Inner West council local government area will encourage community cohesion, people coming together and have fun and play games for the sake of social inclusion.

Community grants 2017

Inner West Council's (IWC) grant program has now closed and funding recommendations will be considered by Council on 24 October. Council received 213 applications across the 6 grant programs that comprise the IWC grants. The 6 grant programs are as follows:

- Community
- Arts and Culture (Including independent artists)
- Stronger Communities
- Environment
- Recreation
- Local History

Announcements regarding successful grant recipients will be made in November 2017 for projects to be conducted during 2018.

Homelessness outreach

A new homelessness outreach project is commencing on 4 October 2017 to focus on the Newtown area. Local agencies have noticed an increased incidence of rough sleeping in the area, and this initiative represents one way of addressing this complex social problem. This collaborative project is being coordinated by the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and involves Police, Missionbeat, Housing NSW, Sydney Local Health District (mental health team) and Inner West Council (IWC).

This multi-agency team will visit known and likely homelessness hotspots around Newtown including King St; Newtown square; St Stephens Church; and Camperdown Park, however the area may expand depending on information received. The team will operate on one early morning each month, with workers from relevant agencies following up individual cases in between outreach sessions. The outreach project will ask the people sleeping rough if they would like assistance with finding accommodation and assist them to progress housing applications. The project is based on the multi-agency outreach project which has been operating with considerable success in Ashfield over the past 12 months.

Inclusion and Access

As previously reported to the SRG the Inner West Council Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 (IAP) outlines Council's commitment to respecting the rights and improving opportunities for people with a disability of all ages, to participate fully in community life.

Inclusion happens when every person who wishes to (irrespective of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual preference or cultural heritage) can access and participate fully in all aspects of an activity or service in the same way as any other member of the community.

The IAP is a whole of Council plan with actions across the range of activities of Council, community and partners: it is core business. The IAP actions have recently been incorporated into Councils Corporate reporting framework and processes and reporting requirements for the

Organisational operational and delivery plans. This is a milestone and a foundational way to embed the plan into everything Council does.

Council staff have also been working:-

- In discussions with local Ability Linkers to design and trial a portable ramp 'library' that we can partner with (like the event tent). This would form a component of a broader program in the IAP to encourage access improvements and promote the advantages of tapping into the inclusive tourism market locally.
- Promotional support provided for the Fergus and Delilah book launch (on 10 Sept) which is a Children's book and awareness raising workshop program about the needs of children with autism.
- Plans are underway for International Day of People with a Disability activities in December 2017, including Access All Areas film events, Groovability and the Blooming Arts festival/exhibition.
- Earlier this year the 'Pathways to Inclusion' guide (Attachment 1) was developed in partnership with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Blind Citizens NSW and People with Disabilities Australia. The resource will be used to inform a number of actions in our IAP about the criteria for an accessible pathway.
- The **Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN)** newsletter (Attachment 2) contains a summary of the community conversations held in June and themes explored during the sessions – on page 3. The sessions were held in Newtown, Rozelle and Ashfield and were promoted by staff.
- Council in partnership with Ability Links and Compeer is holding a 'Wellbeing Mental Health Month event' in the Ashfield Town Hall on 20 October 2017. There will be some live music with a harp player and Spanish guitarist, some mindfulness colouring, food, mural space, body percussion, and a space for people to share their stories with audio, video or pictures. Council is also holding a range of youth support initiatives in conjunction with headspace at local skateparks.
- Cyber Seniors will be launched in Ashfield on the 13 October. This is a partnership with Ashfield Boys High School that involves one on one computer literacy programs for seniors who have smart phones, tablets, or laptops and need help navigating them.

National Child Protection Week 2017

As part of its commitment to addressing domestic and family violence in the inner west, Council hosted the 2017 NSW Play Your Part Awards on 7 September at the Hannaford Community Centre in Rozelle.

Council administrator Richard Pearson presented awards to the two NSW winners as part of Council's support for the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's (NAPCAN) Child Protection Week that ran throughout the week.

NAPCAN's Play Your Part Awards - for inspiring prevention initiatives recognise individuals, communities or organisations who have played a part in creating safer communities for children and young people. The Play Your Part winners included Coonamble Shire Council for the Coonamble Library project that saw the Library reinvent itself to become 'a community living room' as a response to the lack of venues for children and young people to gather in Coonamble.

The other award winner was Home-Start National Inc for Home Start Volunteer Home Visiting in which volunteers and parents in the program work together to prevent family crisis and breakdown to provide a safe, nurturing home for the children involved.

In addition to partnering with NAPCAN in the Play Your Part awards, Inner West Council assists NAPCAN in delivering:

- Love Bites, an interactive school-based domestic, family and relationship violence and sexual assault prevention education program;
- Inner West Respectful Relationships Project community steering group to undertake community consultation and scope the development and implementation of the Inner West Respectful Relationships Project.

In April this year, Inner West Council announced spending of more than \$300,000 over four years to address domestic and family violence in the inner west.

Improve information for carers of the Inner West

Inner West Council recently partnered with the University of Wollongong, Western Sydney to provide a grant submission seeking 'Paths to Care'. To promote awareness, positive attitudes, help-seeking and access to support for carers of older people in the Inner West region of Sydney. Carers from Anglo-Australian and Chinese communities will be targeted as part of the program to:

- 1) Build the evidence around the aged care needs of carers (including Chinese carers) and the social networks from which they obtain information
- 2) Promote awareness and access to information through a social marketing campaign about aged care services
- 3) Train peer educators from a range of community organisations to provide education and support to carers of older people in navigating aged care services.

If funding is successful the project will be designed and delivered by academic researchers in partnership with the Inner West Council, Carers NSW, and Chinese Association for Social Services and NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service. The campaign and peer programs will be underpinned by formative research and a process of co-development with carers from the Inner West region. The program will be systematically evaluated to build the evidence base around effective models for improving the awareness of carers of older people of how to access information and support when they need it.

Financial Implications

All of the activities, programs and partnerships outlined above are being delivered by the Inner West Council through 2017/18 Operational Plans and Budget.

Conclusion

The Inner West Council is committed to continuing to provide the broad community of the inner west with a diverse suite of initiatives, meaningful partnerships and programs that are accessible, reflect the interests, needs and wellbeing of local communities.

Attachments

'Pathways to Inclusion' guide
PDCN newsletter

Item No: Item 8
Subject: Inner West Council – LGBTIQ support and initiatives
Prepared by: Gabrielle Rennard – Community Wellbeing Manager

SUMMARY

The Inner West Council continues to support the LGBTIQ Working party to assist with the design and delivery of a diverse range of socially inclusive programs, partnerships and initiatives to engage, support and celebrate the LGBTIQ community of the inner west.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Social Inclusion Strategic Reference Group note:-

1. Inner West Council support for Marriage Equality and in recognition of this support, Council is flying rainbow flags from its key buildings and hanging banners from key sites throughout the voting period for the national same-sex marriage postal survey.
2. the highlights from the Rainbow Roundtable discussion
3. consider ways in which the SRG members may be able to engage with the various initiatives noted in this report

Background

It is noted that from the 2011 to the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census, the inner west has had an increase in people identifying as same sex couples by 13.0% (up from 3,217 to 3,636 people). Males up 15.7% (1,613 to 1,866 people) and Females up 10.3% (1,604 to 1,770 people).

This is the only data we can access on people identifying as LGBTIQ. This means it is under-reporting the actual number of LGBTIQ as it does not include data on single LGBTIQ people or any same-sex couples who did not identify that on their Census form.

The ABS 2011 Census data shows that the former Marrickville LGA has the largest number of female couples and the second highest number of male couples residing together in the nation. This data, however, does not take into account those who are “single”, those who may have lost their partner through death or separation, and those who were too young to feature in the statistics at the time they were gathered. Despite these limitations, the table below indicates a significant number of persons living as same sex couples in the Inner West.

The below table notes the total State and Nationwide number of couples is from the ABS website <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/factsheetsssc>

Table 1: Couples by Relationship as Reported by State/Territory, 2011 (a)

States and Territories	Same-sex couples where relationship reported as De facto Partner	Same-sex couples where relationship reported as Husband or Wife	Total same-sex couples	Opposite sex couples
New South Wales	12,259	468	12,731	1,488,136
Victoria	8,319	403	8,722	1,160,882
Queensland	5,779	213	5,986	938,314
South Australia	1,845	82	1,930	351,178
Western Australia	2,491	80	2,576	487,189
Tasmania	579	26	606	109,048
Northern Territory	277	10	288	38,271
ACT	828	50	872	77,473
Australia (b)	32,377	1,338	33,714	4,650,986

In 2013, former Leichhardt Council and a group of local residents formed a new consultative committee, the LGBTIQ Action Group, to assist Council work with LGBTIQ communities and to progress the needs of these communities. An annual event, *Feel the Love*, celebrating the beginning of Mardi Gras was one of the key initiatives planned and implemented by the Action Group.

Meanwhile, the former Marrickville Council held 3 annual Forums for service providers and residents to gain a better understanding of issues impacting on LGBTIQ communities and to develop a range of actions to address inclusion and participation.

Post amalgamation, in 2017 the newly formed Inner West Council and re-formed LGBTIQ Working Group hosted its 5th *Feel the Love* event at the start of Mardi Gras to celebrate the strengths and successes of our diverse LGBTIQ communities. Once this event concluded, the LGBTIQ Working Group began planning an in-depth consultation with LGBTIQ communities.

Methodology

Following from the *Feel the Love* event in February 2017, the LGBTIQ Working Group, supported by Council staff, accepted the task of planning, implementing and evaluating the consultation with LGBTIQ communities with the outcome to produce an Action Plan with a range of priorities to progress. These would range from short term actions that could be implemented in house by Council to broader partnerships with community organisation and other levels of government, addressing service provision and advocacy.

Preparation for the Rainbow Roundtable began with a survey sent out to around 100 community organisations to identify issues for both the organisations and their clients. Community organisations (49) reported that funding cuts and uncertainty, staffing and accommodation issues impacted on their ability to support their clients. In considering the main issues for their clients, organisations reported social isolation, mental and physical health, access to services and bullying/harassment to be the top four issues.

It was these themes that were discussed at the Roundtable held at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Tuesday 29 August 2017, 6-8pm, under the guidance of MC Jordan

Raskopoulos. Members of the working party contributed to the conversation, and Council staff recorded the discussion on butcher's paper. Participants (34 people attended of the 80 RSVP's) were asked to jot down ideas on post it notes and some suggestions were also collected through the evaluation forms.

This approach guaranteed that those who may not feel comfortable speaking in front of a large group could contribute ideas and thoughts that otherwise may not have been collected. The next step will be to develop a new LGBTIQ Action Plan to improve social inclusion, participation and service delivery for LGBTIQ communities. The Working Party will work through the discussion notes and prioritise actions over the coming weeks.

Highlights from the Roundtable Discussion – key themes discussed and outcomes.

In talking about **social isolation** some of the discussion points were:

- There is nothing in terms of social support for people with disabilities who are also LGBTIQ
- Ageing, social isolation and staying active (mentally and physical) is a big issue
- Seminars on a range of health topics would be great
- Where do you find out about services available? Websites/directories/what's on– more information is needed to provide a gateway to support
- There is a need for sober events for people recovering from drug and alcohol additions
- Teens don't go general school prom as themselves – an LGBTIQ Prom suggested
- Diversity training for volunteers, Council staff and Home Care workers to reduce assumptions

Bullying/Harassment/Phobia

Discussion points included:

- Children need to see their families represented in books and in media.
- Domestic violence – bullying within the LGBTIQ community
- Encourage our communities to be modelling behaviours we want to see in the broader community (esp. through social media)
- Impact of the Lock Out Laws on Newtown – Keeping the Newtown Vibe

Access to Services/Programs

Discussion points included:

- Mental Health – how to navigate the system for family support and individuals
- Cost of services related to transition is prohibitive for low income earners. The Gender Centre has a waiting list for people needing support of around 6 weeks.
- List of LGBTIQ (particularly trans-friendly) employers – to assist in reducing structural barriers to employment
- Public/private partnership – LGBTIQ health centre – space and promotion for organisations
- Council's website – updated with what's on, links to services, directory of safe places
- More training needed for care workers/pools staff on diversity

Health – Mental and Physical

Discussion points included:

- Intersex community – minority stress erodes mental and emotional resources
- Challenge to navigate health services particularly challenging for CALD – CALD LGBTIQ Health Access Clinic suggested for Ashfield area. TIS services need to be promoted more.
- Need a list of safe GP's or Rainbow friendly GP's in the area
- Intergenerational buddy system
- Financial stress and unemployment/underemployment impacting on mental health
- Need more support for intersex, especially children

- Domestic violence – tap into where people go – hairdressers and bartenders – to provide information about support services.

Marriage Equality

Some points included:

- Higher tensions noted between teenagers as a result of the Yes/No campaign, especially for teenagers with gay parents
- Concern for people in rural communities, however it was noted that there are also narrow minded people in the city as well
- Use positive messages to combat negative messages
- Concern about bias built into the postal survey
- Metropolitan Church has opened their doors during the campaign to offer support

These points of discussion will be grouped into themes for more detailed discussion at subsequent LGBTIQ Working Party meetings to develop the full Action Plan with the ultimate goal to address these issues over the longer term.

Over 55's Meet Up

The risk of social isolation in LGBTIQ communities has been raised at each of the LGBTIQ Forums and again was raised this year in the Rainbow Roundtable. To address this issue, a Shared Luncheon for Over 55's was organised by Council in partnership with ACON late last year. The idea was that the Luncheon would provide a social opportunity for older LGBTIQ people and that potentially, those attending could continue to meet on a regular basis. The event brought together around 50 people to hear guest speakers on mental health and nutrition, and try a Salsa class at Petersham Town Hall. The participants asked a range of questions around the topics and the ACON chef provided a very nutritious lunch to complete the day. A couple of follow up activities were organised, however these failed to attract many people. The LGBTIQ Working Group agreed that it would be worthwhile promoting an Over 55s Meet Up at the Roundtable. The date for the meet up was set for a month after the Roundtable and the Rainbow Room at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre booked to provide a neutral space for people to gather in. On 27 September 2017, almost 20 people gathered to introduce themselves, share their life experiences and plan their next gathering. One couple invited everyone to join them for coffee at Marrickville Metro (they meet there every day!) and another person offered to cook a meal for the group next time. The Rainbow Room is booked for the last week of November for the next meet up.

Australian Marriage Equality Postal Survey

Inner West Council supports Marriage Equality and in recognition of this support, Council is flying rainbow flags from its key buildings throughout the voting period for the national same-sex marriage postal survey. The rainbow flags are being flown to remind people of the importance of having their say on the issue and to support diversity in our local community.

Generally speaking the Inner West Council area enjoys a strong spirit of cooperation, trust and pride and is home to a substantial LGBTIQ community. Inner West Council supports and engages with LGBTIQ communities in events and consultations such as the Feel the Love Mardi Gras Reception, Wear It Purple Day and an annual Rainbow Roundtable forum. Council also raises rainbow flags every year during Mardi Gras to show support for diversity and the benefits it brings to the local community.

Council is also hanging banners in support of marriage equality at the following locations Ashfield Town Centre Liverpool Road, Explorer Park Liverpool Road, Gladstone Park, Balmain Town Hall Darling Street, Leichhardt Town Hall, Robson Park City WestLink, St Peters Town Hall, Steel Park, Newtown Town Hall and Enmore Park.

Financial Implications

All of the activities, programs and partnerships outlined above are currently being delivered by the Inner West Council through 2017/18 Operational Plans and Budget.

Conclusion

The Inner West Council is committed to continuing to provide the broad community of the inner west with a diverse suite of initiatives, meaningful partnerships and programs that reflect the interests, needs and celebrate cultural diversity. Council has a commitment and a focus to support the LGBTIQ community as a significant population demographic of the Inner West.

Attachments

Nil

ATTACHMENTS TO ITEM 7

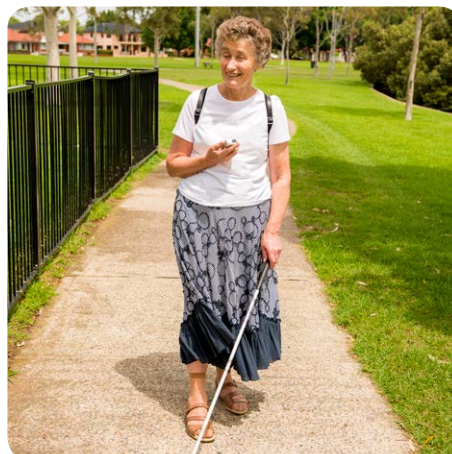
- 'Pathways to Inclusion' guide
- PDCN newsletter



Pathways to Inclusion

Recommendations for preparing Local Government Disability Inclusion Action Plans in the key area of Living Accessible Communities.

Living Accessible Communities Taskforce is a collaboration between Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Blind Citizens NSW, People with Disabilities Australia and Inner West Council.



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Introduction

Liveable, accessible communities and environments are communities that include everyone and enable people to move safely and independently. Liveable, accessible communities are essential to ensuring equitable opportunity for people with disability to confidently and safely participate in education, employment, sporting, cultural and social activities.

We recognise significant consultation has occurred during the production of the 2015 Local Government NSW's, 'NSW Disability Inclusion Access Planning Guidelines'¹ and for the Australian Local Government Association's 'Disability Inclusion Access Planning – a Guide for Local Government'² (the Guidelines).

Those Guidelines “provide Local Government with the necessary tools to develop a stand-alone Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) or to undertake a disability inclusion action planning process that is delivered through their Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework. Whatever the choice, councils must show that people with disability have been regularly engaged and that inclusion is effectively delivered.”³

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Blind Citizens NSW, People With Disability Australia and Inner West Council have collaborated to undertake consultation and research to provide practical

advice which will assist Councils to develop and implement their DIAPs and monitor practical outcomes to make their local communities accessible. In their continued advocacy roles, often providing advice to State and Local Government, the consultation process administered by the NGO's identified practical access issues encountered by almost 500 people with disability with commonalities across many local government authorities.

The following recommendations have been informed by the substantial specialist expertise imbued within Guide Dogs NSW/ACT's Orientation and Mobility Specialists & Access Consultants, People With Disability Australia, Blind Citizens NSW and Inner West Council Access and Inclusion staff, advising on local government inclusion planning. This combined knowledge and expertise, as well as the survey outcomes have resulted in a practical supplement to the thorough Guidelines that Councils are already using as a reference guide.

It is acknowledged that there have been activities, strategies and measures already put in place by Councils. Considerable action has been taken to date to improve infrastructure, policy, enforcement, maintenance and regulation. However, there continue to be barriers to access that have been identified through our consultation and this document attempts to address these issues as they relate to Liveable Accessible Communities.

Impact and implementation process of DIAPs within Local Government

Local Councils are a significant and critical player in the creation of inclusive communities. Without the understanding and application of universal design through design, development, maintenance and ongoing management of the public domain, people will not be able to effectively participate in their communities. Simply put, inclusion will not occur.

Inclusion planning is now an ongoing mandated responsibility of NSW Councils formally expressed through the provisions outlined within the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014. Annual reporting of your progress is also required under the Act. Many Councils have chosen to develop plans to respond to these responsibilities.

Councils' role now is to proactively integrate such plans, strategies and actions that promote inclusion into core business through your Integrated Planning Framework and Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan. This ultimately relies on well researched data, investigation and understanding of the nature of issues and context from which barriers to inclusion occur. Consultation with local users of the area, the infrastructure and systems is essential to this knowledge. Likewise forming partnerships with your community and key providers to develop solutions to these pressing issues will be an important step in realising goals.

“Pathways to Inclusion” can be used as either the start of that understanding or to augment data you have already captured along your own journey to inclusion.

Survey Methodology

Throughout November and December 2016, a Survey Monkey Questionnaire was distributed amongst Guide Dogs NSW/ACT client base (people with vision impairment who were over the age of 18) across metropolitan and regional NSW. Blind Citizens NSW also distributed the questionnaire. The survey was advertised through both Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and Blind Citizens NSW electronic newsletters as well as their social media channels. Participation in the survey was conducted either online or via telephone survey.

Recognising the benefit to local government and the value of capturing broader responses from a wider cross section of people with disability, a slightly amended survey was circulated through both People With Disability Australia (PWDA) and The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) in January 2017.

Both surveys contained qualitative and quantitative components. In total 488 people participated in the survey giving their viewpoints of their direct experience when accessing their local communities in NSW.

The findings and recommendations from the survey evidence the most commonly reported access issues and barriers preventing people from moving about independently and safely in their community. We are aware of other issues related to Liveable Accessible Communities also affecting people with disabilities. We plan to address these specific issues in further publications.

The findings of this survey reflect the considerable experience of the collaborators involved in administering the survey and also confirm similar findings from previous surveys conducted by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.

Research findings – outcome of survey

The outcomes address the specific questions posed in the survey but they are not a complete

comprehensive list. The majority of respondents had vision impairment so the outcomes and recommendations highlight their needs.

We also acknowledge that ongoing surveys are necessary to ensure that access issues are raised, and more importantly, that improvements are evident over time.



Footpaths

Overwhelmingly the greatest access concerns reported from respondents attributed to footpath use, whether it be the state of the footpath, lack of footpath or obstructions on the footpath or into the path of travel, both temporary or permanent.

All pedestrians rely upon the ability to travel safely from A to B, to ensure that they can stay active and independent. People with disability rely on being able to travel safely to their destination.

People with vision impairment cannot usually see the hazards and risks in their path, so it is vital that Council understands pedestrian needs in order to reduce risk of injury when travelling on footpaths. It is also important to understand that a person using a cane may not detect the hazards or risks in their path. A person with low vision may not see the hazard. A person using a Guide Dog may be taken off the path to avoid the hazard. A person with mobility difficulties may be unable to safely navigate the path if it is blocked/obstructed or poorly maintained.

When an uneven footpath or obstruction is encountered, a person must:

- recover from the unexpected shock
- find their way around the hazard, which can force them into another hazardous situation
- relocate their path
- re-establish their direction
- continue on their journey with trepidation until their next encounter with a hazard

In order to help reduce the incidence of this happening, a few simple actions can make a big difference. We have attempted to address this under the section, **“What can Councils do”**.

Lack of Footpath

Lack of footpaths was found to be a notable barrier to safe or effective travel. It is difficult to maintain orientation when there is no distinct pathway. Pathways are also essential for pedestrians who use wheelchairs or scooters, those with an ambulatory disability and those pushing a pram.

With only one footpath on one side of the street, it means that pedestrians have to cross the road to continue to use the pathway, often at an unsafe and inaccessible location.

The more a person has to deviate from the desired line/direct route the more energy is required. Everyone has different fitness and fatigue levels. If the person has a chronic health condition and/or a disability the extra distance could be the deciding factor on if the person is able to continue the journey.



Uneven Footpaths

Uneven footpath surfaces were consistently noted as one of the most problematic and frequently encountered issues that impacts the respondent's mobility. This arises often because of poor maintenance, less than ideal design or surface material and is sometimes due to incorrect installation.

- Uneven footpaths present as a trip hazard, which can lead to falls and significant injuries
- Raised edges or sections of footpath can cause a person's foot to catch
- Lowered or eroded sections may lead to a person stumbling or turning an ankle
- A footpath that is undulating can be hard to recognise visually and can cause jarring and discomfort. This also affects people who are older, those with balance impairments and people using wheelchairs.

An uneven ground surface can result in trips and falls for those with vision impairment and ambulatory disability and poor access for those using wheeled devices. Falls can occur for wheelchair users when the irregularity or sudden level change impairs the motion of the mobility device, particularly those with smaller front wheels. When even small irregularities occur, the momentum of the device is destabilised and can result in the user being thrown from the chair.

Uneven footpaths need to be repaired when there is an alert or identified through regular footpath audits. Causes of irregular footpaths such as tree roots, sunken services access, temporary repairs that leave inconsistent surface levels or soil erosion should be monitored to ensure they are not causing damage and present a safety hazard.



Low Hanging Branches

Branches and foliage that hang at head height and below over a pathway were reported as major concerns for pedestrians with vision impairment. A person who uses a long cane when travelling will not be able to detect these hazards, as the cane will only pick up obstacles below waist height. Travellers who use a Guide Dog may not have sufficient room to safely walk around overhanging branches.

Whether the bushes or branches are overhanging from the sides or above, they are an unexpected and dangerous hazard. This is made even worse when the branches are wet as they usually hang lower into the path of travel. This can negatively affect the person's confidence and independence.

Trees should be maintained so that branches do not overhang footpaths. Maintenance staff should also be responsive to requests for trimming from members of the public as well as promoting this need to property owners/residents where the branches originate from private property adjoining the footpath. Branches need to be trimmed above a height that would be problematic for pedestrians when rain will weigh branches down to be lower than other times.



What can Councils do?

- Promote how the public can report any locations that have uneven footpaths to Council so that they can be fixed. This mechanism should be clear, easy and accessible for the public to use.
- Respond in a timely fashion to reports of uneven paths.
- Regularly inspect footpaths and repair uneven sections.
- Ensure that footpaths are suitably repatriated to a safe condition after services have been accessed underneath.
- Ensure that paved footpaths be central in urban planning and be provided where they do not currently exist in a pedestrian environment.
- Provide continuous footpaths on both sides of the street including kerb ramps where a road or lane intersects the footpath.
- Ensure the road/lane surface between the kerb ramps is even and without holes or trip edges.
- Ensure that the street trees selected will not cause future issues with paving.
- Keep trees and bushes trimmed vertically and horizontally away from footpaths.
- Respond promptly to complaints from the public about the need for trees to be trimmed.
- Keep vertical clearance on paths to a minimum of 2 metres in wet weather when branches hang lower.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they are well clear from the pedestrian area.
- Ensure that footpaths are swept regularly to minimise slip hazards caused by fallen leaves and seed pods. Priority/high volume pathways should be addressed first where resources are limited.
- Check and review progress with users on a regular basis to measure improvement and identify priority areas. Develop your own KPIs and service standards that address these action items and are appropriate to the area.

Barriers in the Path of Travel

Predictability of street furniture location is important. Care needs to be paid in ensuring the most direct trafficable surface is clear of such objects. Constant meandering around objects creates uncertainty and difficulty for users to negotiate where mobility devices have to be controlled. It also creates unpredictable movement patterns in pedestrians as they try to gauge speed and direction of others around them. People with ambulant disabilities can find this particularly difficult as well where it requires additional balance and pressure on joints.

The pedestrian area of the footpath should be located adjacent to the building line and kept clear of dining, goods and signage.

Street Furniture

Street furniture is an object installed on the street for public use, for example, benches, bollards, phone/Wi-Fi, bins, planter boxes, 'A frame' signs, parking meters and water fountains.

The survey found street furniture placed in the path of travel to be a significant barrier to access. Respondents also had major concerns with other

obstacles on the path of travel including dining, footpath trading, parked cars, shared pathways and construction and repair works.

Street furniture in the path of travel is unpredictable for the pedestrian, particularly those with vision impairment. Having tables and chairs, sandwich boards and goods on display adjacent to doorways make it very difficult for all people to locate the entrances to shops. For people who are blind or vision impaired that are unable to use visual clues to locate the entrance, this situation is even more complicated.

We recommend that all street furniture be positioned outside the clear path of travel and the use of pedestal objects avoided.

Where street furniture restricts the navigable width of the existing pathway, Council needs to be aware of the altered pedestrian movement. This is especially evident where it coincides with an entry to the path, (i.e. shop, kerb ramp) and then reduces the minimum circulation space required by all users. Often 'pinch points' are created whereby the object, through its location, reduces the capacity of the path to allow easy movement. People who have a larger spatial footprint (i.e. use a mobility device) are less agile on their feet will be disadvantaged.



Obstacles on Footpath

The most frequently reported obstacles on the footpath reported by respondents included; wheelie bins/rubbish bins, leaf litter, broken glass, food scraps and hard waste

The location of wheelie bins on and after bin day are difficult to predict and can be difficult to pass. Where footpaths are narrow, this can set up an irregular pattern of obstruction with no viable alternative.

Leaf litter can pose a slip hazard and be hard to detect for those with impaired vision. It may also be unavoidable for those using crutches and other walking aids or prosthetics.

Broken glass is hazardous to both pedestrians and Guide Dogs and food scraps provide a dangerous distraction to Guide Dogs.

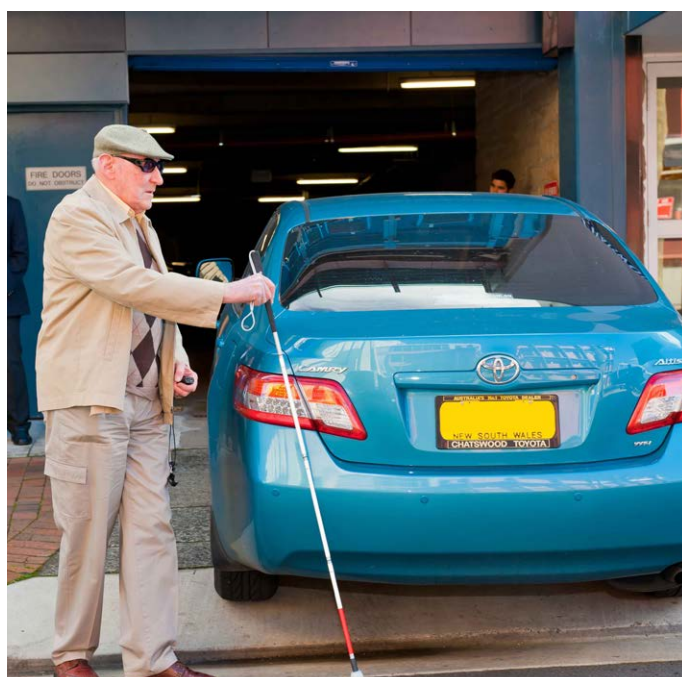
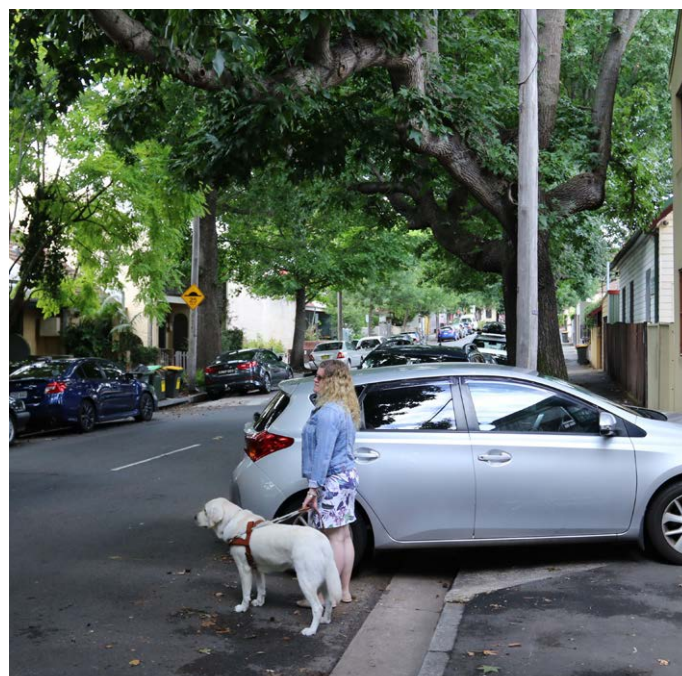
Hard waste and associated debris awaiting collection often spill from the nature strip onto the footpath, creating an obstacle and trip hazard.

Cars Parked on Footpaths

A frequently reported problem was the issue of cars parked over the footpath on a driveway or on the street across a kerb ramp.

When a vehicle is parked across a footpath it is annoying for any pedestrian, but for someone with vision impairment or using a mobility device it can force the person into unsafe situations such as having to venture out onto the road. It can also be disorienting, or the person might sustain an injury from objects like ladders protruding from the back of a tradie's ute. Sometimes there is no option but to pass the vehicle by going onto the road. The pedestrian must return to the last pathway exit and travel on the road until there is an opportunity to get back onto the footpath. Cars parked over a kerb ramp can obstruct a safe entry or exit to a road crossing.

Think before you park. Clear footpaths are safer and needed for people who are blind, safer for families and safer for all pedestrians.



Council Works/Temporary Barricades

Construction and repair works along the footpath and surrounding areas can create temporary and permanent barriers along the path of travel. These obstacles are unpredictable and can force the pedestrian to deviate from their path of travel, often onto the road, to pass the area of disruption. Associated construction noise can be disorienting and distracting. It can also mask traffic noise that a pedestrian with vision impairment would need to listen to carefully to accurately judge a safe moment to cross the road.

Temporary barricades around construction sites or to guide pedestrians along an alternative path are unexpected and can be difficult to negotiate. The alternative path provided must also be accessible and appropriate assistance provided by construction staff if requested.

Debris from construction can create a slip hazard on the footpath and should be consistently cleared.



What can Councils do?

- Ensure regular maintenance and clean up occur on all public walkways and timely response to requests for rubbish or obstacle removal.
- Enforce the removal of wheelie bins to their place of storage in a timely manner after bin day.
- Ensure a consistent practice of placement of bins (kerb side) be employed and that waste removal crews return bins to these positions to ensure the path is passable for all users.
- Council Rangers prioritise streets to ensure cars are not parked across driveways or over kerb ramps.
- Regularly sweep streets, especially after heavy rains and winds when foliage and seeds can fall onto the paths.
- Keep the pedestrian zone on footpaths located next to the building line.
- Keep the accessible area of footpath at 1.8 metres wide.
- Keep the footpath free from trip hazards.
- Make the footpath as even as possible.
- Ensure that the footpath has all weather slip resistance.
- Ensure debris and rubble from construction along footpaths is cleared as a condition of consent.
- Council construction staff receives training on how to assist someone with a disability upon request.
- Check and review progress with users on a regular basis to measure improvement and identify priority areas. Develop your own KPIs and service standards that address these action items and are appropriate to the area.

Outdoor Dining and Footpath Trading

Outdoor dining refers to dining in public space, generally associated with an approved restaurant or cafe. Public space refers to footpaths, roads, public squares, nature strips, parks and access ways, i.e. the spaces between buildings that are available for public use. An absent or inconsistent outdoor dining policy can create an unpredictable and inaccessible path of travel for all pedestrians.

When dining furniture such as tables, chairs, heaters, barriers and signage are placed along the building line, the shoreline used by those with vision impairment is interrupted. "Shoreline" refers to a visual or tactile line or audible cue where two different structures or surfaces meet. In this case, the shoreline is the intersection of the building and the footpath. When followed, it can be used to maintain straight-line travel and orientation. A clear path along the building line is an important element that provides a consistent guiding line for people to follow.

People who are blind or vision impaired usually prefer to travel along the clear path next to the building line as this provides many clues for directionality and entry location. When the

primary pedestrian zone is moved towards the kerb line due to such activities, attention is needed to ensure users are not exposed to the drip line at the edge of awnings. This creates an inconsistent and slippery surface where falls are more likely.

In addition, attention is needed where pedestrian 'pinch points' are created as a result of such activity. This makes negotiating the pathways more difficult and requires more energy for pedestrians with a mobility restriction. Negotiating passage among other pedestrians (especially for wheelchair and/or scooter users) is more difficult as passing space, speed and manoeuvring all have to be effectively judged by all parties. This is more complex and leads to collisions in areas where the pedestrian volume is greater.

It is recommended that all outdoor dining furniture be placed off the building line and this to be stipulated in a published Outdoor Dining Policy. It is also recommended that this Policy be consistently applied and enforced.

Keeping the building line clear also allows the user to be able to identify the premises.



What can Councils do?

- Keep all footpath dining areas, street furniture, signage and goods on display away from the building line.
- Ensure all footpath dining areas have suitable barriers enclosing the whole area and clearly identify the entry and exit.
- Adopt an Outdoor Dining and Footpath Trading Policy ensuring that the footpath is clear, outdoor dining is kerbside and footpath trading does not create hazards or obstruct the continuous accessible path of travel.
- If footpath dining barriers are used they require:
 - Suitable luminance contrast
 - Suitable height
 - Sturdiness
 - Have no trip hazards for footings
 - Footpath dining barrier openings align with the premises opening
 - Clear entry and exit points
 - Replicate the key features of the building to maintain the essence of a building line



Shared Pathways and Shared Zones

Shared pathways refer to those areas used by pedestrians as well as bicycles.

Pathways that are designed to address the competing requirements of pedestrians and cyclists have features that make it difficult for those with a disability.

Bicycles, which are silent by nature, can be difficult for those with a range of vision impairment to detect and to accurately judge the amount and direction of bicycle traffic. This is of particular concern when using a shoreline to maintain orientation and, if using this shoreline, it means that the pedestrian could be travelling against the flow of bicycle traffic.

Signs and painted pavement markings that indicate that a footpath is a shared pathway are not accessible to those with vision impairment so these pedestrians may not be aware they are traveling in such a zone.

Shared zones are those areas that are shared by pedestrians, bicycles and cars.

We believe that clear markers, (other than signage) are necessary to indicate the existence of a shared zone, especially to designate the delineation between road and footpath. In the absence of other indicators such as a kerb or change in gradient, it can be particularly

dangerous for people with impaired vision to know if they are on a footpath or in the path of a car.

Shared pathways and shared zones present risks and dangers to pedestrians with disabilities and should be avoided where other traffic management strategies can be implemented to achieve the same aims.

What can Councils do?

- Paths are clearly separated between pedestrians and cyclists.
- Shared zones are clearly marked with tactile ground surface indicators where necessary.
- Explore alternative traffic management strategies other than shared pathways and zones.
- Check and review progress with users on a regular basis to measure improvement and identify priority areas. Develop your own KPIs and service standards that address these action items and are appropriate to the area.



Kerb Ramps and Road Crossings

Misaligned Kerb Ramps

Kerb ramps that are not directly opposite each other on either side of the crossing are dangerous and disorienting for those with mobility difficulties. Aligned kerb ramps allow for quick passage across the crossing, reducing the amount of time spent on the road. A diagonal crossing increases the amount of time spent on the road. When a kerb ramp is not predictably in the corresponding position on the other side of the road, those with vision impairment also increase their time spent on the road searching for it. Aligning kerb ramps should be considered when designing and constructing crossings.

Blended Kerbs

Blended kerbs refer to those areas where the road and footpath are at grade, that is, there is no kerb ramp or change in gradient to indicate the demarcation. These kerbs are undetectable for those travellers using a long cane and difficult for a Guide Dog to determine as a road crossing. As such, these travellers may unwittingly find themselves on the road with no notice. Where provided, these crossings should be clearly marked with warning tactile ground surface indicators.

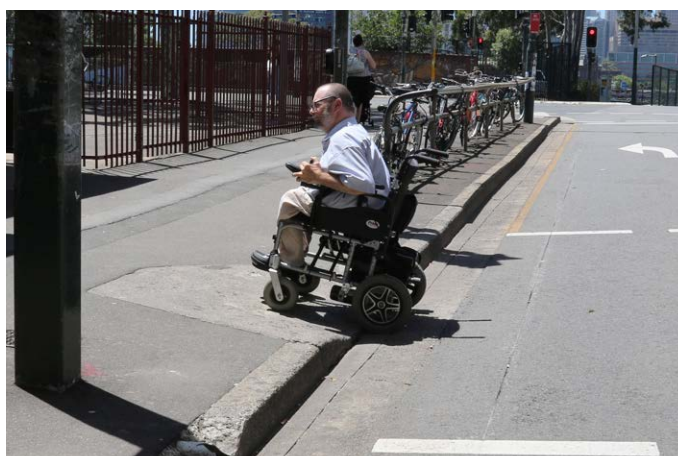
Kerb Gradient

Kerb gradients that are too steep can be difficult to negotiate for travellers who use wheelchairs, older people and those with other mobility difficulties. When the angle between the road and the kerb is too steep, therefore making the kerb ramp unusable, it may mean that the pedestrian is unable to exit the road or enter the footpath.

Conversely, kerb gradients that are too shallow are difficult to detect for travellers using a long cane. Kerb ramps need to be designed in accordance to current RMS guidelines. Those with a gradient less than the prescribed guidelines should have warning tactile ground surface indicators in the absence of any other detectable cues.

What can Councils do?

- Provide for aligned kerb ramps in the urban planning process.
- Where blended kerbs exist, install warning tactile ground surface indicators.
- Install kerbs as per the RMS guidelines or modify through reconstruction or installation of tactile ground surface indicators where appropriate.
- Check and review progress with users on a regular basis to measure improvement and identify priority areas. Develop your own KPIs and service standards that address these action items and are appropriate to the area.



Dog Issues

In a survey⁸ conducted in 2015, 83% of Guide Dog handlers reported that their Guide Dog had been distracted by an off-leash dog in the past 12 months.

Distracting a working Guide Dog reduces its capacity to do what it has been trained to do, potentially putting its handler's safety at risk. A well-intentioned pat can undo months of training, and frequent distraction can cause anxiety or serious injury for Guide Dogs and their handlers.

Dogs off Leash

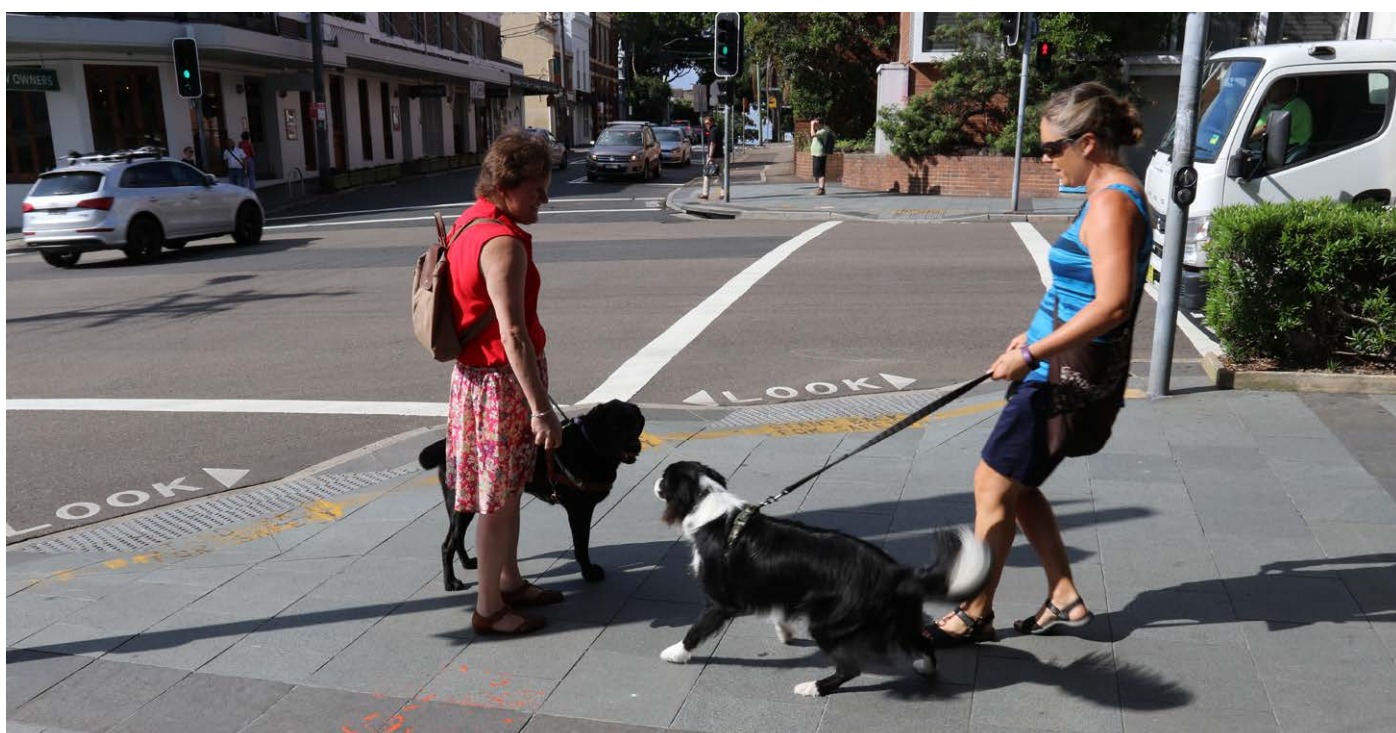
Dogs off leash are a major concern for Guide Dog handlers. They can pose serious risk to a working Guide Dog by approaching the Guide Dog, thereby diverting their attention away from keeping the handler safe. In this situation the guide dog handler may or may not be aware that the dog off leash is approaching, and thus will not be prepared to deal with a situation which may lead to an attack on the Guide Dog. Dogs off leash can distract a working Guide Dog so much that their long term work can be affected potentially leading to early retirement.

Dogs off leash can also be a trip hazard for people who use long canes as they can unexpectedly approach a person.

Some dogs react to wheels. This includes barking, chasing and even more aggressive behaviour towards people using wheelchairs or similar. Where the dog is larger and approaches wheelchair users the dog can be at face height, therefore causing a menacing and traumatic experience with few escape routes. It is not uncommon for several off leash dogs to be encountered along a path. These repeated encounters can be extremely stressful and potentially dangerous for people using wheelchairs.

Responsible Dog Handling in Public

Irresponsible dog handling in public can compromise the safety of any person who is blind or vision impaired. Unattended dogs outside shops was highlighted in the survey as a major concern. Unattended dogs can unexpectedly approach or jump on a person who is blind or vision impaired walking past them. They can distract a working Guide Dog by jumping or barking. Further, the leash with which dogs are tethered can be a trip hazard for a person using a long cane.



What can Councils do?

- Enforce a policy where dogs must be on a leash in all public places under immediate control of their owner.
- Enforce a policy that ensures responsible dog handling in public, including limited tethering of dogs away from footpaths and outside shops.
- Issue of fines where dogs are tethered unaccompanied on footpaths and major pedestrian walkways.
- Promote awareness of and enforce the Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW).
- Promote awareness of and enforce Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.
- Educate community about responsible management of pets in public areas.
- Check and review progress with users on a regular basis to measure improvement and identify priority areas. Develop your own KPIs and service standards that address these action items and are appropriate to the area.



Determining measurable outcomes and the way forward

Local Government is now very much in the spotlight as a key player in creating liveable communities.

Recent reforms at international, domestic and state level all confirm that there is still substantial change required before our communities can be equally enjoyed by all of their citizens. These matters are now firmly understood as rights rather than an aspirational goal.

Through the auspices of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act, Local Governments are the agencies where significant responsibility now resides and have an opportunity to show great leadership.

It is clear from the survey responses which informed many of the above recommendations, that many access issues preventing people with a disability from moving about independently and safely in their community, and in fact the general population, can be addressed by Local Councils continued commitment.

In an environment of fast paced infrastructure and community growth, development and innovation, research, monitoring and review of the accessibility of each LGA is essential.



Guide Dogs NSW/ACT 2014 Take the lead campaign

Through an ongoing commitment to consulting with stakeholders and community members and ensuring a culture that embeds accessibility for all as a bedrock principle into the everyday processes of Councils' activities, we have great hope that we will all see an increasingly accessible community for all over the next four years of the DIAP cycle and beyond.

Many barriers to equitable and dignified access are persistent and will require careful planning to overcome conflicts, however through the collaborative efforts of Councils liveable communities can be created that realise the modest goals people have to move about independently and safely in their communities.

The Liveable Accessible Communities Taskforce (LACT) came together with the aim to make known the barriers people face as identified

through research undertaken by its members and thus make Local Councils task easier. Armed with this knowledge and advice Councils can make a difference by incorporating strategies and actions into their planning frameworks that will facilitate the necessary improvement.

The LACT invites you to take on board these recommendations and to contact Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, Inner West Council, People with Disabilities Australia and Blind Citizens NSW to discuss any of these matters or to support you along your pathway to inclusion.



Footpath Obstructions

Uneven Paths

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT 2010 Don't Turn a Blind Eye campaign

Legislative context

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)⁴

The UNCRPD, ratified by Australia in 2008, acknowledges that people with disability have the same human rights as those without disability. This commits participating governments to ensure these rights can be exercised and that barriers are removed. The UNCRPD supports the social model of disability.

Broadly this regards disability as not residing in the individual or as an inherent characteristic of a person, but rather as a restriction caused through society's lack of accommodation in addressing that person's needs and rights such that they can participate on an equal basis with others.

This recognises that attitudes, practices and structures are the disabling agent and can create barriers to people from enjoying economic participation, social inclusion and equality. The impetus for the research undertaken by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and our collaborators lies within a commitment to advocacy for and providing expert and practical advice to facilitate the implementation of the numerous principles enshrined within Article 9 of the UNCRPD.

Article 9 - Accessibility

1. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

- (a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
- (b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.

2. States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to:

- (a) Develop, promulgate and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public;
- (b) Ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- (c) Provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities;
- (d) Provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms;
- (e) Provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public;

(f) Promote other appropriate forms of assistance and support to persons with disabilities to ensure their access to information;

(g) Promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;

(h) Promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost.

Disability Discrimination Act⁵

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) makes it unlawful for any person or organisation to directly or indirectly discriminate against a person with disability.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person or organisation treats, or proposes to treat, a person with disability less favourably than they would have if the person did not have a disability. This includes not making, or proposing to make, reasonable adjustments for the person with disability.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a person or organisation requires a person to comply with a requirement that, because of their disability, the person is not able to comply with, which causes the person with disability to be disadvantaged.

An example of this would be if the footpath has no kerb ramp. To step off the kerb, a pedestrian would be required to find the edge visually and be able to use steps.

National Disability Strategy⁶

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 provides a ten-year national policy framework and plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers to support the commitment made to the UNCRPD

It is intended that actions and initiatives taken under the Strategy to improve the accessibility of mainstream services for people with disability will complement specialist disability services and programs currently provided by Commonwealth, state and territory governments, including those provided through the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The National Disability Strategy sets out six priority areas for action to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.

These are:

1. Inclusive and accessible communities—the physical environment including public transport; parks, buildings and housing; digital information and communications technologies; civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life.
2. Rights protection, justice and legislation—statutory protections such as anti-discrimination measures, complaints mechanisms, advocacy, the electoral and justice systems.
3. Economic security—jobs, business opportunities, financial independence, adequate income support for those not able to work, and housing.
4. Personal and community support—inclusion and participation in the community, person-centred care and support provided by specialist disability services and mainstream services; informal care and support.
5. Learning and skills—early childhood education and care, schools, further education, vocational education; transitions from education to employment; life-long learning.
6. Health and wellbeing—health services, health promotion and the interaction between health and disability systems; wellbeing and enjoyment of life.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)⁷

The NDIS is a national system, which subject to eligibility, provides disability support focused on the individual needs and choices of people with permanent and significant disability. The NDIS gives participants more choice and control over how, when and where supports are provided.

The NDIS provides for a national insurance system to enable the funding and administrative systems to support people with disability to access the reasonable and necessary supports they need to lead an ordinary life. The NDIS will enable eligible people with a disability to pursue their interests in the community through individualised packages of funding.

Local government inclusion planning seeks to make local communities and environments accessible and inclusive, so that persons with disabilities can use their individualised funding for the specialist supports they need, rather than using such funding to access environments and services that are their right to access as citizens.

¹NSW Disability Inclusion Access Planning Guidelines', Local Government NSW, published 2015

²Australian Local Government Association's 'Disability Inclusion Access Planning – a Guide for Local Government; Alison Wallace (Director), Poppy Wise (Associate Director), Diane Fase (Senior Consultant) and Christina Griffiths (Consultant) from Urbis and Monica Telesny (ALGA Senior Policy Adviser)

³NSW Disability Inclusion Access Planning Guidelines', Local Government NSW , Pg 4,

⁴<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx#9>

⁵http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264/

⁶<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/government-international/national-disability-strategy>

⁷<https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/programmes-services/for-people-with-disability/national-disability-insurance-scheme>

⁸Survey conducted by Sweeney Research across Guide Dog NSW/ACT clients in NSW, VIC, SA, ACT, TAS and NT in 2015.



Contributors

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Guide Dogs NSW/ACT receives less than 2% of its funding from Government and is financially dependent on the generosity of the people of NSW and the ACT.

Welcome to the September PDCN Live Newsletter!

The last three months have seen the team at PDCN become very busy as we completed end of year reports, undertook our audit and developed a new workshop to assist people whom have now begun to action their NDIS plans and may need some additional support to understand the many changes this requires.

In addition, we have given evidence to the Federal Government's Senate Committee inquiry into the delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy to build inclusive and accessible communities. We want to ensure that this occurs not only for those whom benefit from the NDIS, but everyone else; particularly older persons with disability and those whom will be more disadvantaged when the NDIS comes into play, ensuring continued and improved access to the community.

The retention of independent advocacy, information and referral supports will be a focus of the next three months, as the NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance (a group formed by many of the advocacy, information and peak representational organisations throughout NSW) formally launch our campaign to stop the massive loss of funding to the majority of organisations that currently offer you supports.

We hope that as PDCN members, you will assist us to spread the word to your local councillors, or MP's and let them know of how that loss will affect you – and your ability to engage in the community, or have a voice and support when you need it. Over the next few weeks, we will provide you with tools to help you do this. Sign an online petition, visit your local councillor or Member, tell your story to us of how advocacy has helped you, and why it is imperative that it remains available to you in the future... after all, none of us truly knows what the future brings, or when we may need a little extra support!

Enjoy the newsletter – and don't forget - join us on Wednesday 18 October at our AGM. We'd love to see you!

Serena Ovens,
Executive Officer

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Contact Us



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1800 688 831
Freecall

02 9552 1606
Sydney Metro

admin@pdcnsw.org.au

Save The Date!

Our *Annual General Meeting* is on Wednesday 18 October at The Westin Hotel, Barnet Room, 1 Martin Place, Sydney.



Speaker: The Honourable Liesl Tesch, MP for Gosford, seven time Paralympian and first wheelchair user in NSW Parliament.

Arrive at 5:45pm for a 6pm start. Drinks and canapes at 7pm. RSVP to 02 9552 1606 or admin@pdcnsw.org.au by Monday 9 October.

Council on the Ageing 50+ Report

Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA) has released its latest 50+ Report, 'The twin currencies: how people in NSW spend their time and money as they age.' The 2017 50+ Report was informed by COTA's 2016 survey which was completed by more than 6000 people over 50 across the state. The current report has chosen to focus on how older people spend their time and their money and seeks to gain a better understanding of the varied circumstances of people in the years leading up to and including their retirement.

Community engagement is key to the work carried out by COTA. Research provides COTA insight into the diverse perspectives of older people and assists with the formation of evidence based policy that is directly influenced by the views, wants and needs of older people in NSW.

The latest 50+ Report has highlighted the challenges older people face, particularly women on lower incomes and those on the disability support pension or the age/DVA pension. The report also explores participants lived experience of the concept of retirement and if this will be a reality for them given many individuals are choosing to remain in the workforce longer for economic reasons.

COTA's 50+ Report can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2xa2CSd> or contact us on 02 9552 1606 if you would like to be emailed a copy.

Community Conversations: Themes and Summary

During the month of June, PDCN held a series of Community Conversations in Ashfield, Rozelle and Newtown. The invitation was extended to anyone who was interested in the community wellbeing of that particular area. Thank you to all who contributed their time, experiences and ideas.

We gathered together the common themes and this is what the community said...

People want to live in a diverse, inclusive, accessible, safe and affordable community, but they are concerned that city is taking over and community connection is disappearing. They feel that diversity is not valued and they don't feel safe. As people talk more about those concerns they talk specifically about connection to community.

Residents want to focus on keeping the sense of community alive, with services working collectively, not competitively. Participants want to have more community gatherings, support local business, ensure community spaces are incorporated into new developments, such as high rise apartments and buildings. They want to raise awareness around accessibility with community members sharing their stories and experiences, helping people to think outwardly beyond their own personal circumstance and understanding how their actions affect others. They

want all departments and services, including Local MP's, Councils, access committees, neighbourhood centres, community services, Chamber of Commerce, businesses, peak bodies, all working collectively playing a part in those actions and then community would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.

PDCN used the Harwood Community Engagement methodology to lead these conversations, which include a series of nine questions. In order to create an intimate and open conversation, we refer to these as a 'Kitchen Table' conversation, keeping each conversation to 15 people or less. If you are a community member or an organisation interested in bringing together additional people to facilitate more of these conversations, please contact us. A whole range of government and non-government services as well as community members are well placed to initiate these sessions.

You can contact us on 02 9552 1606 or admin@pdcnsw.org.au with any suggestions or feedback.



NDIS: Plans in Practice

In the last three months, PDCN has wrapped up its last scheduled NDIS Ready workshops in Rural and Remote NSW. The workshops were held in Wentworth, Kyogle and Tweed Heads with 35 people attending and 13 pre-planning referrals requested. Post workshop evaluations particularly highlighted the workshops to be informative and empowering with the majority of participants reporting that they feel more confident to develop their plans.

As NDIS Ready wraps up, PDCN launched its new free two day workshop NDIS: Plans in Practice on the 5th of September in Gosford. After receiving feedback from our members, workshop participants and other NDIS participants who found their NDIS plans to be confusing, PDCN identified a need to help demystify the implementation of the NDIS in participant's everyday lives. In response, PDCN



in partnership with our facilitators who have a lived experience of disability developed a new workshop focusing on understanding one's NDIS plan and how to make the most of it. The essence of the workshop is to empower people to take hold of the choice and control the NDIS offers and to make that 'good life' a reality.

The first workshop was well received with many participants able to ask questions during the day and have them answered in a meaningful way by our knowledgeable facilitators. And significantly, participants expressed feelings of clarity, hope and renewed direction going forward with their NDIS plans. Another outcome which we look forward to seeing in future workshops is the development of supportive networks between participants, as one person answered what she liked most about the course,

"Collaborating with so many great women! Not feeling so alone."

- NDIS: Plans in Practice Gosford participant

Upcoming 2017 workshops have been scheduled in Toongabbie, Mittagong, Liverpool, Taree and Armidale.

For further information on peer support groups, or to register, go to <https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/projects/ndis-plans-practice/>

Upcoming Peer Support Groups

Essential Employment Peer Support Group

Date: 27/09/2017 (last Wednesday of every month)

Time: 10:30am-12:30pm

Location: Essential Employment and Training, Wollongong

Blacktown Peer Support Group

Date: 29/09/2017 (last Friday of every month)

Time: 11:00-1:00pm

Location: Assistive Technology Australian, Sydney

AAC Youth Group

Date: 01/10/2017 (first Sunday of every month)

Time: 11:00am-1:00pm

Location: The Place, Newcastle

Erina Peer Support Group

Date: 03/10/2017 (first Tuesday of every month)

Time: 11:00am- 1:00pm

Location: The Hive, Erina

Shoalhaven Self Advocacy Group

Date: 07/10/2017 (first Saturday of every month)

Time: 11:30-1:30pm

Location: West Street Community Centre, Nowra

Liverpool Peer Support Group

Date: 09/10/2017

Time: 11:00am-1:00pm

Location: Liverpool Library, Sydney

Nowra Peer Support Group

Date: 09/10/2017

Time: 11:30am-1:30pm

Location: Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, Nowra

Wollongong Women's

Date: 19/10/2017

Time: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Location: Flourish Australia, Wollongong

Top Ryde Peer Support Group

Date: 20/10/2017

Time: 1:00pm-3:00pm

Location: Top Ryde City Library, Sydney

The Parent Room

Date: 26/10/2017

Time: 10:30am-12:30pm (day session) & 6:00pm-8:00pm (evening session)

Location: Noah's Shoalhaven, Nowra

For further information on peer support groups, or to register, go to <https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/projects/peer-support-groups/> or call Sarah Humphery on 9552 1606.

Donate to PDCN!

Remember, donations above \$2 are fully tax deductible.

You can make donations online at: <https://www.pdcnsw.org.au/get-involved/donation/>

Invisible but not Silent



Do you have an invisible disability? People with invisible disabilities often face discrimination when they try to access disability services because people wrongly assume that they are trying to take advantage of facilities that they are not entitled to. Blue Badge Insurance hears about these incidents all the time from customers and Facebook followers, so they decided to conduct a survey of people with invisible disabilities and their carers to gain insight into their day to day experiences.

Invisible Disabilities and Parking

Many invisible disabilities can affect a person's mobility, making them eligible for a disability parking permit. People with physical disabilities or chronic illnesses may be unable to walk long distances, or may need extra room to enter or exit the car. People with intellectual disabilities or brain injuries may need help with equipment like seat belts, or to walk safely through traffic. While others need quick access to exits in case of panic attacks or medical emergencies. Despite this, people with invisible disabilities often face harassment for using their disability parking permits.



The Impact of Harassment

While we have been aware of harassment, it appears that the problem is far more widespread than we had imagined, with 76 percent of permit holders surveyed experiencing abuse ranging from glares, rude notes, verbal harassment and even spitting.

"I have a young child and I am often scared for our safety and humiliated by the way some people speak to or look at us. I am sad and angry that my young child witnesses the nastiness of other people." - Survey respondent

The effects of this harassment on people who are legally entitled to use disabled parking is profound, with people reporting feeling frustrated, threatened, angry and offended. Many also reported that they were made to feel guilty, even though they knew that they had a right to use their permit. Sadly, 59 percent of respondents who had been abused in car parks said they have felt forced to change their behaviour as a result of their experience. These changes range from looking around to see if anyone is watching them when

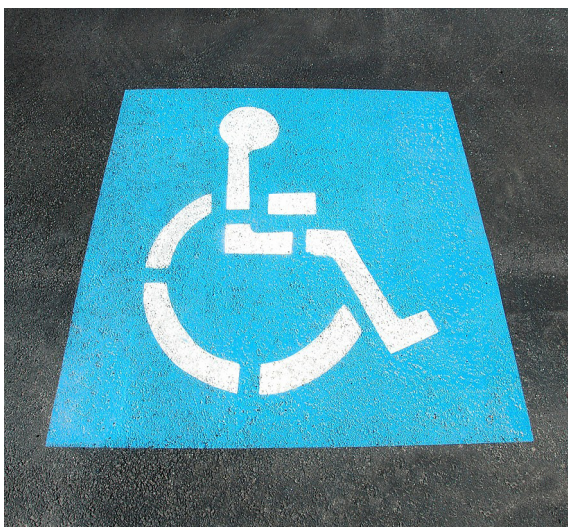
they get out of their car, through to exaggerating their limp or even using a walking stick that they didn't really need to "prove" their disability. For some people, the effects were much more severe. One parent had to sit down and explain the situation to their children to console them after an incident, while others avoided using their permit altogether whenever possible.

Reporting Harassment

Although 77 per cent of the disability parking permit holders we surveyed told us they had received harassment as a result of an invisible disability, incidents of abuse seem to be vastly underreported, with only 8 percent of respondents saying that they had reported it to authorities. This under-reporting occurs for a number of reasons, with some people saying that they couldn't find an appropriate person to report the harassment to, while others said were simply too upset or fatigued as a result of the incident and their disability to do anything about it. However, the most common response was that people didn't think that authorities could or would do anything even if they reported abuse, with 59 per cent of people saying that they didn't think reporting abuse would help.

How do We Fix the Problem?

A staggering 95 per cent of respondents said that there was not enough accessible parking in their area and 90 per cent would like to see their parking areas better monitored for misuse.



The need for increased education was a theme that came up regularly, and participants had lots of great ideas about how this should be done. Some suggested changing the International Symbol of Access (currently a picture of a person in wheelchair on a blue background), to something more inclusive of a range of disabilities. Many people also advocated more widespread education campaigns about the varied nature of disability, with government-sponsored awareness campaigns, targeted curriculum in schools and testing as part of drivers' licences and citizenship tests all being suggested.

Survey Results – A Quick Look

1. 77% of permit holders had faced harassment while parking.
2. Only 8% of people reported their harassment to authorities.
3. Of the people who reported to authorities, only 17% were happy with the response they received.
4. 59% of people have felt compelled to change how and when they use their permit as a result of being harassed.
5. Over 94% of respondents don't feel that there are enough accessible parking spaces in public parking areas.

If you're interested in getting an obligation free quote to find out how Blue Badge compares to your current insurer, call 1300 304 802.

*Full Terms and conditions for Blue Badge offer. It is important to read the PDS before deciding if a Blue Badge insurance policy is right for you.

Discounts for the Blue Badge Insurance Comprehensive Motor Vehicle Insurance will be applied to the base vehicle rates subject to the customer holding a permanent Disability Parking Permit and/or the vehicle has been converted for use by a driver or passengers that have a disability. The discounts do not apply to the Blue Badge Roadside Assistance Optional Benefit. Underwriting criteria will be applied to the consideration of the risk. Additional excesses will apply to drivers under 25 or those drivers who have held a full Australian drivers licence for less than 2 years. This offer may be withdrawn at any time. Not available with any other offer.

Consider the PDS at www.BlueBadgeInsurance.com.au to decide if the product is right for you. Blue Badge Insurance Australia Pty Ltd, ABN 59 162 783 306, (AR No. 438547) is an Authorised Representative of The Hollard Insurance Company Pty Ltd, ABN 78 090 584 473 (AFS Licence No 241436).

Quarterly Highlights

A successful Sydney Harbour Bridge Step free access rally and PDCN joins a Parliamentary round table discussion



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www.pdcnsw-emergencyready.com



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www.pdcnsw.org.au



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