



WAVERLEY
COUNCIL



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

CONSULTATION REPORT - 2021

An Inclusive Community For Everyone

We support our community members to participate positively in community life – whatever their age, gender, physical ability, socio-economic status, sexuality or cultural background – to feel that they can be active, healthy, valued and connected.

We plan and design for our diverse community, by providing safe, healthy and inclusive services and spaces.

Waverley Council acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal people, who traditionally occupied the Sydney Coast and we acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders both past and present.

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Background

Waverley Council is developing a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022 -26 to improve community inclusion and access over the next four years.

The DIAP is Council's second plan under the Disability Inclusion Act around four focus areas.

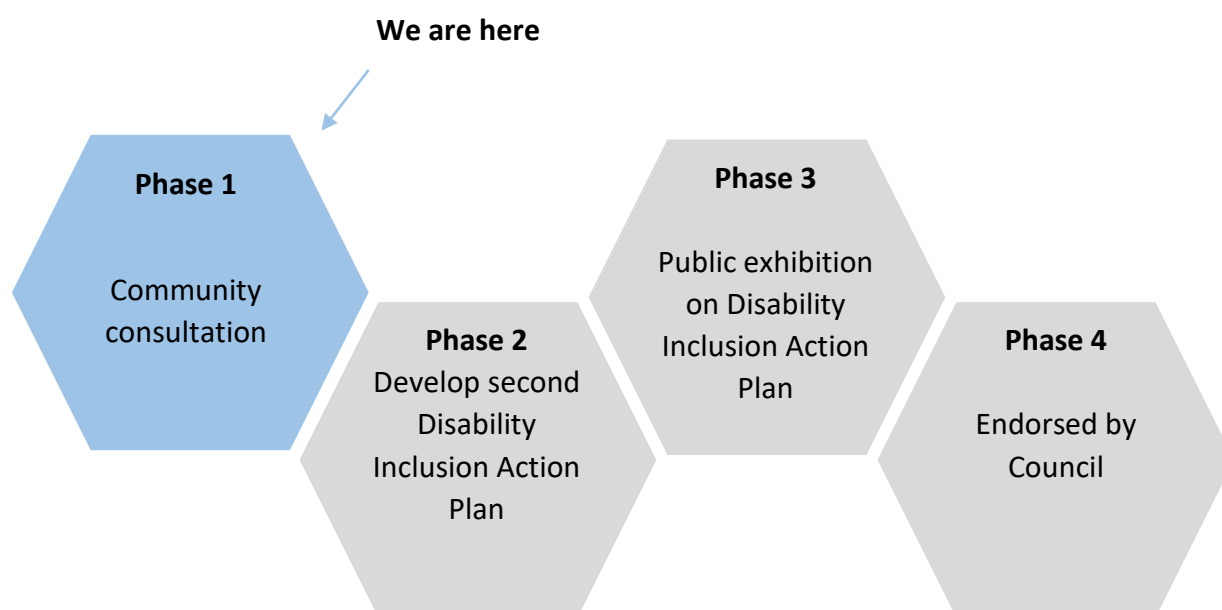
1. Inclusive attitudes and behaviours
2. Liveable community
3. Meaningful employment
4. Engagement and systems

How we engaged the community

Council engaged with the community to review the success of the previous Plan and to identify gaps and emerging needs. We do this to ensure the DIAP continues to respond to changing community issues and trends. This report provides a summary of the outcomes from the consultation.

More than 130 people participated in engagement activities between 25 October to 20 February 2022. We heard from younger and older people with disability, families, carers and services with diverse experience of disability including physical, sensory, neuro diverse, cognitive, mental health, and chronic illness.

Council held two regional workshops, resident focus groups, and met with individuals, disability service providers and local networks. We also received survey responses and submissions. A summary of engagement activities is listed at appendix 1.



Engagement Outcomes

We have summarised the consultation feedback under each of the four focus areas and listed what's working well, areas for improvement and priority actions.

You told us about **priorities**

- Accessibility of streetscapes, open spaces, and beaches
- Access to meaningful employment
- Genuine engagement and opportunities for codesign
- Engagement and connection with local business and community networks

You told us about **what works well**

- New and upgraded accessible venues and streets
- Transport network and light rail
- Information and community education sessions on interesting topics
- Inclusive skill development opportunities eg: Our Vision for Inclusion , Tactile Tours, Learn to Surf classes

You told us about **areas for improvement**

- Make it easier to access commercial centres and shops, places to exercise, socialise and play
- Make it easier to participate in recreation, events and cultural activities
- Improve community perception about people's abilities and needs to support greater connection and opportunity to access employment
- Treat inclusive design as an essential component when designing streetscapes, programs, communications, and activities

Focus Area Summary

1. Inclusive attitudes and behaviours

The attitudes and behaviours of the general community towards people with disability continue to be a significant barrier to their sense of inclusion. We know people experience both positive and negative attitudes when in the community but many still feel unwelcomed.

You told us

'Sometimes I feel when I go to my local area, some of the shops don't understand how to treat people with disabilities ... they treat other people like normal but not me and that's discriminating. They should just have proper training of how to talk to people with disabilities, like everybody else.'



Key insights

- Increased visibility of people in community life and employment would support positive attitudes and reinforce the message that people with disability are no different to anyone else.
- People with invisible disability such as intellectual disability, mental illness, or who are neuro diverse are regularly misunderstood or dismissed, often resulting in negative interactions.
- Stigmatising language and paternalistic attitudes make people feel unwelcome or dismissed, increasing their sense of exclusion and social isolation. Increased awareness of inclusion in children's services and primary schools may help to achieve long term intergenerational change in attitudes.
- Educate and skill staff, community, and local business to understand how to treat people with dignity, communicate respectfully and allow people to make their own decisions in life.
- There is a poor understanding of accessibility. Some businesses promote their service as accessible when they are not.

	Improvement ideas
Community awareness	Engage people with lived experience in the development and promotion of community awareness initiatives to challenge stereotypes
	Increase the visibility and representation of people with disability in Council publications and communications

Council awareness	Provide training, skills development and communication resources for Councillors and staff
Business awareness	Engage with local business to connect people with disability to opportunities for skill development, employment and participation in mainstream activities.
	Promote the benefits of providing accessible and inclusive services to local business.

2. Liveable Community

2.1 Service support, cultural and recreational activities

People with disability want to feel part of the community and have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in community life. Access to affordable services and housing are fundamental in achieving these objectives. Improved access to mainstream events, cultural and recreational activities are viewed as a way of increasing the visibility of people with disability in community life.

You told us

‘There is not enough funding in my NDIS package to do everything I want.’

‘I lived in Waverley for 30 years. It was a rental. We were given a no grounds eviction. We spent six months looking for a house and I've moved out of Waverley now. We found a house outside the area and we've had to adapt the ramps ourselves with no help from NDIS. We basically took this place because we had no choice. I'm not happy, it is not accessible, it's too expensive, it's in bad condition, but we are forced into these places with no choice because the rent is too expensive and the houses are not accessible. We need to stay in the area to be close to our community, hospitals, and doctors.’




Key insights

- People want opportunities to join local clubs and sporting groups, and to work and socialise in their local area. This would also support people to develop local friendships and networks.
- A range of services are needed to cater for different needs and aspirations, for example, the experiences of younger people with disability are very different to older people. People who are marginalised, homeless or have other complex needs require more support.
- Whilst the NDIS has increased service choice for many people, advocacy is important to get the right type or level of funding. There are concerns that some people are missing out on services, particularly people from culturally diverse backgrounds and people who are

ineligible for the NDIS. Financial sustainability is a challenge for smaller disability services since NDIS was introduced and the impact of COVID 19 has placed additional pressures on people with disability and services providers.

- Easy access to digital inclusion training would help support many to access online services and to connect to others remotely.
- There are significant information gaps. Information on local activities and opportunities for participation is not easy to find and the national information and linking services are not widely known.
- Housing is not affordable and accessible housing options are limited.
- Noise, dust and access to footpaths as a result of commercial and residential redevelopment can significantly impact access and the wellbeing of residents with disability.

	Improvement ideas
Service support	Deliver an information program and promote NDIS, My Aged Care Disability and Carers Gateway in community languages and culturally specific for Aboriginal people
	Promote digital inclusion initiatives to upskill people and create more opportunities to access supports and connection with others
	Ensure Council's services support community connection and promote independence and wellbeing.
Recreation and Cultural activities	Facilitate people's participation in events, recreation and cultural programs and explore skill development opportunities
Housing	Maintain affordable housing programs, implement initiatives to promote housing accessibility, and continue partnerships to address homelessness
	Investigate how to minimise the impacts of construction and redevelopment on residents with disability

2.2 Venues and open spaces

We received a lot of feedback in this area, reinforcing the significance of accessible public spaces and access to buildings to support participation in community life.

Inclusion and accessibility need to move to the centre of the planning, design and programming process, not added on like an afterthought.

You told us

'People don't understand if I have a reaction to the bright lights and noise in the shops, there is nowhere I can go to calm down, I just have to go home. There should be somewhere I can go to de-stress instead of having to go home. This shouldn't be seen as something 'special' it should just be there for anyone to use if they need to '


'There is not a pool from Bronte to Malabar that I can feel confident to get in or out.'

'Most footpaths are badly in need of repairs, with cracks and uneven surfaces. Ramps and footpaths at intersections are steep and difficult to use with wheelchairs.'



Key insights

- Shops, venues and surf club facilities are often not accessible
- People who are neuro diverse need calming spaces to go when in the community and at venues and not all venues have fixtures to support inclusion such as hearing loops.
- Streetscapes are not always accessible. Signs, café seating, lack of kerb ramps, and footpaths can be in poor condition.
- Footpath construction can make it difficult for people to move around easily and alternative accessible paths are often not identified or promoted.
- Only some beaches are accessible and there are no accessible ocean pools for adults. The beach mat at Bondi is not out every day and does not reach the water.
- Coastal walks are not accessible, and some parks have many steps and no accessible path.
- Easy access to places for exercise, play and socialisation are needed. Play spaces are often not accessible or don't have accessible play equipment. There are no 'all abilities' play spaces in Waverley.

	Improvement ideas
Streetscapes	Conduct access audits of commercial and village centres to identify continuous paths of travel, installation of accessible infrastructure, and spaces for social interaction and relaxing
	Prioritise repair of damaged footpaths that block access for wheelchair users or others with limited mobility
Venues	Ensure fixtures and fittings such as hearing loops, recharge points and calm spaces are included in venue and facility upgrades.

Open spaces	Develop an accessible beach and coastal walk strategy so that upgrades can facilitate improved opportunities for recreation and play for everyone.
	Maximise opportunities for co-design and selection of equipment to implement the inclusive play strategy.

2.3 Getting around

Getting around with ease and confidence is fundamental to people's sense of autonomy, health and wellbeing.

You told us


'During the construction outside Westfield Bondi Junction on Oxford St, I couldn't see the ramp. It was a white ramp and was not visible. I had to ask someone where the ramp was.'

'We [community transport] were fined for parking in the community bus set down outside Eastgate Shopping Centre while dropping off a person with a physical disability. There is a drop off/pick up spot for buses on Spring St, but not for smaller vehicles'



Key insights

- Light rail and more accessible train stations has improved the accessibility of the transport network.
- A reduction in some bus routes, particularly in Randwick, has made it more difficult for people with disability and older people to travel independently around their local area.
- In some locations, bus stops are not accessible, and lighting is poor.
- Prioritise and fix issues that impede pedestrian access within reasonable timeframes. Reported issues, such as damaged footpaths, are sometimes reported as completed when the matter has only been referred to another officer, but the work is still outstanding.
- Accessible parking options are limited at some key destinations, including mobility parking, pick up and drop off spaces and accessible parking options for community transport vehicles. Construction works can also block pick up and drop off points for people with mobility issues.
- Wayfinding and information to support whole of journey planning is often missing.

	Improvement ideas
Parking	Review accessible parking places and accessible drop off and pick up zones and increase the number in town centres, and outside key destination venues and facilities.
	Implement a mobility parking sensor scheme to provide real time parking availability information.
Information and wayfinding	Ensure clear signage and information is available and when construction work impedes access on footpaths and identify alternative paths of travel.
	Ensure wayfinding information meets the needs of people with disability and prioritise upgrading wayfinding signage in major centres.

3. Employment

Meaningful employment and all the associated benefits of income, skills recognition, social interaction and feelings of self worth remain an important goal for most people.

You told us

‘I need more help to find a job and meet people.’

‘Mainstream employers are still hesitant to employ people with disabilities. There needs to be more education promoting the value of employing people with disability.’

‘At times, it is challenging for business to employ someone if they don't have support.’



Key insights

- People with disability want to access meaningful employment. Lower paid and insecure employment is often the only opportunities available.
- Employers are still hesitant to engage people with disabilities and COVID 19 and its financial impacts has created additional barriers for employment.
- Employment near to where people live, would mean there is opportunity to meet others and expand their networks and feel more welcomed in the local community.
- Councils could provide more job and skill development opportunities and encourage local business to do the same.

	Improvement ideas
Council employment	Consider setting employment targets and develop strategies to increase and support employment of people with disability
	Support skill development opportunities and establish identified placements and traineeships.
Business employment	Facilitate connection with local business, encouraging employment opportunities, and support disability employment initiatives.

4. Engagement & Systems

Small adjustments and early consideration of people's needs can make a huge difference to how people can engage with us, find the 'missing link' or are empowered to successfully navigate systems and pathways. Technology plays an important part but is not the only part in achieving this.

You told us

'I think if they [Council] are going to be more inclusive and accessible, they need to have people with disabilities making suggestions, not just going ahead thinking this is great, we'll do this, and it doesn't suit everybody and nobody with a disability gets any say in it'

'It is easy to make complaints about services but the problem is that they either don't act on it or part act on it but send an email advising it has been dealt with.'

'I'm not sure if the website is accessible to vision impaired or blind.'

'Much more engagement and consultation is needed than currently exists.'



Key insights

- Council websites are not accessible for people with low vision. Information is not always easy to find, and 'have your say' consultations are not easy for people to access.
- Meaningfully engage people with disability in decision making to ensure their views are heard and their needs are better understood.
- Compliance with access standards do not always result in the best outcomes for people with disability. Involve people with lived experience in co-design of projects and programs to get better outcomes for everyone.

	Improvement ideas
Access to information	Review Council's website to improve accessibility, ease of use and close information gaps.
	Online maps and information support people to plan their journey and promote information on alternative paths of travel.
Engagement and feedback	Engagement and feedback systems are promoted and easy to use, and feedback is accurate and timely.

	Support and engage the Access and Inclusion Panel in monitoring DIAP outcomes.
	Increase opportunity for people with lived experience to participate in identified co-design projects and programs.

APPENDIX

Engagement methodology

The aim of the Disability Inclusion engagement was to check-in with the community to see if the key priorities from the last plan are still relevant and identify any emerging needs.

Objectives:

- Engage at least 50 people including those with disability using a range of communications and engagement activities.
- Check-in with identified stakeholders to confirm if the key priorities from the Waverley Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017- 2021 remain relevant and to identify gaps and emerging needs.

More than 130 people participated in engagement activities between 25 October to 20 February 2022. We heard from younger and older people with disability, families, carers and services with diverse experience of disability including physical, sensory, neuro diverse, cognitive, mental health, and chronic illness.

A range of consultation methods were used to engage with stakeholders with diverse and specialised knowledge and expertise. The activities are listed below.

Method	Overview	Date	Response
Have Your Say website	Council dedicated a Have Your Say page to the project.	October 2021 onwards	177 page visits 22 engaged
Social media post – instgram	Post 1: Promoting workshops	26 October 2021	54 likes 1 comment
	Post 2: Promoting the consultation period	8 November 2021	39 likes 1 comment
Social media post – facebook	Post 1: Promoting workshops	26 October 2021	42 likes 5 comments 5 shares
	Post 2: Promoting the consultation period	8 November 2021	13 interactions 1 comment 6 shares
Online survey	Have Your Say Waverley	October – December 2021	21 participants
Regional Workshops	Two online workshops	27 October	20 participants
		3 November	10 participants

Focus Groups	Waverley focus group Lexington Hub	23 November 14 December	8 participants 9 participants
Specialist networks	Eastern Suburbs Aged and disability services network Eastern Suburbs Homelessness Assertive outreach Collaborative	20/10/21 9/11/21	17 10
Targeted engagement	Engagement with individuals /services Wairoa School Ethnic Community Services Co-op Dementia Advisory Service Anglicare Benevolent Catholic Health Care Southeast Sydney Local Area Coordination Service Community Transport Services Guide Dogs Waverely Community Living Program Ethnic Communities Cooperative Dementia Adaydvisory Service Hearing Australia Family Fair Day Aboriginal Community Consultation Access and Inclusion Panels ACON	Various through November - February	5 written submissions 42 participants
General communications	Some people may have received information through Councils newsletter and enews	October 2021	2597 opened enews 13 clicks