



**FEDERATION
COUNCIL**

DISABILITY ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN 2022-2026



CREATING OPPORTUNITY CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

Acknowledgment of Country

Federation Council acknowledges the Bangerang People as the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that now reside in this area.

General Manager's Message

Adrian Butler

I am pleased to present the Federation Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026. Council is committed to the principles of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and to fostering a culture of inclusion in Federation. We understand that the basis of a strong community stems from diversity and when a range of viewpoints and individual perspectives are considered and valued.

Inclusion enables all people, regardless of their ability, to participate in every part of community life. It leads to better outcomes in health, welfare, education and employment.

Federation Council is committed to the inclusion of people with disability, and to building a strong and equitable community. We want to find ways to make Federation Council a better place to live, work, study and play – creating a livable region for all.

This plan identifies what Council needs to do to help people with disability feel and be more included in the community, and be able to access the same services, facilities and opportunities.

Council has an important role to play in supporting and promoting access and inclusion and is committed to ensuring that inclusion is considered in all Council business. This includes how we develop the built environment, provide information and services, support employment opportunities and promote positive community attitudes and behavior towards people with disability within our communities.

Community engagement played a key role in the development of this Plan and I would like to sincerely thank all community members, organisations, governing bodies, Council staff and key stakeholders who contributed their ideas about access and inclusion during the consultation process. Your contribution will go a long way in ensuring the Federation Council region provides equal opportunities for everyone and is a better place to live, work, study and play.

Kind Regards,

Adrian Butler

Federation Council General Manager



Introduction

The Federation Council is committed to making a more inclusive community for all people. In 2014, the Disability Inclusion Act was passed that means that all NSW Councils must have a Disability Inclusion Action Plan that outlines the ways they are working to support inclusion of people with disability in their communities.

In 2017, the Council adopted its first Disability Inclusion Action Plan. It has laid the groundwork for the council and strengthened its commitment to people with disability through advocacy, planning, project management and accessible resources.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 will outline the practical steps the council will take to remove barriers and identify opportunities for people with disability so they can participate in all areas of community life.

The Plan also supports the goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2015, focusing on the four key areas of action:

1. Developing Positive Community Attitudes and Behaviours
2. Creating Liveable Communities
3. Supporting Access to Meaningful Employment
4. Improving Access to Mainstream Services Through Better Systems and Processes

The plan will cover a four year period and will include short, medium and long term approaches to the council improving and supporting the broader community be more inclusive of people with disability.

Some of the actions identified will have cost implications and others; for example, improving information available to people with disability will have minimal costs. Actions with cost implications will be considered as part of council's regular budget allocation and review processes.



Federation Disability Access and Inclusion Committee

The **Federation Disability Access and Inclusion Committee** provides the Council with advice on inclusion, access and equality, along with issues and barriers facing people with disability.

At the time of writing this plan the **Federation Disability Access and Inclusion Committee** had seven community representatives:

- Four members with a lived experience of disability.
- Three members who are local disability sector professionals.

The Committee assisted with implementation of the 2017-2021 Disability Inclusion Action Plan and has supported the community consultation and drafting of the 2022-2026 Disability Access and Inclusion Action Plan.

Definitions



Disability

The term 'disability' is described in Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as follows:

"Disability, in relation to a person, refers to a physical, intellectual, psychological, neurological or sensory condition, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others."

A disability may be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease. It may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or invisible. Australian Network on Disability, 2021, Disability Statistics, accessed 6 September 2021 (www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics).



Person with Disability

In Australia, best-practice language is to use "person with disability" or "people with disability". Person-first language is the most widely accepted terminology in Australia. Examples of person-first language include "person who is deaf", or "people who have low vision". Put the person first, and the impairment second (when it's relevant). Australian Network on Disability, 2021, Inclusive Language, accessed 6 September 2021 (www.and.org.au/pages/inclusive-language).



Accessible

A person with disability has the right to have access to public places, acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without disability.

To be accessible is to ensure that everyone has the right to:

- Access public premises such as offices and shops, footpaths and walkways, hospital and medical facilities, sports venues and swimming pools.
- Travel on public transport, access medical and health services, attend and educational facility and live in a home that meets their needs.
- Read publications, use websites, respond in emergency situations and find out about government policies and programs.

Australian Human Rights Commission, accessed on 6 September 2021, (www.humanrights.gov.au).



Inclusion

Inclusion is pro-active behaviours, options and actions to make people from all backgrounds, ages and abilities feel welcome, understood and respected. Inclusive mean everyone regardless of their mental or physical abilities has every opportunity to participate in activities as they choose, and be able to participate and contribute meaningfully.

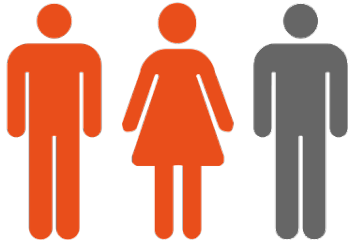
Play by the Rules, 2021, Inclusion and Diversity-What is it? Accessed on 5 September 2021. www.playbytherules.net.au

- Everyone should have the right to:
- Be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities.
- Participate in recreational activities in neighbourhood settings.
- Work at jobs in the community that pay a competitive wage and have careers that use their capacities to the fullest.

Attend general education classes with peers from preschool through to higher education and continuing education.

Disability in Australia

1 in 6 or 4.4 million Australians, are people with disability. Of those 4.4 million people.



1 in 3 have a severe or profound disability.

3 in 4 have a physical disorder as their main condition.



Almost 90% of disabilities are 'invisible' disabilities such as chronic pain disorders, diabetes or depression.



Types of Disability in Australia

Sensory Impaired Disorders

- 1 in 6 people or around 3.6 million people are affected by hearing loss.
- There are approximately 30,000 Deaf Auslan users with total hearing loss.
- It is estimated that 357,000 people are blind or have low vision.

Intellectual

- 1 in 70, or 353, 880 Australians are people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- 6.5% people live with an intellectual or developmental disability.
- 5 in 10,000 are people with Down Syndrome.

Physical

- 1 in 700 children are diagnosed with cerebral palsy each year.
- Over three-quarters (76.8%) of people with disability reported a physical disorder as their main condition. The most common physical disorder was musculoskeletal disorder (29.6%) including arthritis and related disorders (12.7%) and back problems (12.6%).
- 4.4% of people with a disability use a wheelchair.

Psychosocial

- Almost one quarter of people live with a mental health condition (23.2%), and almost half the population has suffered a mental disorder at some time in their life.
- 3 million live with depression or anxiety.
- 54% of people with mental illness do not access any treatment

Neurological

- It is estimated that in 2020 there are between 400,000 and 459,000 people with dementia
- 50 000 people will suffer a stroke annually. Among those who survive, 1 in 3 will have a long-term disability due to their stroke.
- 2.6% of the population have dementia and Alzheimer disease.

Housing

- 5% of people with disability live in social or public housing. That is 4 x higher than among those with no disability (1%).
- Almost two thirds (64%) of people with disability own their home, either with or without a mortgage.

Education and Skills

- 1 in 10 (10%) school students have disability.
- 34% of people aged 20 and over with disability have completed Year 12 compared to 66% without disability.
- 17% of people aged 20 and over with disability have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 35% without disability.

Health

- 59% of people with disability need help with at least one daily living activity.
- 42% of adults with disability rate their health as poor or fair, compared to 7% of adults without disability.
- 1 in 5 people with disability who delayed seeing a doctor, did so because of the cost.
- Up to 1 in 10 people with mental illness dies by suicide.

Employment

- People aged between 15 and 64 years with disability have both lower labour force participation (53.4%) and higher unemployment rates (10.3%) than people without disability (84.1% and 4.6% respectively).
- 59% of people with disability receive income support, compared with 15% of people without disability.
- 1 in 10 employed people aged 15-64 with disability are underemployed.
- 3 in 10 employed people aged 15-64 with disability want to work more hours.

Justice and Safety

- 1 in 10 (9.6%) people aged 15 and over with disability have experienced disability discrimination in the last year.
- 47% of adults with disability have experienced violence after the age of 15.

Income and Finance

- People with disability (14%) are less likely than those without disability (34%) to have a high income.
- 38% (or 2.2 million) of households with a person with disability have a low level of household weekly income, compared with 18% (or 2.2 million) of households that do not.
- Almost 1 in 3 (27% or 145,000) primary carers have a low level of personal income, compared with 28% (or 3.6 million) of people who are not primary carers.

Customers with Disability

- People with disability in Australia have a combined disposable annual income of around AU\$54million.
- 90% of people with disability take a holiday each year. Making up to 8.2 million overnight stays and contributing 8 billion dollars to the tourism economy.
- 33% of people with disability report that their customer needs are often unmet.
- 62% of small businesses have not done anything in the past 12 months to make it easier for customers with disability. For almost half of these, there is a perception of not being asked to. "We have received no specific requests."
- People with disability are 3 x times as likely to avoid an organisation and 2 x likely to dissuade others because of an organisation's negative diversity reputation.
- 71% of customers with disability will leave your website if it difficult to navigate. The spending power of these customers represents 10% of online spending. To put this in a local perspective, Spendmapp indicates that \$40.38 mill is spent online by people in Federation Council area each year. Based on the above figure of 10% it means Federation Council businesses are missing out on \$4.3 mill in local spending.

Sources

NSW Government (2018) Federation Council Area Data Profile

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Census of Population and Housing, Compiled and presented by .id consulting.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, Federation Council 2019 NSW Population Projections

Blackdog Institute

Australian Network on Disability

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020)

Cerebral Palsy Australia

Vision Australia

Down Syndrome Australia

Scope Global

People with disability in Australia 2020 Report

Spendmapp

Disability Snapshot in the Federation Council LGA

- The population estimate for Federation Council area as of the 30th June 2020 is 12,598. Since the previous year, the population has grown by 1.31%. Population growth in Regional NSW was 0.83%.
- In the 2016 Census, 665 people (5.4% of the population) in the Federation Council Local Government Area reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability.
- Overall, 5.4158% of the population reported needing assistance with core activities, compared with 6.2528% for Regional NSW.
- In Federation Council area, 1,185 carers were providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age in 2016. This represents 11.6% of the population aged 15 years old.



People with disability are diverse – they come from all different backgrounds, have different types of disability and varying needs for support. This may have a minimal or substantial impact on how they participate in their community.

Analysis of the need for assistance of people in Federation Council area compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a lower proportion of people who reported needing assistance with core activities.

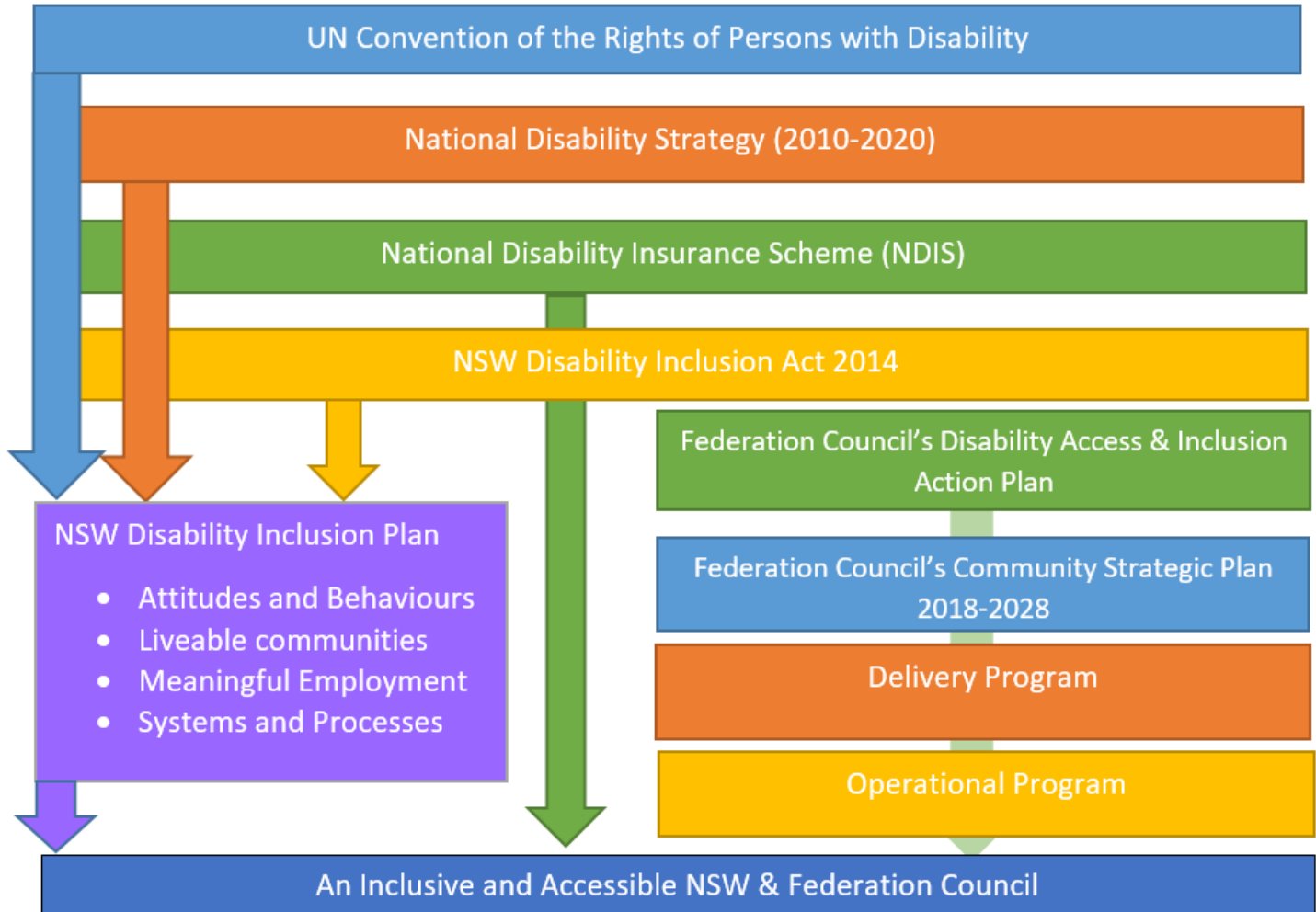
Relying on Census data to provide a clear picture of the number of people with disability and how those people live can be problematic because individuals have different perceptions of disability and only people who require assistance with day to day tasks are captured.

It is likely that the number of people with disability living in Federation Council Local Government Area is much higher than the number presented in the Census data.

As people grow older they are more likely to experience some form of disability. In 2016, 35.2% Federation Council residents were aged 60 years and over, compared with 22.1% and 27.2% respectively for Regional NSW. The number of people aged 65 and over is estimated to increase from 3,300 in 2016 to 3,550 by 2041 - a change of 250.

Types of Disability in Australia

Figure 1: The relationships between the relevant policy and legislative instruments



There is a range of Commonwealth and State legislation that actively supports access and inclusion for people with disability. These are the policy settings that require Federation Council to undertake its business operations in certain ways with regard to access and inclusion.

UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability

In 2008, the Australian Government committed to implementing the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: “to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”

The National Disability Strategy is the main mechanism for the implementation of the UN CRPD in Australia. Its principles are also reflected in the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 and in the mechanisms for the delivery of services to people with disability (such as the NDA and NDIS).

National Disability Strategy (NDS) 2010-2020

The Commonwealth National Disability Strategy (NDS) 2010–2020 sets out a 10-year national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers. This approach also supports the NSW Government enactment of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act (DIA) 2014.

The NDS covers all people with disability, irrespective of whether they need or use specialist disability services. In particular, the strategy is intended to drive improvements in access to mainstream services, to promote a more inclusive approach to the design of policies and programs, and to ensure that all people with disability can participate and fulfil their potential as equal citizens. A new NDS is currently under development (2021) in consultation with stakeholders by the Commonwealth Government.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

In 2010, the Australian Government asked the Productivity Commission to carry out a public inquiry into a long-term disability care and support scheme. In July 2012, in response to the inquiry's final report, the Australian Government introduced the NDIS.

The NDIS fundamentally changes the way disability supports are provided and is widely regarded as a once-in-a-generation reform. Its key principles focus on improved outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers, driven by participant choice and control (NDIA 2018).

The NDIS provides 'reasonable and necessary supports' to help people with 'significant and permanent' disability. It is based on an insurance model, and each individual seeking access is assessed against common criteria. Eligible individuals receive a funding package to buy the supports identified in their individualised plan.

NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 promotes the rights of people with disability and commits the NSW Government to making communities more inclusive and accessible for people with disability.

Under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), discrimination on the basis of disability is unlawful. Council, along with other organisations, has an obligation to make its facilities and services inclusive and accessible.

Under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, councils are required to review their DIAP every four years. Legislation also requires councils to report progress on DIAP implementation in their Annual Report.

A Disability Inclusion Action Plan demonstrates local government's commitment to people with a disability on improving access to services, facilities and jobs. It's also designed to change perceptions about people with a disability.

NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2025

The NSW State Disability Inclusion Plan is the NSW Government's commitment to identify and break down the barriers which prevent those with disability from enjoying the same opportunities and choices as everyone else.

The Plan has four focus areas that are aimed at creating long-term change and require consistent efforts from government and the wider community. The focus areas are:

- 1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours**
- 2. Creating liveable communities**
- 3. Supporting access to meaningful employment**
- 4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.**

These four focus areas are reflected in the Federation Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026.

Strategic Alignment with the Federation Council's Community Strategic Plan

The Federation Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 supports the delivery of the Federation Council Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028 – Our Community, Our Opportunity by outlining the specific actions council will undertake to create an inclusive and accessible community. The four pillars of our Community Strategic Plan connect with the access and inclusion outcomes highlighted in this Plan.

Economic

- Support workforce development by identifying local skill shortages, and advocating to the training organisations and other levels of government to address them through post-school education and training.
- Support entrepreneurship and industrial diversification through fostering connections and learning among current and prospective entrepreneurs.
- Enhance and increased retail opportunities as part of planning and economic development initiatives.
- Support business development by supporting grants program for business development and collaborating with local and regional business chambers and other business development organisations.
- Increase tourism by investigating opportunities to increase tourism growth sector accommodation.

Natural

- Provide quality recreational spaces such as parks, playgrounds and gardens to meet community expectation.
- Ensure attractive and vibrant public spaces.

Social

- Encourage an age-friendly environment through the provision of ageing well initiatives and a strategic focus in addressing the needs of ageing communities.
- Improved health facilities and services across the Council area.
- Influence Improved public transport to assist residents with mobility limitations to access healthcare.
- Encouraging young people to participate in and contribute to all aspects of community life, including through sport and recreation, arts and culture, volunteering, and involvement in decision making.
- Advocacy for increased opportunities for young people to learn, find jobs and develop life skills.
- Align sport and recreational opportunities to meet community expectation.
- Support diverse range of community activities and events to foster community pride and spirit.
- Support the use of rural town halls and other community facilities to bring people together and build local network.
- Collaboration in services for people experiencing disadvantage.
- Supporting social capital formation, social inclusion, capabilities development and other approaches to overcoming disadvantage.
- Supporting services for people with a disability.
- Strategic focus in reconciliation and diversity.

Well-governed

- Ensure extensive communication and consultation with residents.
- Open, transparent and consistent approach to engaging with all communities in Council decision-making processes.
- Utilising contemporary communication channels to achieve two way communication.
- Access to an appropriate system for customer enquiries.
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness to ensure a resilient and responsive organisation.
- Council compliance with all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements.

Monitoring, reviewing and reporting

Federation Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan is aligned with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework including the Community Strategic Plan, the Delivery Program and annual Operational Plans.

The progress of the Plan will be regularly monitored and reported. Actions from the DIAP will be included in council's internal annual reporting mechanism to ensure accuracy in reporting progress from all relevant departments of Council every six months.

Council will continue to work with the Federation Disability Advisory Committee to practically look at how it can best implement the Plan, to check-in on progress and modify if required to meet changing community priorities.

Each year progress against the actions in the Plan (for that year and all ongoing actions) form part of Council's Annual Reporting process.

A copy will be provided to the Department of Communities and Justice and the Disability Council NSW who manage the compilation of reports on behalf of the Minister for Disability Services.

Implementation will be evaluated towards the completion of the Plan to inform the next plan. The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be reviewed and updated every four years in consultation and collaboration with the community.

We welcome any feedback on this plan or suggestions related to access and inclusion. Please direct any enquiries to Council's Community Development Team Leader.

Amber Harvey

Community Development Team Leader

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Consultation Process

Federation Council conducted an extensive consultation and drafting process over a four month period during 2021.

Review

The process to develop this plan began with a review of progress made on the Federation Disability Action Plan 2017–2021. This included a staff review survey of the current Disability Action Plan 2017-2021 and feedback for the new plan. Past customer requests relating to disability were reviewed, and feedback obtained for the development of the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan.

Community Consultation

After the review we consulted people with disability, disability sector professionals and the broader community about what the Federation Council should do next.

Between July and September 2021, we asked for feedback on how we can create a more inclusive and accessible Council and local government area. The Federation Disability Advisory Committee provided advice and guidance on the consultation and engagement process to ensure our approach was inclusive.

The consultation included the following activities:

- Specific meeting held to obtain feedback from the Federation Disability Advisory Committee
- Meeting with local carers group
- Meeting with Federation Interagency Members and local disability service providers
- Targeted emails asking for feedback
- Show Us an Inclusive Federation Competition with schools and the broader community
- Online and hard copy surveys
 - People with a lived experience of disability
 - Easy read survey
 - Disability and community service providers
 - Broader community including businesses, schools, sporting and community clubs
- Face-to-face meetings with Council's Community Development Team Leader.
- Phone discussions
- Emails and written feedback to Council

What you told us

Developing Positive Community Attitudes and Behaviours



How council will build community awareness of the rights and abilities of people with disability, and support the development of positive attitudes and behaviours toward people with disability.

Attitudes towards people with disability can be negative, prejudicial, or stereotypical. It is clear that negative attitudes, along with misconceptions and lack of awareness, present barriers to social inclusion in various life domains such as education, employment and community participation.

What you told us:

The following strategies may assist:

- Promote positive attitude and perceptions of people with disability.
- Show people with disability doing everyday things such as visiting the library, attending an event or playing sport.
- Include images of people with disability in publications and communications.
- Promote public awareness campaigns that celebrate and recognise the achievements, contribution and abilities of people with disability.

It is also clear that lack of knowledge or training can make people with disability access to services difficult. Community consultation told us that the following strategies may assist:

- Offer disability awareness and inclusion training to council staff.
- Educate the broader community on respectful behaviours and inclusive practices.

Familiarity with people with disability—that is, knowing them personally as acquaintances, friends and colleagues—seems the most promising way to increase respect and inclusion, especially if exposure is consistent and recent. Community consultation told us that the following strategies may assist:

- Talking and getting to know people with disability.
- Increase opportunities for people with disability to be involved in Council decision making processes.
- Employ people with disability.

An Inclusive Community

As a whole we are a friendly and inclusive community with 89 % of people feeling either welcome a lot or a moderate amount of the time.

Businesses were particularly friendly with everyone saying they felt welcome when shopping locally. Council staff were relatively approachable (88 % moderate or above), but there was room for improvement. While 55% of people felt moderately to very welcome at local sports clubs, community groups or events, 22% of people felt only a little welcome or not at all.

What you told us:

It was generally agreed the council is well catered for wheelchair access, but it was thought that only a small minority of people use a wheelchair.

There was a big push for initiatives and programs that aim to raise awareness and provide support for those living with invisible disabilities was high on the agenda.

- Council needs to consider other disabilities other than physical such as people with mental health or sensory disabilities and provide for them.

Inclusion for youth and children with disability was raised.

- Include more social opportunities and meaningful activities to connect young people which would remove barriers would help youth with disabilities.
- Consider Ability Consultative Sub-Committee with younger people

Inclusive Education Call for:



Community education that helps to reduce the stigma and fear associated with disability was a repeat request.



Education to assist council staff, community groups and sporting groups to be inclusive.



Call for education for employers to engage someone with disability.

What you told us:

- Specific need for education on invisible disabilities, best mobility scooters to buy, understanding of eligibility for disabled parking stickers, the Easy Accessible Taxi Card and on the use of the Companion Card.
- Lack of understanding of 'invisible' disabilities such as psychosocial and specific disabilities such as autism was a concern for residents both by the council and the broader community.
- Students with disabilities need to feel that they are safe and accepted, whether it be at a sporting venue, the supermarket or just walking down the street.
- There needs to be education with sporting bodies, community etc. to try and remove any social stigma associated with disability.
- Assist in training groups so that there is a lot more social interaction in the community.
- A forum of disability services designed by consumers who have lived experience of barriers to employment.
- Information about government services and incentives for employing people with disability, employment Assistance Fund and managing WHS and liabilities.



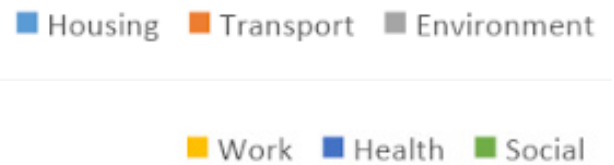
Creating Liveable Communities

✓ *All people including those with disability are able to exercise their rights, live, learn, work and play, feel safe, raise a family and grow old. Within their own community.*

You said a livable community is all of the following:

- Access to affordable, appropriate, and accessible housing
- Accessible, affordable, reliable, and safe transport
- Inclusive and accessible physical environment
- Work, volunteer, and education opportunities
- Access to key health and supportive services
- Been able to participate in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

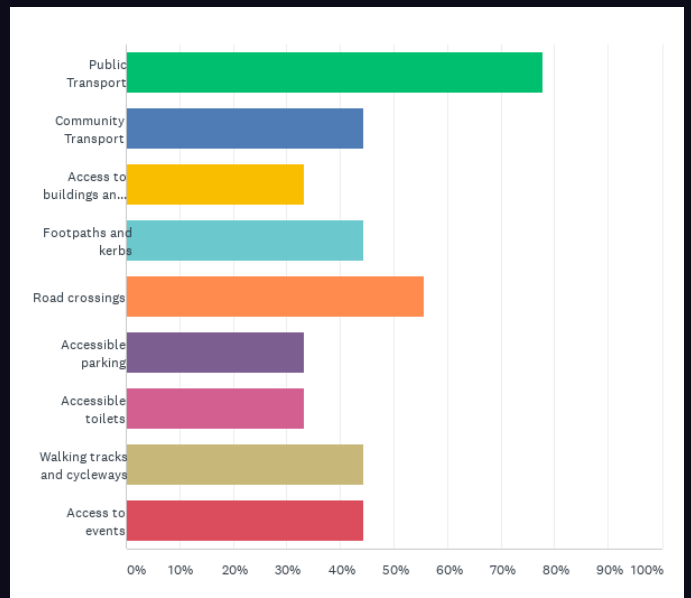
Livable Community



Barriers

You told us the biggest barrier that makes it hard for people with disability to participate in daily life in the Federation Council area was access to public transport, followed by road crossings.

Q3 What barriers do you face in your community that makes it hard for you to participate in daily life? Tick those that apply to your situation.



Footpaths and Kerb Access

Call for

- **Improved and extended footpaths including sealed footpaths (to support an increase in mobility aids).**
- **Suitable kerbing that enables safe progression from the footpath to the road (when using mobility aids and scooters).**
- **More unsealed footpaths in smaller towns and villages.**
- **Kerb ramps that allow for safe passage across the council area.**

What you told us:

- There are people with motorised scooters, and mothers with prams all having to struggle on the grassed areas of nature strips as there are no footpaths.
- People in their motorised scooters driving on the road because it is easier for them to use or there are no footpaths. This was flagged as considerably dangerous in Oaklands during harvest time where trucks are moving along Milthorpe Street.
- Kerb ramps need an overhaul as many are non-compliant (too narrow and steep) especially in Sanger Street, Corowa and Hawkins Street, Howlong. Need to be smoothed down for wheelie walkers and mobility scooters to cross safely.
- Some paths are too narrow for scooters.
- Golf Club Drive in Howlong of foot traffic with people walking to golf, along with cars and golf carts. Street lighting would be a great benefit too.
- Footpaths in Sanger Street is uneven especially between Woolworths and the Bakery.

Access to Footpaths

Call for

The council to work with local businesses and residents to ensure understanding of that under section 23 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) a footpath is considered a 'premise' and the need for businesses and residents to comply. This includes ensuring the council's placement on street furniture, poles, bollards or equipment are not placed in locations that cause a barrier to access.

What you told us:

- Properties allowing obstructions (overhanging shrubs, trees) to encroach on the footpath making it even harder for pedestrians to get past.
- Businesses operating on footpaths that causing barriers to access such as 'A' board signage, clothing racks, and chairs and tables blocking access on the footpath.
- People park across footpaths or grow extensive gardens on nature reserves obstructing the pathways.
- Bollards in the middle of the footpath making it difficult for mobility scooters to pass.

Crossings

Call for

- **Need for more crossings in main shopping areas.**
- **A number of current crossings to be reviewed.**
- **Tactical paving in CBD at crossover points so people with vision impairments can cross the road safely.**

What you told us:

- There was a concern about the lack of pedestrian crossing, or rather, a lack of safe places to cross the road – particularly in the main streets of Corowa, Mulwala and Howlong.
- Mulwala residents raised concerns about the medium strips in the Melbourne Street and the Inglis Street railway tracks been a trip hazard and dangerous to cross.
- There was a request for wheelchair accessible crossing is needed to cross Hawkins St at or nearby to Hovell Street section of Hawkins Street.
- Request to have hand rails in high pedestrian areas.

Public Toilets

Call for

- **More suitable (all ability) public toilets.**
- **Concern was raised about during lockdowns and COVID restrictions have raised concerns for people with disability especially when public toilets were closed.**
- **Throughout the council a need for improved directional signage to public toilets and other facilities.**

What you told us:

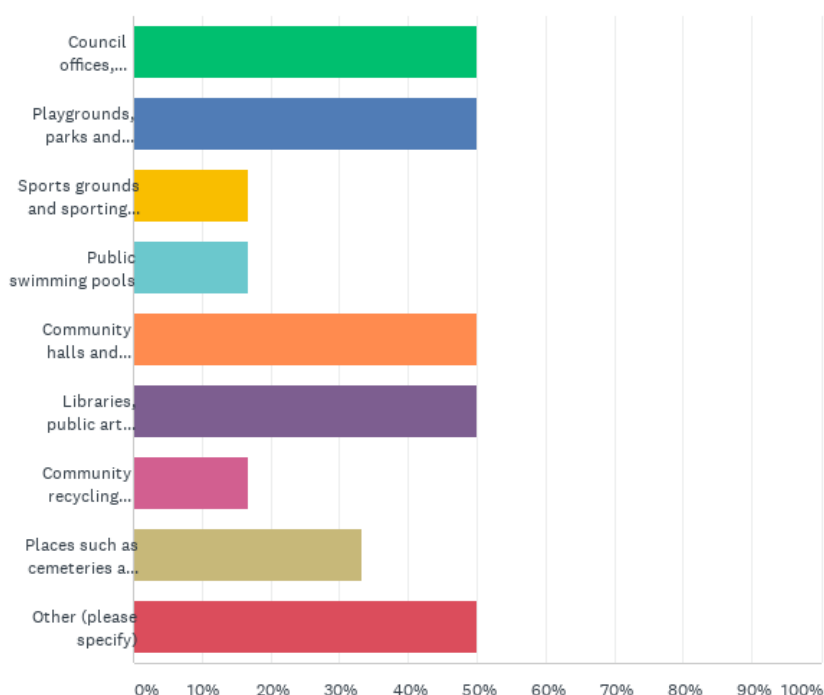
- Request for toilets to be open at all times or at least dedicated disabled toilets open in each towns. This could be controlled by a MLAK key.
- Requests for toilets to be stocked with handwashing lotion or soap, and provision for drying hands.
- A provision for hanging a hand bag or colostomy bag in toilets.
- Corowa RSL toilet block was identified multiple times –disgusting, not accessible, and unreachable from the playground.
- Suggestion to get rid of the barriers between the Corowa Woolworths and the public toilets behind the Memorial Hall to allow for easier access.
- Parking right next to toilets is also critical.
- It was suggested there was a lack of public toilet in shopping area at Mulwala.
- Daysdale public toilets are at old footy grounds and too far away, not easily accessible, toilets at Hall are locked and not “Disabled “friendly.
- A list of disabled (or indeed, public toilets) would be useful on the council’s website, especially for visitors to the area.
- Request for a bench in the disabled toilets at the Corowa Aquatic Centre.

Access to Council Facilities and Venues

You told us that you had problems accessing:

1. Council offices, Visitor Information Centre and Service NSW outlet.
2. Playgrounds, parks and street spaces.
3. Community halls and venues
4. Libraries, art spaces and museums.

Q5 Do you have any problems when accessing the following Council facilities and infrastructure? You can tick more than one.



Buildings

There was a general view that much has been done to improve access to buildings. But there was still more to do including wider doors, ramps, better internal design, all ability toilets etc.

What you told us:

- It was acknowledged that access to the building is an on-going problem due to the age of buildings in the council area and heritage listings.
- Difficult to get in and around many shops in town when in a wheel chair or scooter.
- Need to promote accessible buildings and services on the council website for residents and visitors.
- Multiple enquires about the lift at the Corowa Civic Centre and if functional.

Libraries

Request for improvements in access and information available through our libraries.

What you told us:

- Mulwala library needs sliding doors and to be made more open plan.
- Need for more things to entertain people with disabilities
- Libraries should be a one-stop contact point for rapid and ready information and access within the council area.
- It was hard to access to the Howlong library from the footpath.

Lighting

A general lack of street lighting was identified particularly in Howlong. There was a request for lighting along walking tracks.

Housing

Housing or lack of for people with disability was a concern for many residents especially residents with older children who want to be independent. When asked if it was easy to find accessible and affordable housing for people with disability in the Federation Council area 88.89% of the people who completed the survey said no it was not easy, while 11.11% were not sure.

What you told us:

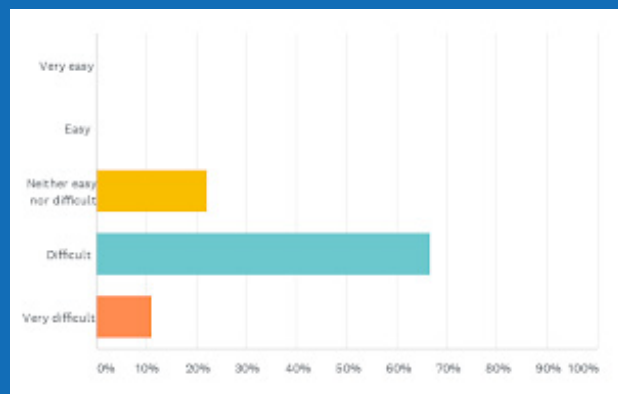
- The need for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) that allows young people in particular, who require assistance to live together in a supported environment, but independently was raised multiple times.
- Council could support others to provide assisted accommodation support others by with planning permits, reduced rent and rates for those trying to support these vulnerable individuals.
- Advocate or support for more respite housing options across the council area.
- Lack of public housing especially in Mulwala and few rentals across the council area.
- There is no housing available for permanent assisted disability housing in Corowa. Council has community housing for Cystic Fibrosis so perhaps it is something they would look at for disability.
- Co-operation between Council, social justice organisations, & Real Estate Agents to identify suitable private rentals. Possibly enable subsidised modifications.

Medical and Allied Health

Access to local health, medical and disability services based on survey results is difficult with 66.67% of people saying it was difficult and 11.11% saying it was very difficult.

Many people access services outside of the council area which is made hard if they don't drive, the limited community or public transport, arranging appointments around work and school commitments.

Q8 How easy is it to access local health, medical and disability services?



What you told us:

When asked what medical, health, or disability services do you need in the Federation Council area the response included:

- Neurologist here in Corowa (Dr Stephen Ring is Albury)
- For our smaller communities the need for visiting GP's, support workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, counsellors, physiotherapists, and dieticians.
- For our younger residents access to a paediatrician, psychologist, speech therapist, social worker, and an occupational therapist.
- To be able to have MRI.
- Social activities aimed at children with disabilities such as the Play Project in Yarrawonga.
- Services that are based here so that families are not paying \$416 from their NDIS package for one 45 minute session with a speech pathologist after fees and travel costs.

Our Feedback Included:

- Incentives for speech therapists / OT to access the area.
- Consistent medical support is vital. Changing medical practitioners and support staff is very hard to negotiate and annoying to have to explain over and over.
- Information on what services are available here, when and where.
- Telehealth is handy, but you don't get the same rapport as you would having a face-to-face service.

Transport

Call for

More public transport options or better access to community transport, as well as improvements in the types of transport. It needed to be accessible and flexible on demand transport.

What you told us:

- Public transport needs to be specific for access to medical, physiological, dental etc. with a return pick up for the patient.
- Transport to council facilities such as swimming pools.
- Communicating to the community what is available in taxi services and bus services.
- A bus service that has suitable access onto the bus with the individual requirements the person.
- Advocate for on demand bus service in the council area.
- Weather proof shelters when awaiting public transport, situated in accessible areas within each town.

Day Sports

Call for

People that are unable to work due to the nature of their disability, to have options to attend other programs. It was not expected that the council provide this service, but it was felt important that the Council advocate or support day programs for people who cannot or are unable to work.

Business / Eco Dev

Call for

The Council to offer business support to be more accessible and inclusive.

What you told us:

- Council could assist our business to be ready for these needs by facilitating business grants to help with upgrades. For instance a dollar for dollar matched funding opportunity for businesses to become compliant (ramps, door widening, toilet upgrades etc.).
- We feel that with Council support many businesses would take the opportunity to invest in their assets / business for Council to promote the region as open for all abilities to work, visit, and play.
- Promote the region as accessible and open.
- Scope in Melbourne that I think would be great for Council to be a part of. It is Communication Access and registers businesses to be ones that understand that many people communicate in different ways, but that the business has structures in place to assist those who use different ways to communicate.

Access to meaningful employment

People with disability have the opportunity to gain, retain, contribute effectively and experience the positive self and social benefits of employment

Employment

Working in the Federation Council area for people with disability comes with challenges.

55% of people said it was either difficult or very difficult to find or to work in their communities and if they did have work it was usually part-time or working from home and they relied on other sources of income such as Centrelink or family to support themselves.

Currently the options for young adults with intellectual disability leaving school are fragmented, discriminatory and the onus is really on parents to access community based services which are only available in larger regional cities such as Albury and Shepparton.

Flexible working hours and changing people's attitudes towards employing people with disability was considered high on improving employment opportunities for people with disability.

Q18 What do you think is important in improving employment opportunities for people with disability in the Federation Council area? You can tick more than one.



What you told us:

- Role modelling by Council – Create roles/apprenticeships within the council team for those with disabilities. Promote this and share.
- Encourage & support employers to engage persons living with disability by connecting businesses with employment agencies and learning with businesses through forums.
- Support disability support service to offer training programs for young adults with disabilities like the Purple Chicken in Albury to assist with transition to work.
- More opportunities for students with disabilities to engage in work experience with support as needed. Work experience creates an opening into the workforce and also reduces the stigma associated with the disability that exists in the community.

Education and Training Opportunities

Access to suitable education for children or training for adults with disability in the Federation Council is challenging. In fact for 1 out of 3 families said it is very difficult to attend a suitable school or educational facility living here.

Reasons included lack of available options, access to buildings, teacher's ability to adapt curriculum to suit a range of students, funding unavailable for conditions such as mild intellectual disability, and learning difficulties and transport barriers (availability and function) to and from school.

What you told us:

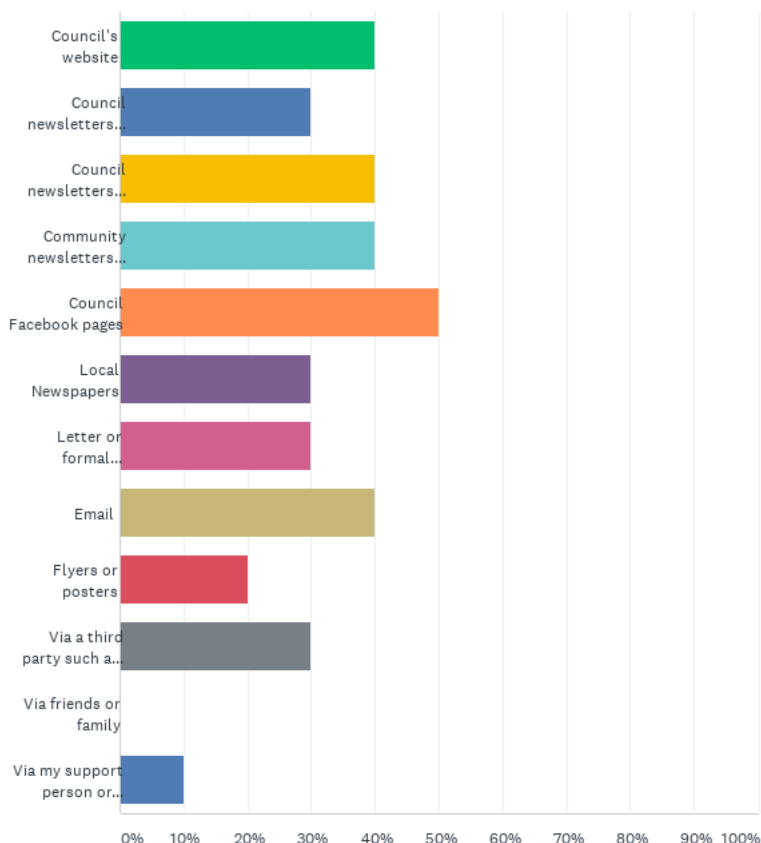
- There is only one school in my town and it is not suitable for my disability.
- The teachers and the school have very little understanding of kids on the autism spectrum and are not flexible in their learning techniques to cater for children with learning difficulties.
- My child needs some support in the classroom, but does not qualify as her disability doesn't meet the strict criteria. So basically will fall through the cracks as the teacher doesn't have time to support students one-on-one.
- This applies to my son's ASD (he is now an adult). It would have helped to have something like the Indie School in Corowa.
- Parents are
- The new TAFE College is lovely to look at, however parking, access, & movement with any variety of mobility aid is difficult.
- I found organising disability assistance through TAFE impossible.

Access to meaningful employment

Improve Access to Mainstream Services through Better Systems and Processes

The Council's Facebook page was your preferred channel of communication, followed by the website, newsletters and emails.

Q21 How do you prefer to receive information from Council? Tick those that apply to you.



Communicating with Council

Communicating with a staff member was either easy (30%) or neither easy or difficult (40%).

Been part of the council's consultation process such as council meetings, community engagement workshops, focus groups, town meetings was neither easy nor difficult (50%).

Using the Council's website was either easy (30%) or neither easy or difficult (30%). The main reason people don't use it or find it hard is it is tricky to find stuff (85%).

What you told us:

- For those who can't communicate orally, there is a program through SCOPE in Victoria called Communication Access. It would be great if Council would sign up to this.
- Using blue (and other background colours) and grayscale on the digital rates notices needs to be reviewed and removed as it is very difficult to read.
- Impossible to read flyers where the writing is appearing as black or white on a coloured background and in very small font.
- Have communication boards available for those who are unable to make themselves understood by staff.
- 'Missing' online forms, contacting specific staff and having issues resolved in a timely matter were raised.
- Maybe parts of website could use Simple English for those with literacy issues and English as a second language.
- The online notification form 'black hole' needs to be resolved.
- The council website seems to have many "dead ends" when trying to search for information.

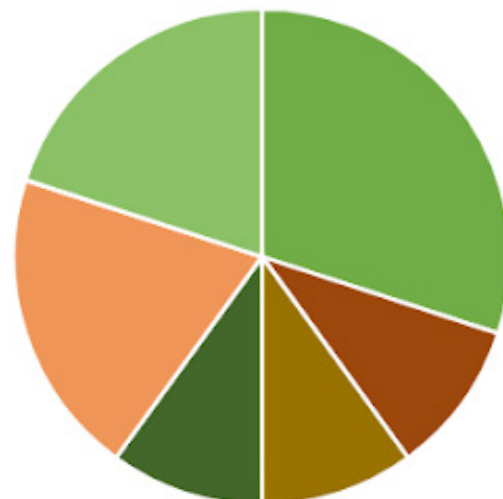
Signs

Call for

- **Way finder signage and signage on public toilets and for accessible car parking to be reviewed and improved. To a lesser extend directional (way finder) signage to public venues and spaces.**
- **Tactile paving is high crossing areas.**

What you told us:

- It would be great to have sign showing where disability parking is in the town.
- Have tactile paving at high crossing areas such as along Sanger Street and surrounding streets.
- Have better signage to find toilets. Such as the toilets behind Memorial Hall. From Sanger Street it is hard to know that they are there and then it is confusing as they appear in the hall that is locked.
- More signs that are clear for example you would have no idea where Bangerang Park is, Ball Park, the pool from the main street.
- Perhaps have coloured signs for public toilets, sports grounds and venues. Berrigan Shire has just installed blue wayfinding signage and it is fantastic.
- Larger signs, perhaps in a different - brighter - colour to other signs.



- Street Signs
- Road Signs
- Public Toilets
- Wayfinder Signs (Toilets)
- Wayfinder Signs (Venues)
- Wayfinder Signs (Public Spaces)
- Accessible Car Park
- Braille and Tactial Signs
- Tactial Paving



CREATING OPPORTUNITY CELEBRATING COMMUNITY