

2017 – 2021 Disability Inclusion Action Plan

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1. MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

I am very pleased council has completed this Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

An accessible and inclusive community is one where community members have positive attitudes and behaviours toward people of all abilities. It is a community where people of all abilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and play; and to actively participate in decision making.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan sets out actions to support the development of a truly inclusive and accessible community. The actions in the plan seek to address the barriers identified by the community survey and to adopt accessible and positive practices in our workplaces, clubs and businesses. These practices include actively engaging and employing people with disability and ensuring that programs and strategies are developed with consideration of the impact on people with disability.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan presents actions under four Key Objectives:

1. Develop Positive Community Attitudes and Behaviour
2. Create Liveable Communities
3. Support Access to Meaningful Employment
4. Improve Access to Services through Better Systems and Processes

A community that supports and celebrates people of all abilities is a better community for everyone.

Mr Chris Gillard

General Manager – Federation Council

2. ACCESS COMMITTEE

Federation Council will establish a Disability Access Committee made up of people with a disability, service providers and interested community members to advise Council on the barriers that prevent people with disabilities participating in programs, services and facilities.

Roles of the committee include raising awareness of the positive contributions of people with a disability and the importance of accessibility for all people and to provide input into decisions relating to alterations to Council buildings and streetscape, and the development of programs that improve the quality of life of people with a disability.

3. BACKGROUND

In August 2014 the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 was passed. This Act requires all NSW Councils to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan to help remove barriers and enable people with disability to participate fully in their communities.

Federation Council's vision is for an inclusive, respectful and diverse community where people of all abilities have the opportunity to live, learn, work and play as they choose and are able to actively participate in decisions that may impact on them.

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan aims to promote positive attitudes and behaviours in the community, to provide better access to information, services and facilities, to provide a more liveable and accessible community, to enhance employment opportunities and to increase opportunities for people with disability to participate.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed through a community consultation and research process which included review of Council documents and Government policy. The consultation process involved talking to regional and local service providers, to people with disability and carers. Agency meetings and focus groups were held to identify gaps and discuss issues and a community survey conducted.

A Disability Access Committee, consisting of community members has been established due to this process and this committee will be actively involved in the ongoing development, implementation and formal review process of this plan.

4. INFORMING THE PLAN

This plan has been informed by the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, National Disability Insurance Scheme, Disability Inclusion Act (NSW) 2014, Local Government Act 1993, Federation Council Ageing Well Strategy, Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan, Community Consultation Procedure and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

The draft plan was endorsed at Council's April 2017 meeting and placed on public exhibition for 28 days.

5. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 defines disability as:

‘The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.’

Federation Council has a population of approx. 12,500 people and is home to the diverse communities of Corowa, Howlong, Mulwala, Oaklands, Urana, Balldale, Boree Creek, Buraja-Lowesdale, Coreen, Daysdale, Morundah, Rand, Rennie and Savernake.

Located within an agriculturally rich and diverse area on the border of New South Wales and Victoria, the Southern Riverina region is the centre of one of the most productive wool, grain, lamb and beef-cattle growing areas of Australia.

Only three hours from Melbourne, four hours from Canberra and six hours from Sydney, the region boasts a great climate and vibrant atmosphere and is an ideal location for families, businesses and visitors to experience its exceptional lifestyle and opportunities

Information about disability in Federation Council is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on people who identify as needing help with mobility, self-care or communication due to disability or long-term health conditions.

5.1 Disability Snapshot in Federation Council

According to the Bureau of Statistic data for 2011 there are 612 people (5%) living in Federation Council who receive a Disability Support Pension. This pension is provided to people who have a physical, intellectual or psychiatric condition that stops them from working or people who are permanently blind. Of these, 220 are people under 65 years old.

Service NSW identified that 648 people living in the Council area are registered as having a current Disabled Parking Permit.

The ABS data shows that 1147 or 9.2% of people living in Federation Council were receiving a Carer Payment benefit in 2011. This payment is made to people who personally provide constant care, in the home, to someone with a severe disability, medical condition, or who is frail aged.

6. CONSULTATION

Over a four-month period conversations and meetings were held with stakeholders including local and regional service providers, individuals with disability, carers and interested community members. In February 2017 the Disability Inclusion and Access Survey was undertaken which invited the community to tell us what they thought could be done to improve access and inclusion in Federation Council.

The survey told us that accessibility in the community was very important to our residents and that more could be done to improve access.

6.1 What respondents told us was MOST important:

For changing attitudes and behaviours

- Involving people with disability in developing communication campaigns regarding inclusion.
- Developing public messages and campaigns that highlight inclusion and recognise the rights and contribution of people with disabilities in the community.
- Integrating staff training on access and inclusion into induction practices

For making communities liveable and accessible

- Ensuring community programs and events are accessible through early consideration of venues, transport, toilets, parking
- Providing continuous paths of travel between facilities and services in towns and public areas
- Providing accessible toilets in all public buildings

For improving employment opportunities

- Changing people's attitudes
- Accessible workplaces
- Flexible working hours and locations
- Designing roles suitable for people with disabilities

For improving accessibility of systems and processes

- Ensuring all information is available in different formats for all abilities
- Creating ways to provide feedback for inclusion and accessibility e.g. Council access advisory committee
- Ensuring workplaces internal systems and processes are accessible

What can be done to change behaviour and attitudes?

Respondents told us that to change behaviours and attitudes in the community toward people with disability - education and awareness, increased visibility, positive promotion of people with disability and providing more accessible places were essential.

What are the current barriers?

The biggest barriers to access businesses were lack of staff awareness, poor physical accessibility (including toilets) and no clear signage. Barriers to community spaces were similar.

What is done well?

Respondents identified some good examples of accessibility in local businesses. These included Corowa Arcade, Target, Post office (ramp), newsagent, hospital, RSL toilets, chemist and takeaway food store.

Good examples of accessibility in Council facilities include the automatic door at the entrance to Corowa offices, Sanger Street pedestrian refuges, rowers park, some of the playgrounds and parks, and disabled parking on flat ground.

What can be done better?

Respondents also told us where businesses and council could do better. For businesses, including hotels, clubs and cafes having steps and narrow entry doors reduced access. For Council and public facilities, the main difficulties identified were the access ramp at council offices in Corowa, the lack of disabled toilets, no continuous accessible footpaths (to library, council offices and some parks) and the location of disabled parking.

Who Responded to the Survey?

Responses were from individuals with disability, service providers representing people with disability and carers. Respondents came from Corowa, Howlong, Mulwala and Urana. The majority were aged between 35 and 65 years old and identified with disabilities including mental health, physical, intellectual, visual and hearing impairment.



Information from the survey and discussions with service providers has been used to inform the Disability Inclusion Action Plan

7. DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan presents actions under the following key objectives:

1. Positive Attitudes and Behaviours
2. Create Liveable Communities
3. Support Access to Meaningful Employment
4. Improve Access to Services through Systems and Process



A delivery timeline has been applied to each action within the plan to guide implementation.

Short term within one year

Medium term within two years

Long term within four years

7.1 Positive attitudes and behaviour

The attitude of the general community towards people with disability is described as the single greatest barrier to full inclusion.

Negative attitudes can impact the lives of people with disability across education, employment and community participation.

Attitudes towards disability can change over time. Through a combination of large public campaigns and local initiatives, people can learn more about disability and how their words and action matter.

Objectives & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective 1	Develop, promote & support positive community attitudes and behaviour			
Action 1	Develop and facilitate Disability Awareness Training for staff (include access and inclusion awareness in induction practices)	Human Resources	Short	A range of disability awareness education and awareness programs undertaken by Federation Council staff Participation in International Day of People with Disability Awards program for Access and Inclusion developed
Action 2	Include images of people with disability in council publications and in promotion of council events, not just disability specific activities	Communications Community Development	Short	
Action 3	Recognise and celebrate the contribution of people with disability during annual International Day of People with Disability	Communications Community Development Access Committee	Short	
Action 4	Facilitate the development of Access and Inclusion Awards for individuals, community groups, businesses	Community Economic Development	Medium	

Action 5	Develop public messages and campaigns that highlight inclusion and recognise the rights and contribution of people with disability in the community	Communications Community Development	Medium	Positive public images of people with disability in Council publications and promotional materials including face book and webpage
Action 6	Provide and/or support activities that increase awareness of people with disability and their contribution to our community	Community Development	Short	

Objective 2	Encourage and support local groups, agencies and organisations to provide more opportunities for people with disability to participate			<p>The Community Grants Program actively supporting initiatives that are inclusive, accessible and welcoming to people of all abilities</p> <p>Federation Council supporting and promoting local programs and activities that give people with disability the opportunity to be physically and socially active</p>
Action 1	Promote and encourage programs and activities that give people with disability the opportunity to be physically and socially active	Community Development	Short	
Action 2	Support community initiatives and the delivery of programs that engage and develop people with disability and their carers	Community Development	Short	
Action 3	Support recreation groups, clubs and programs that provide opportunities for people of all abilities to participate in and enjoy community activities	Community Development	Short	
Action 4	Strengthen partnerships with health & community services and disability service providers to ensure services available in our local communities meet our needs	Community Development	Short	

Objective 3 Create opportunities for people with disability to be actively engaged in community decision making				
Action 1	Facilitate the establishment of the Federation Council Access Committee	Community Development	Short	<p>Access Committee established</p> <p>Systems and processes in place to enable input from Access Committee on Council actions that impact on people with disability</p> <p>Access Committee involved in the development of public messages and campaigns regarding access and inclusion</p> <p>Access Committee providing input and advice on Council decisions and new developments that impact on people with disability</p>
Action 2	Through the Access Committee, involve people with disability in the development of communication campaigns regarding access and inclusion	Communications Community Development	Short	
Action 3	Through the Access Committee, ensure that people with disability are provided with opportunities to have input into community developments and master plans within the local government area; including CBD upgrades, recreation and open space developments and community facilities	Community Development	Medium	

7.2 Create liveable communities

Liveable communities are places where people have the opportunity to live, learn, work and play as the wish.

Physical accessibility is important, but liveable communities are also about the opportunity for social engagement, personal and business interactions, feeling safe and secure and being included in community activity.

Objectives & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective 1 Increasing Physical Accessibility of buildings and community facilities				
Action 1	Conduct an audit of buildings owned or leased by council to assess compliance with Australian standards for access and mobility (AS1428 parts 1-5)	Infrastructure	Medium	Planning decisions based on accurate and updated information relating to the needs of people with disability
Action 2	Develop a Disability Access Improvement Program to guide improvements to Council facilities and services, making older Council buildings compliant with Australian building codes and other access requirements. The program may include ground surface indicators, adaptive equipment and technologies for libraries, sliding doors, hearing loops in chambers, ramps, handrails, accessible toilets, adult change tables.	Infrastructure	Medium	Audit of Council owned or leased buildings undertaken Disability Access Improvement Program developed and used to inform future allocation of Council budget
Action 3	Make equity and access part of the key criteria for decisions about physical infrastructure, and information and communications technology	Council	Short	Access Committee engaged in decisions regarding new infrastructure and buildings
Action 4	Engage people with disability in the design and planning phases of new infrastructure and buildings to support accessible and inclusive assets.	Council	Short	

Action 5	Advocate for funding to allow community groups and clubs to complete retrofitting work of inaccessible buildings and facilities to enable use by all community members	Council	Long	Key community facilities (may not be council owned) to be considered as part of the overall audit and improvement program Community groups and clubs supported through advocacy efforts PAMP used to inform allocation of council budget
Action 7	Ensure that accessibility and inclusiveness for people with disability is considered in the planning of Council programs, planning and activities	Council	Short	
Action 8	Plan for continuous accessible paths of travel (see PAMP) between facilities and services in town centres	Infrastructure	Medium	
Action 9	Ensure signage throughout the council area is easy to read for all community members	Infrastructure	Medium	

Objective 2 Increasing accessibility of programs, services and activities				
Action 1	Establish and support an Access Committee to provide advice and feedback on matters relating to access for people with disabilities to Council facilities and services and within the community generally	Community Development	Short	Access committee engaged, monitoring DIAP and providing feedback and advice to Council regarding access and inclusion matters Audit of council run programs and activities undertaken with a focus on inclusiveness and accessibility
Action 2	Develop, implement and monitor the Access and Inclusion Action plan in consultation with Access Committee	Access Committee	Short	
Action 3	Ensure that council facilities are accessible, inclusive, welcoming and well promoted	Council	Long	
Action 4	Ensure that community recreation, cultural and social programs are inclusive and accessible	Council	Long	

Action 5	Provide information resources for people with disability to facilitate access to local services and activities. This includes the development of an Access and Mobility Kit with map showing locations of accessible businesses, facilities and toilets.	Community Development Communication	Medium	Information resources developed for people with disability Road safety initiatives undertaken
Action 6	Implement road safety initiatives throughout the council area including mobility scooter workshops and pedestrian safety	Road Safety Officer	Medium	

7.3 Support access to meaningful employment

People with disability often face barriers seeking employment, through the recruitment process and within the workplace.

Removing these barriers requires employers to be mindful of the information and access needs of people with disability and to gain an appreciation of the positive practices that can be adopted to provide accessible interviews, reasonable workplace adjustments and work experience opportunities.

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective 1	Providing and Supporting Inclusive and flexible work environments			
Action 1	Make diversity and inclusion a key consideration for strategic workforce planning and develop position advertisements that welcome disability	Human Resources	Short	Reasonable adjustment to workplace to support employees with disability
Action 2	Actively develop a respectful and welcoming work culture including flexibility and accountability for all staff in the way that they work as well as specific attraction and retention strategies	Human Resources	Medium	Review of recruitment procedures including advertisements for new employees
Action 3	Engage with local disability employment providers to identify strategies to enhance opportunities for employment of people with disability	Human Resources	Medium	
Action 4	Review recruitment procedures to support non-discrimination of people with disability	Human Resources	Medium	
Action 5	Undertake reasonable adjustment to the workplace - to change a work process, practice, procedure or environment to support an employee with disability to perform their job	Human Resources	Short/Med	

Action 6	Provide opportunity for representation on committees, groups and Council from people with disability	Council	Short
Action 7	Support community initiatives that facilitate the engagement of people with disability in employment	Community Development	Short



7.4 Improve access through better systems and processes

The systems and processes required to access services in the community can be complex. This can be more so for people with disability. Simple tasks such as gaining a driver's license can be difficult and costly for a person with disability.

It is the responsibility of each NSW Government department, local council and community and business organisation to ensure everyone has equitable access to information and services.

Objective & Actions		Responsibility	Timeline	Measure
Objective 1	Adoption of systems and process that increase opportunities for people with disability to actively participate in the community			<p>Specific training needs and resources identified to support current and future employees with disability</p> <p>Review of communication material undertaken to ensure it is accessible and inclusion compliant</p> <p>Accessible complaint mechanism adopted</p>
Action 1	Implement practices that ensure that all Council information distributed to the community is clear and easy to understand and in a range of formats to support different needs and capabilities	Communications	Short	
Action 2	Ensure service users have access to communication supports such as hearing loops, touch screens and translation services	Communications	Long	
Action 3	Ensure feedback and complaint mechanisms can be accessed by people with a range of disabilities	Communications	Short	
Action 4	Ensure web content is compliant with at least conformance level AA in the W3Cs Web Content Accessibility Guidelines	Communications	Medium	
Action 5	Provide a mechanism for feedback on access and inclusion in the council area (Access Committee)	Community Development	Short	
Action 6	Ensure internal systems and processes are designed to allow for inclusion of staff with a range of disabilities	Human Resources	Short	

Action 7	Use non-technology reliant communication methods such as local newspapers, letterbox drops and library information boards	Communications	Medium
Action 8	Ensure people with disability and their carers are involved in appropriate Council community engagement processes to support the understanding and reflection of their needs	Communications	Short



8. REVIEW

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan provides a framework for actions over the next three years. In order for this plan to remain relevant, it is important to include an ongoing monitoring and review requirement.

The Disability Access Committee in consultation with the community will review performance measures outlined in the DIAP on an annual basis.

Consultation with people with disabilities to gain feedback in relation to progress of the Disability Inclusion Access Plan through the Federation Council's Disability Access Committee will be undertaken.



9. SCHEDULE OF CHANGES & AMENDMENTS

Version	Date	Changes / Amendments

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