

11.2 Disability Inclusion Action Plan - Post Exhibition Report

REPORT BY THE MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL SERVICES
TO 21 SEPTEMBER 2022 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400098, COS300797

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Manager, Community & Cultural Services on the Update on Disability Inclusion Action Plan following public exhibition;**
2. **note the feedback received during the public exhibition period; and**
3. **endorse the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 with the recommended changes.**

Executive summary

At its July 2022, Council resolved to place the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 on public exhibition for feedback. This report provides a summary of feedback received and proposed changes to the Plan for endorsement by Council.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

The draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan was placed on public exhibition for 28 days from 22 July 2022. One submission was received on behalf of the Mid-Western Regional Council's Access Committee suggesting rewording of action items and indicators within the Plan, as follows:

1. Supporting an inclusive workforce – Set a target number for opportunities available for people with disability to work or volunteer within Council so that the indicator can be appropriately assessed.

Council encourages people with disability to work or volunteer within the organisation as and when opportunities arise. Indicator numbers may not be feasible at any given time in the employment marketplace, particularly if the supported employee program is ever discontinued.

2. Supporting an inclusive workforce – Establish a memorandum of understanding with at least one disability service provider to enhance employment opportunities.

It would not be advisable to establish a memorandum of understanding with a specific disability service provider given the number of services across the region. Rather, it is staff recommendation that Council continue to promote opportunities available for people with disability to work or volunteer within Council and this may be done via promotions through all local disability service providers.

3. Providing effective and efficient governance and leadership – Recommendation that all Mid-Western Regional Council advisory committees include disability inclusion within their terms of reference.

It is recommended that this amendment be considered by each Advisory Committee when the Terms of Reference for that Committee are next considered.

4. Supporting the community to promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion – Set a minimum target number of Council events and activities that incorporate or promote outreach and education relating to disability.

This recommendation would be challenging as the number of different Council events and activities vary in scope and size, as well as intended outcome, from year to year. This recommendation, therefore, is not supported by staff.

5. Supporting the community to promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion – Reword *‘Establish collaboration between Council’s Access Committee and all Council departments’* to read *‘Embed accessibility and inclusion requirements and content across Council’* and update the indicator to *‘Council Directorates to demonstrate consideration of accessibility and inclusion in decision making’*.

The measure for the proposed indicator could be onerous on Council departments and staff and is not recommended, however, the proposed amendment to the action is supported.

6. Council actively promotes meaningful communication and engagement with the community – Recommendation that a formal process be established for providing Council information in multiple accessible formats and that the indicator be a specific percentage increase in downloads in accessible formats.

A set percentage of downloads in any specific format is an indicator that is outside of Council’s control as it would depend upon online user statistics. It is staff recommendation however, that Council continues to provide information in multiple accessible formats.

7. Supporting improved physical access in the community – Recommendation that 100% of planned pathway infrastructure be implemented each financial year.

There already exists an action within Council’s Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework to *‘Implement the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan.’*

8. Supporting improved physical access in the community – Recommendation that Council’s community grants process consider and align with inclusion and disability objectives.

This suggestion is recommended in theory but would require amendment to (and subsequent re-endorsement of) Council’s Community Grants Policy. It is staff recommendation that this be considered when this policy comes due for review in April 2026 (or sooner, if necessary).

Based on the staff recommendations above, the Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been reviewed again and is attached to this report.

Community Plan implications

Theme	Looking After Our Community
Goal	Meet the diverse needs of the community and create a sense of belonging
Strategy	Provide equitable access to a range of places and spaces for all in the community

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Not Applicable

Council Policies

Not Applicable

Legislation

The *Disability Inclusion Action Act (NSW)* 2014 commenced in December 2014 and requires Council to maintain and regularly review its Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Financial implications

Not Applicable

Associated Risks

A failure to endorse and report upon a Disability Inclusion Action Plan, would potentially leave Council liable for penalties under the *Disability Inclusion Action Act (NSW)* 2014.

FIONA SHEARMAN
MANAGER, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL
SERVICES

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

29 August 2022

Attachments: 1. Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 - Final recommendation.
2. Submission on behalf of Access Committee - 8 July 2022.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER



Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022– 2026

21 SEPTEMBER 2022

MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES



COMMUNITY SERVICES | DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2022–2026

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN PREPARED BY COMMUNITY SERVICES, FOR MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL.

ANY QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:
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1. Introduction

This is the first formal review of Mid-Western Regional Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan ('DIAP'). It is a tangible demonstration of Council's understanding of the need for it to be a role model for promoting the rights of those in the community living with disability, as well as its commitment to improving access and opportunity for everyone living in or visiting the region.

The DIAP provides a vision for the future and puts in place a number of proactive strategies intended to achieve and maintain community inclusion within the Mid-Western Regional area. Council accepts the responsibility of being the driving force for the plan, but the strategies also require the ongoing support of local community members, services and businesses to achieve those outcomes. By working together, we can continue to make our community an even better place to live, work, invest and visit.

This plan was initially prepared for Council by the University of Technology Sydney Institute for Public Policy and Governance in July 2016. It has now been reviewed and updated 'in house'.

2. The case for inclusion

Local government plays a key role in promoting the value of diversity and inclusion across the community. Council seeks to meet its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and is committed to being a regional leader in disability inclusion.

Council is committed to advancing the social model of disability and seeks to break down the barriers between people with a disability and physical, attitudinal, communication and social environments. As part of this commitment, Council seeks to actively promote the rights of people with disability to fully participate within the community on an equal basis with other citizens.

A diverse and inclusive community benefits and strengthens Council's vision and enriches all aspects of community life. Through increasing inclusiveness in our community we can achieve greater social harmony, strong and diverse vibrant towns and communities, positive health impacts and provide a strong sense of belonging and community pride.

3. Disability Inclusion Action Plan

This DIAP was originally developed (and now reviewed) as part of Council's commitment to providing equitable opportunities for everyone to access services and participate in community life. The DIAP establishes actions that Council will undertake to achieve a more inclusive region for everyone. It is intended that the plan will have a positive impact on people living with disability, and benefits will extend to the broader community through positive effects of increased inclusion and access.

The term 'disability' is very broad. Improving disability inclusion is not just about increasing physical accessibility; it also includes creating opportunities for social engagement, improving the quality of personal, social and business interactions, and the methods through which information can be accessed.

The DIAP is a holistic document which applies to all areas of Council business: infrastructure, services and activities, events and community engagement. The DIAP outlines a framework and establishes actions, with embedded evaluative measures and indicators that will allow our community to achieve the benefits of an inclusive community.

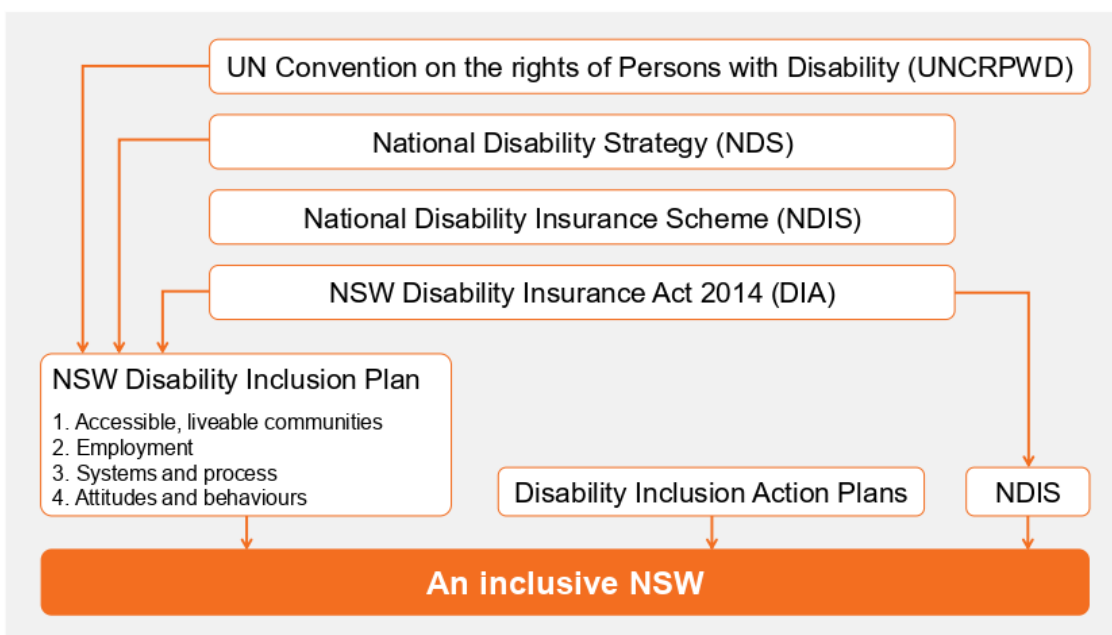
The DIAP forms part of Council’s integrated planning and reporting and will be monitored and reported on annually in Council’s Annual Reports.

It is important to note that the DIAP is a plan for the community. While a significant number of actions in the DIAP fall under Council’s lead or responsibility, Council alone does not have the power to affect the scale of change that the DIAP aspires to achieve. For example, by increasing community awareness and acknowledging local businesses that are actively undertaking inclusion activities, Council is promoting good practice. Council however is not able to enforce disability inclusion principles in areas outside of the building development process.

4. Legislative context

The New South Wales (NSW) Government is committed to improving the lives of people with disability, their carers and families. Changes and reforms over recent years have led to the NSW Government building upon national efforts to enhance the cohesion of society by ensuring that people living with disability can exercise their rights and prerogatives without barriers. The State and local policies below depict the legislative mechanisms with which government seeks to further the ability of people with disability to fully and meaningfully participate within their community.

FIGURE 1: LGNSW (2015) NSW DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLANNING GUIDELINES



National context

In 2008, the Australian Government committed to promoting and exercising a rights-based approach to ensure that people with a disability can fully participate within the community without barriers as emphasised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The UNCRPD recognised that people with a disability have the same human rights as those without disability and reaffirmed the ‘universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with a disability to be guaranteed their full enjoyment without discrimination’.¹ Along with acknowledging this universal human right, Australia in ratifying the UNCRPD pledged to ‘promote, protect and ensure the full and equal

¹ UNITED NATIONS (2006), CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, PREAMBLE.

enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with a disability and to promote respect for their inherent dignity'.²

The Commonwealth Government's National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (NDS) was developed in partnership with all levels of Australian government. It outlines a national plan for improving the lives of Australian people with disability, their carers and families. The NDS identifies six priority areas that broadly encompass the outcomes set out by the UNCRPD. The principles of the NDS have been aligned with the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and Disability Inclusion Plan.

State context

The New South Wales Disability Inclusion Act 2014 ('NSW DIA') is aimed at improving the lives of people with a disability and continues the efforts of the NSW government to build a truly cohesive society. The objectives of the NSW DIA are to promote the independence of people with a disability to exercise choice and control in pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of supports and services for people with disability.³ The NSW DIA sets forth a purpose of coordinating a whole of government approach towards the creation of a more inclusive society, in which community services and facilities are accessible to people with disability and assist people with disability actualise their full potential.

Local context

To achieve the abovementioned goals, the NSW DIA stipulates that all local governments develop a DIAP. The DIAP outlines measures to ensure that people with a disability are able to effectively access general support and services that allow them to meaningfully participate within their community. The DIAP also sets out strategies which Council will utilise to support people with a disability. The DIAP focuses on key outcome areas for priority action planning. The key outcome areas and action plans are developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, Council staff and the community have been included.

The DIAP is not a standalone document; it is an integral part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting ('IP&R') framework. Figure 2 demonstrates the placement of the DIAP in Council's IP&R requirements. Council is currently undertaking the development of their future Community Plan. Council will consider the alignment of the DIAP inclusion objectives as part of the development of the Community Plan.

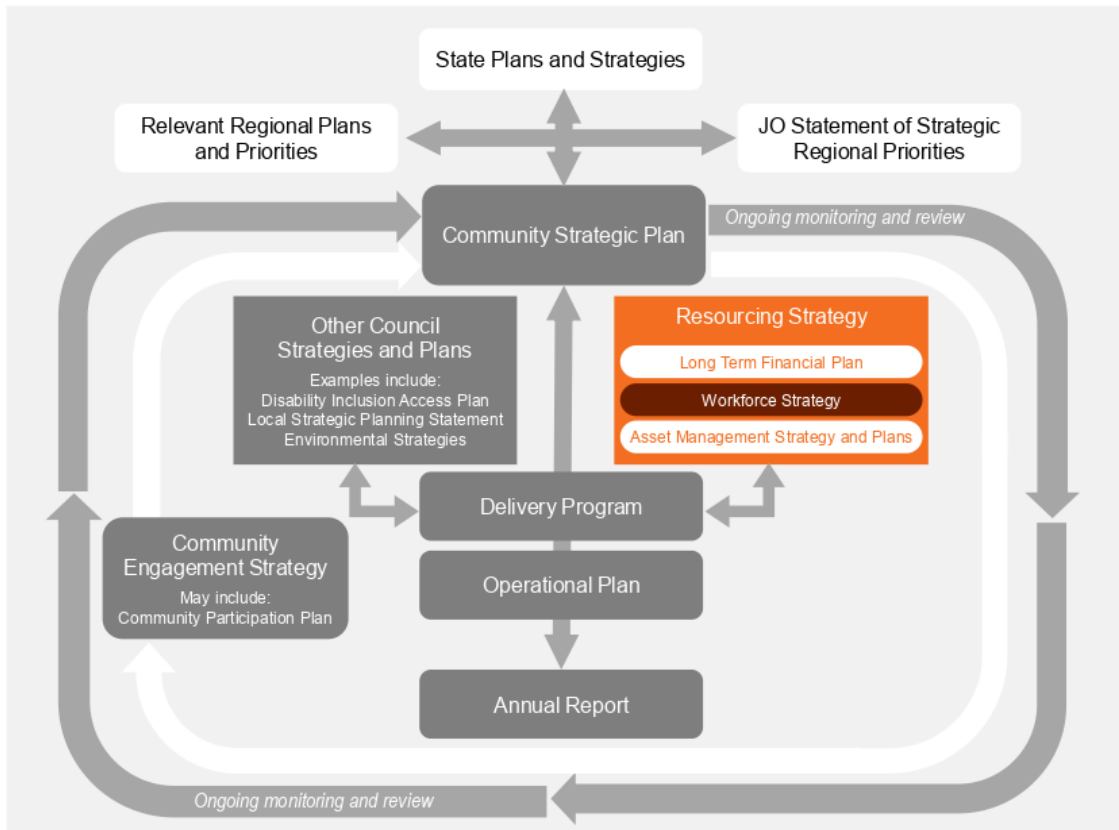
The DIAP reflects the values and principles of the community and promote Council's vision developed as part of the Community Plan. Strategies for inclusion inform Council's Delivery Program and inclusion actions are identified in Council's Operational Plan. Progress of the DIAP is monitored and reported in Council's Annual Report. Alongside annual monitoring, the DIAP is evaluated and reviewed every four years (or exceptionally five years in this case). Evaluation ensures that the DIAP remains a current reflection of the community's principles and acknowledges progress made towards inclusion in the community more broadly.

A key outcome of the DIAP involves the inclusion objectives traversing into all areas of Council planning. Council is committed to ensuring that our community is inclusive of all people with disability including people with physical, intellectual, cognitive sensory disabilities and those with mental health conditions. This also extends to those living within our community with dementia. Council aspires towards inclusion planning that is reflected in every area of Council practice and planning. The DIAP is an integral aspect of achieving this aspiration.

² UNITED NATIONS (2006). CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, PREAMBLE.

³ DISABILITY INCLUSION ACT (2014) NSW NO 41, PART 1: PRELIMINARY.

FIGURE 2: HOW COUNCIL’S DIAP FITS WITHIN ITS IP&R FRAMEWORK



Source: Mid-Western Regional Council Workforce Strategy 2022-2026

5. Disability and inclusion in the Mid-Western Region

Council is committed to enhancing the lives of its community. It seeks to involve the community in the planning, implementation and monitoring of its DIAP. In implementing the Mid-Western Regional Council DIAP, Council wishes to extend the scope of disability inclusion beyond physical barriers to ensure that people with disability are included and able to meaningfully participate within the community.

Extending the scope of disability inclusion actioning involves reassessing how disability is interpreted within the community and ensuring all people with disability are understood and included. Council understands that genuine inclusion is never achieved in isolation. Effective disability inclusion actioning involves identifying existing Council visions, goals, principles and objectives that directly align with Council’s DIAP. The sections below have been developed to inform, assess and continue our commitment to fully support the members of our community by reviewing the demographics of the local government area and existing Council policies for disability inclusion.

Demographic context

The MWRC was established in 2004 when the former Mudgee Council and the majority of the former Rylstone Council along with a portion of Merriwa Council were merged.

The MWRC area is comprised of four main towns: Mudgee, Gulgong, Kandos and Rylstone as well as smaller surrounding rural villages. The MWRC area is home to a growing and diverse population with an economy based on agricultural, viticultural, mining, and tourism industries.

At the time of the 2016 Census, the usual resident population of the MWRC area was 24,076, with a median age of 42, higher than NSW (38 years). Table 1 below provides a snapshot of community characteristics of the MWRC region compared to NSW.

TABLE 1: MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL – DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

	MID-WESTERN REGIONAL LGA	NEW SOUTH WALES
Total population	24,076	8,186,800
Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander People	5.4%	2.9%
AGE		
Median age	42	38
MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME		
Personal	\$547	\$664
Family	\$1,433	\$1,780
Household	\$1,131	\$1,486
HOUSING TYPE		
Owned outright	38.0%	32.2%
Owned with a mortgage	30.6%	32.3%
Rented	27.4%	31.8%
EMPLOYMENT		
Employed, full-time	56.4%	59.2%
Employed, part-time	31.6%	29.7%
Unemployed	6.5%	6.3%
BIRTHPLACE		
Australia	81.2%	65.5%
England	2.3%	3.0%
New Zealand	1.0%	1.6%
LANGUAGE		
English only spoken at home	87.4%	68.5%
DISABILITY		
Has need for assistance	5%	5.4%
Does not have need for assistance	84%	88%

Source: ABS, 2016

The MWRC has a higher percentage of people born in Australia (81%) compared to NSW (66%). This is also reflected in the number of people who only speak English at home (87%) compared to New South Wales (69%). At 2016, 5% of the MWRC population identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is a similar proportion of people who need assistance within the MWRC area compared to NSW generally.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the age profile across each major town within MWRC.

TABLE 2: MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL SUBURB BREAKDOWN - DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

	MID-WESTERN REGIONAL LGA	MUDGEES SUBURB	GULGONG SUBURB	KANDOS SUBURB	RYLSTONE SUBURB
Total population	24,070	10,923	2,530	1,310	926
GENDER					
Female	49.7%	51.2%	49.5%	49.1%	50.8%
Male	50.3%	48.8%	50.5%	50.9%	49.2%
AGE GROUPS					
0 to 9 years	14%	15.9%	15.1%	9.3%	9.4%
10 to 19 years	11.8%	11.9%	12.3%	10.8%	11%
20 to 29 years	9.9%	12.3%	10.4%	7.3%	8%
30 to 39 years	11.3%	13.7%	11%	7.5%	9.1%
40 to 49 years	13%	12.4%	11.7%	12.1%	11%
50 to 59 years	14.1%	11.9%	12.6%	17%	14.9%
60 to 69 years	12.5%	8.9%	13.2%	15.3%	17.9%
70 to 79 years	9%	7.8%	8.4%	15.3%	13.5%
80+ years	4.3%	5.2%	5.3%	5.3%	5.2%

Source: ABS, 2016

Generally, the MWRC is home to a higher percentage of older people compared to NSW, with 26% of the population aged 60 years and over, compared to 22% for NSW.

- **Mudgee** is home to just under half the MWRC population (10,923 people). Mudgee is home to MWRC Council Chambers and is a primary hub for the majority of services across the region. The median age in Mudgee is 37.
- **Gulgong** is the second most populated town with 2,530 residents. The median age in Gulgong is 41.
- **Kandos** has a population of 1,310 people. It is the third most populated town in the MWRC area and has the highest median age compared to other MWRC area towns (52).
- **Rylstone** has a population of 926 people. The median age in Rylstone is 50.

Disability assistance and carers

Data from the 2016 Census identifies that 1,288 people in the MWRC area need assistance with a core activity. Table 3 provides a breakdown of people across each major MWRC town that requires assistance.

TABLE 3: MWRC AND MAJOR TOWNS – DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

	MID-WESTERN REGIONAL LGA		MUDGEES SUBURB		GULGONG SUBURB		KANDOS SUBURB		RYLSTONE SUBURB	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Need for assistance										
Has need for assistance	1,288	5%	605	6%	133	5%	142	11%	60	6%
Does not have need for assistance	20,223	84%	9,351	86%	2,083	83%	1,000	76%	800	87%
Not stated	2,562	11%	971	9%	308	12%	172	13%	64	7%

Source: ABS, 2016

Some key characteristics of people who require disability assistance include:

- 605 (47%) of people who require assistance across MWRC reside in Mudgee.
- The largest age group of people requiring assistance are people 75-84 (18%).

- 50% of people who require assistance with a core activity in the MWRC area are 55+ years.
- 77% of people in Rylstone who require assistance with a core activity were 55+ years old.
- 6% of Indigenous people who reside in the MWRC region require assistance with a core task.

The MWRC region has a total of 2,107 people who provide unpaid assistance to people with a disability. Some key characteristics of carers include:

- Out of the four main towns in the MWRC, Mudgee has the highest number (796) of people who provide unpaid care.
- The majority of unpaid carers of people with disability in the MWRC area are between the ages of 45 to 64.
- 21.7% of unpaid carers in the MWRC region are volunteers.

6. MWRC plans and policies

Community Plan: Towards 2040

In May 2022, Council endorsed its Community Plan Towards 2040 ('Towards 2040'), which is Council's highest level strategic plan. Towards 2040 sets out the community's vision of the future and outlines the community's goals, values and aspirations. Towards 2040 aligns with the NSW State Plan.

Towards 2040 provides five key themes that outline the community's vision for the future. Council has developed goals or objectives with corresponding strategies to achieve success:

- Looking after our community
- Protecting our environment
- Building a strong economy
- Connecting our region
- Good government

Council also provides a suite of strategies to support the implementation and action of goals within Towards 2040. Key goals within Towards 2040 focus on providing accessible and inclusive community services and facilities that meet the needs of residents and visitors. Council also commit to working with key stakeholders to support and promote effective health and disability services in the region. Council is committed to providing the necessary infrastructure to meet current and future demands to enable and create a sense of belonging.

MWRC Delivery Program and Operational Plan

Towards 2040 is supported by the MWRC Delivery Program and Operational Plan. The Delivery Program and Operational Plan is a program and resource strategy that identify the assets, funds and resources required to deliver the goals set out in Towards 2040. These documents are also currently in development. The 2022/23-2025/26 Delivery Program and the 2022/23 Operational Plan outlines measures that directly relate to improving inclusion and access in the community.

Workforce Strategy 2022-26

The MWRC Workforce Strategy (the Strategy) is an essential element of the Community Plan Towards 2040 and aims to ensure MWRC has the right amount of people with the right skills to achieve the expectations outlined in the Delivery Program.

The Strategy outlines the issues, actions and strategies required over a four year period to facilitate the Delivery Program. Some key challenges that place pressure on the MWRC workforce include an ageing workforce and the impact of increased retirement age. The Strategy also includes a workforce profile of the local government area. Some key findings include.

- Employees aged 50+ represent 41% of the workforce
- Employees aged less than 30 years represent 17% of the workforce
- The majority of the workforce (54%) is between 41 and 60 years old

MWRC Equal employment opportunity

MWRC also has an Anti-Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (EEO). Council works to provide an environment where staff and other people in the workplace are treated fairly and respectfully.⁴

Between 2017 and 2021, MWRC completed several initiatives that supported EEO measures. These initiatives are outlined below:

- Providing training on Anti-Discrimination and EEO Policies, including a focus on merit based recruitment
- Training on disability inclusion and accessibility awareness
- Code of conduct training for select positions
- A review of Council's Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Continued assistance with flexible working arrangements for employees with family and carer responsibilities

A Wage Assessment Tool for supported workers employed in Council disability services has also been developed. The tool provides fair wages for employees while meeting the needs of disability services.

Pedestrian access and mobility plan

In 2016 Council endorsed its Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP). The PAMP is part of Council's commitment to safe, convenient and connected pedestrian infrastructure that encourages the community to use active transport. The PAMP was developed in collaboration between Council and NSW Roads and Maritime Services. The PAMP delivers a framework for developing pedestrian routes and infrastructure that caters to needs of individuals of all abilities including: older people, people with mobility or visual impairments, children, tourists, and cyclists.

- The PAMP includes projects to improve pedestrian safety, mobility, and access to local shops, schools and community facilities, recreational areas and neighbourhoods

⁴ MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL 2021 ANNUAL REPORT.

- The PAMP reports that the MWRC area has a higher percentage of older adults compared to the Australian national average
- The PAMP finds that the higher percentage of older residents escalates the requirement of suitable pathway infrastructure for the mobility impaired

As part of the development of the PAMP, a user survey was undertaken with the general community and aged care facilities.

Some key findings from the community survey include:

- 44% of respondents were aged 55 years and older
- 19% of respondents (n=33) require the use of walking sticks or frames and 3% of respondents (n=11) require use of guide dogs/walking cane
- 6% of respondents (n=10) require the use of wheelchairs and 8% of respondents (n=14) require use of mobility scooter
- Less satisfaction with the extent of the pathway network and the network safety than with pathway design, convenience or pleasantness
- Respondents felt they would use pathways more if the network had a greater extent available

The pathway audit also reported major issues with relevant to ability of people with physical or cognitive disability or lowered mobility to access the pathways. These issues included:

- Pathways not meeting the road
- Missing ramps and existing ramps which do not meet the standard
- Shops and facilities with only stair access

Consideration has been made to these findings and have provided necessary context for forming the DIAP, in particular highlighting physical access and mobility for people with disability and older community members.

Accessible tourism

Access to tourist attractions and recreational activities is recognised as a fundamental human right, delivering important social benefits for individuals and the community, and economic and employment opportunities. Enabling people with disability and their carers to better access tourism opportunities promotes social inclusion; capitalises on the social benefits of increasing access and generates economic opportunities through the growth of the tourism market.

Improving access to tourism and recreational activities has both social and economic benefits. Accessing tourist and recreational activities is a vital step in ensuring an improvement in social inclusion and health and wellbeing outcomes for people with disability. Improving social inclusion is not just about increasing physical accessibility; it also includes creating opportunities for social engagement, improving the quality of personal, social and business interactions, and the methods through which information can be accessed. All tiers of government have undertaken a number of policy initiatives aimed at promoting and enhancing social inclusion; one particular aspect is improving the accessibility of services and public infrastructure for people with disability.

Improving access to tourism and recreational activities has both social and economic benefits. According to demographic forecasts there will be a huge increase in the proportion of older people. With close to 40% of people nationally having some form of disability by the time they are 70 years

old, forecasts based on population statistics of age acquired disabilities indicate that the total expenditure of this group in the tourism sector is likely to exceed 22% in five years' time.⁵

The MWRC area is a key regional destination for tourism and visitors in NSW. It is important that established platforms and mechanisms are realised for disability inclusion, including accessibility more broadly.

MWRC and the DIAP – towards an inclusive community

The DIAP is well placed to align with Council's existing plans and processes. The DIAP integrates within the Community Plan Towards 2040 and works towards existing community goals, values and aspirations. Actions developed in the DIAP strengthen Council's five themes and engage existing strategies to deliver stronger and more inclusive communities. The DIAP is also strengthened by acknowledging Council's ongoing funding of community support programs, disability employment, accessible public infrastructure and providing non-discriminatory working environments.

7. Inclusion objectives

Council plays a key role in promoting the value of diversity and inclusion. The role of Council in delivering inclusion is much broader than service provision. Council alone does not have all the levers to affect community-wide change. Council can lead by example in the way it conducts its operations and drive activities to lead awareness but there is no regulatory framework to 'enforce' social inclusion principles in the manner in which non-council services are delivered.

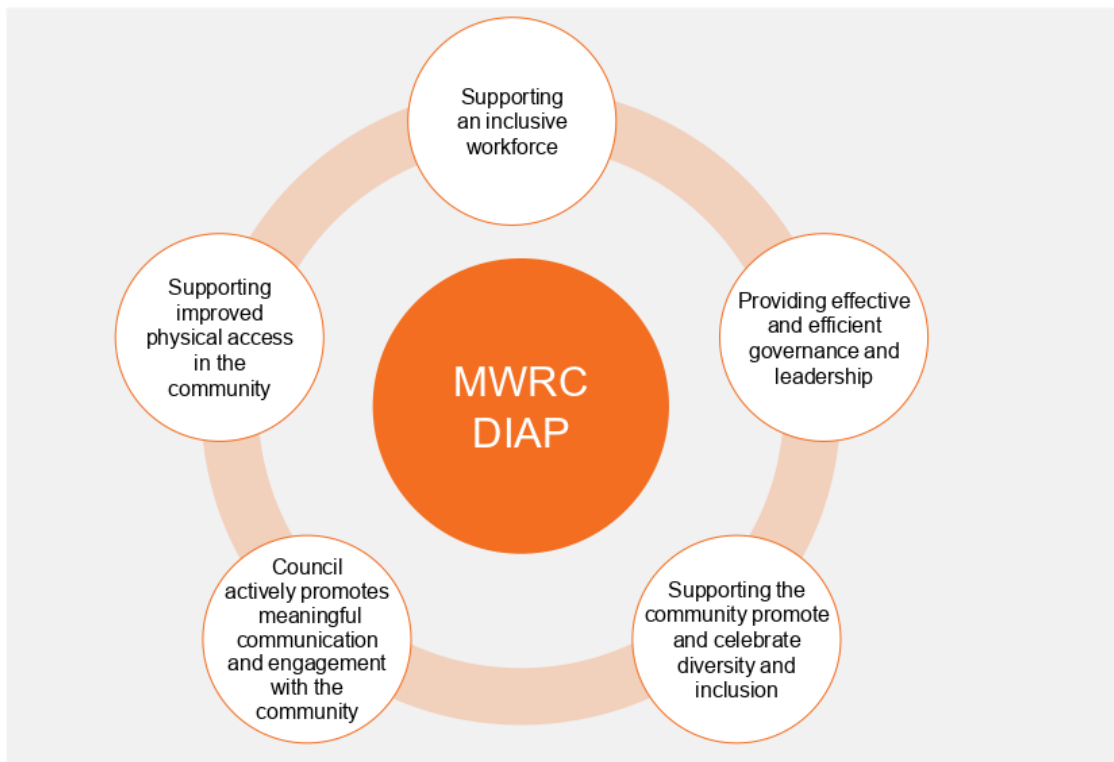
These objectives outline our approach towards inclusion. Objectives guide the DIAP actions and present our aspirations for developing greater inclusion in our community. By developing realistic yet aspirational goals we can work towards making genuine progress.

These inclusion objectives were developed to provide strong integration with Council's existing planning processes to make disability action planning align with Council's core business.

The inclusion objectives and actions developed as part of this DIAP reflect Council's role as a leader within the community to facilitate and influence change to improve access across the community.

⁵ TRAVABILITY (2010), PRESS RELEASE: AUSTRALIA MISSES THE PLANE ON ACCESSIBLE TOURISM.

FIGURE 3: MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL'S DISABILITY INCLUSION PLAN



8. Action planning

Actions have been structured to reflect the four objectives outlined within the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines:

- Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- Creating liveable communities
- Supporting access to meaningful employment, and
- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

The nature of actions is dynamic; actions are not necessarily contained under one focus area or are mutually exclusive to one objective. One action can have a number of related objectives and sit across multiple focus areas. Our framework attempts to encapsulate the inter-connection of actions and many pathways of likely impact.

Actions will also target different audiences, for example certain actions will relate exclusively to people with a disability, others will benefit the entire community. Actions are directed to address the multiple roles and influences of Council as an organisation, local leaders, and drivers of change within the community.

Supporting an inclusive workforce

An inclusive community is one in which everyone has the ability to access and participate in life and engage with other members of the community. Employment is an extremely valuable and important enabler to promoting inclusion.

COMMUNITY SERVICES | DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2022–2026

People with disability have valuable contributions towards our community and workforce. As a key employer, Council seek to be inclusive within its own workforce recruitment and retention of people with disability and promote other employers to be diverse and inclusive.

How this aligns with NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines:

- Objective 3: Support access to meaningful employment
- Objective 2: Create liveable communities

ACTIONS 2022-2026	EXPECTED OUTCOME	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	REPORTING	INDICATORS
Facilitate opportunities for people with disability to work or volunteer within Council	Increased diversity of Council workforce Improve employment opportunities for people with disability	People with disability	Workforce strategy	Council workforce statistics
Engage with local disability service providers to identify strategies to enhance employment opportunities for people living with disability	Increase knowledge sharing between Council and local disability service providers	People with disability	Annual report	Council workforce statistics
Consider diversity within a workforce strategy framework	Council continues to be an inclusive employer, including recruiting, retaining and supporting people with disability	Community	Annual Report Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan	Council workforce statistics

Providing effective and efficient governance and leadership

Council is a leader and has the ability to facilitate and influence an inclusive community. We envisage that its Access Committee provide strategic advice concerning accessibility matters.

How this aligns with NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines:

- Objective 4: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

ACTIONS 2022-2026	EXPECTED OUTCOME	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	REPORTING	INDICATORS
Review and amend the Access Committee Terms of Reference to reinforce its focus and purpose	Access Committee is provided with Terms of Reference that clearly outlines Access Committee’s purpose, roles and responsibilities and processes to Council and the community. This will not be exclusive to issues of physical access.	Council Access Committees	Updated Terms of Reference	Increased communication and interaction between Council and Access Committee that results in positive inclusion outcomes.
Support better collaboration between Advisory Committees	Improved collaboration between Advisory committees for youth, recreation and inclusion so that all Council Advisory Committees have consider disability inclusion.	Council Advisory Committees Access Committees	DIAP 2020	All advisory committees consider disability inclusion when the terms of reference for those committees are next reviewed.

Supporting the community to promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion

An inclusive community is one where people feel valued and celebrated for who they are. A key component of respect includes acknowledging and celebrating diversity and ensuring ownership of participation and sense of place within the MWRC community.

Everyone should be treated with respect, offered freedom, encouragement and opportunities to be independent and equal. Council plays an important role in building awareness and challenging assumptions through representing and celebrating diversity and inclusion.

How this aligns with NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines:

- Objective 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- Objective 2: Creating liveable communities

ACTIONS 2022-2026	EXPECTED OUTCOME	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	REPORTING	INDICATORS
As appropriate, incorporate disability awareness and inclusion across key Council activities and events	Encourage outreach, awareness and education about disability. Encourage people with disability to interact, showcase their talents and ability alongside people without disability.	Advisory Community People with disability Disability service providers	Annual report	Number of Council activities and events that incorporate or promote outreach and education about disability
Embed accessibility and inclusion requirements and content across Council	Cross collaboration and education of Council staff. Increased understanding of accessibility and inclusion in all Council areas.	All of Council Community	Annual report	Council Directorates to demonstrate consideration of accessibility and inclusion in decision making.
Develop and implement a marketing campaign to encourage understanding of people living with disability	Encourage outreach, awareness and education about disability.	Council corporate team Council community services team	Annual report	Number of campaign activities
Provide disability awareness training for frontline Council staff to promote accessible Council services	Increased understanding of disability.	Council frontline staff	Annual report	Number of staff trained

Council actively promotes meaningful communication and engagement with the community

Council also seeks to improve access to mainstream services by providing information to people with disability, local businesses and other community members of issues and resources for improved access.

Council facilitates and influences processes and outcomes that demonstrate disability inclusion. As an organisation, Council provides services and support that assist people with disability. As a leader, Council works with local businesses, community groups and individuals who also promote inclusion in the community.

Council seeks to address barriers and look for opportunities to engage with the community to deliver and provide services and facilities that are accessible for everyone.

How this aligns with NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines:

- Objective 2: Creating liveable communities
- Objective 4: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

ACTIONS 2022-2026	EXPECTED OUTCOME	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	REPORTING	INDICATORS
Continue to provide Council information in multiple formats	Improved access to Council information	Community	Annual report	Number of downloads through various formats
Investigate the opportunity to provide a 'one-stop-shop' on Council's website that provides people with disability access to essential information (e.g. accessible and appropriate services and facilities)	Improved processes for engaging with people with a disability.	Council People with disability	Annual report	Number of web page visits

Supporting improved physical access in the community

An inclusive community is one which is accessible to everyone. Having an accessible built and natural environment and streetscape is fundamental to inclusion and participating within the community.

Council understands that active planning and design principles are important to motivate participation and facilitate social connection. Council seeks to ensure that wherever possible, buildings and other spaces are accessible to everyone. Council understands that it does not have direct power over non-Council services and buildings however Council wishes to be a leader for accessibility in the community and to increase easy access to services, community and cultural centres and other buildings and spaces.

- How this aligns with NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines:
- Objective 2: Creating liveable communities

ACTIONS 2022-2026	EXPECTED OUTCOME	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	REPORTING	INDICATORS
Continue to implement the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP)	Increase pathway infrastructure to improve physical access of public space.	Community Council	Pathways inspected every four years and PAMP updated every two years.	Implement the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan..
Auditing physical accessibility of Council owned buildings to consider leading practice prioritisation of upgrades	Physical accessibility of Council owned facilities is reviewed with priority upgrades identified.	Council	DIAP 2022-2026	Council prioritises key facilities to upgrade in terms of physical accessibility.
Inclusion objectives to be referred to and considered when allocating community grants	Increase consideration of disability and inclusion in awarding Council grants.	Community Council	Annual report	Successful applicants reflect and align with the inclusion objectives.

9. Governance and accountability

Monitoring and reviewing

Section 13 of the DIA stipulates that councils in NSW must include reporting on their disability inclusion action planning in their Annual Reports.

Key performance indicators have been developed for each of the actions in this Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Key outcomes should be reported on four yearly. Along with key outcomes, each action has been developed with a performance indicators and measures. It is recommended that each key performance indicators and measures are reported on annually and integrated into Councils delivery program monitoring and reporting processes.

Section 14 of the DIA stipulates that Council is required to review their disability inclusion action planning process every four years (the exception being five years for this current review, given delays and challenges brought about by the global pandemic). This stipulation is designed to align with the review of Council's IP&R framework and the four-yearly review of the Community Plan.

10. Disability inclusion action planning checklist

The following table provides a checklist of the mandatory requirements under DIA legislation for councils as part of disability inclusion action planning or a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT	COMPLIANCE
Planning	
People with a disability have been consulted in the disability inclusion action planning process	✓
Strategies and actions to provide access to buildings, events and facilities have been identified	✓
Strategies and actions to provide access to information have been identified	✓
Strategies and action that support employment of people with disability have been identified	✓
Strategies and actions to encourage and create opportunities for people with disability to access the full range of services and activities available in the community have been identified	✓
A report on the disability inclusion action planning consultation with people with a disability has been provided to the Disability Council NSW	✓
Actions and strategies that support the goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act have been identified	✓
A copy of the disability inclusion action planning documentation has been provided to the Disability Council NSW	✓
Disability inclusion action planning documentation is publicly available	✓
Reporting	
Progress towards achievement of the action planning goals will be included in the Annual Report	✓
The Department of Communities and Justice and the Minister for Disability Services have been provided with a copy of the section of the Annual Report that details implementation of disability inclusion action planning	✓

██████████

From: ██████████
Sent: Friday, 8 July 2022 1:06 PM
To: ██████████
Subject: Comments for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Hi ██████████

Outlined below are my comments regarding the actions in Section 8. I appreciate the workforce reporting might be a bit touchy and that people may not identify so data gathering can be tough. I have tried to just change the wording on the indicators to make them a more measurable target (not all of them). I have also made some suggestions on some of the wording of the actions.

Objectives 2 and 3

Action: Facilitate opportunities for people with disability to work or volunteer within Council.
Indicator: Suggested change to - XX opportunities made available for people with disability. (This then gives HR team an actual target to work toward).

Action: Engage with local disability service providers to identify strategies to enhance employment opportunities for people living with disability.

Indicator: Suggested change to something like - Memorandum of Understanding established with at least one local disability service providers to enhance employment opportunities.

Objective 4

Action: Support better collaboration between Advisory Committees

Indicator: All advisory committee TORs include disability inclusion as part of the advisory committee mandate.

Objective 1 and 2

Action: As appropriate, incorporate disability awareness and inclusion across key Council activities and events

Indicator: At least XX Council activities and events incorporate or promote outreach and education about disability.

Action: Establish collaboration between Council's Access Committee and all Council departments. Suggested change for action - Embedding of accessibility and inclusion requirements/content across Council.

Indicator: Each Department is able to demonstrate how it has considered accessibility and inclusion into its everyday activities. (this then holds each of your department heads accountable for taking some ownership).

Objective 2 and 4

Action: Continue to provide Council information in multiple formats. Suggest reword: Establish formal process for providing Council information in multiple accessibility friendly formats.

Indicator: XX% increase in number of downloads in the accessibility formats.

Objective 2

Action: Continue to implement the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP)

Indicator: 100% of planned pathway infrastructure for each financial year implemented.

Action: Inclusion requirements to be formally included in the process for allocating community grants

Indicator: 100% of grants (where relevant), have considered and aligned with inclusion and disability objectives.

Have a good weekend. Could you drop me a quick note back just so I know you received the email!!

Thanks
██████████