

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2022 - 2026



newcastle.nsw.gov.au



City of
Newcastle

Acknowledgment

City of Newcastle acknowledges that we operate on the grounds of the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession.

City of Newcastle reiterates its commitment to address disadvantages and attain justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

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A message from our Lord Mayor

Newcastle continues to be the regional heart of the Hunter, drawing in people from a wide catchment for employment, education, tourism, recreation, social and cultural events, services and business. We all know it is a great place to live, work and play, and the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) outlines how we can further enhance access and inclusion for the benefit of people with disabilities and our entire community.

More than one in six residents of Newcastle has a disability. Based upon 2021 population estimates, this means that 30,835 Novocastrians are living with disability, whether it be mild, moderate, or severe. In presenting the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 – 2026, I confirm that Council is committed to ensuring Newcastle is an inclusive community for all people.

Newcastle has benefitted from significant development over the life of the previous DIAP and will continue to do so for the life of this new plan. I am proud that we have been able to deliver more accessible infrastructure for everyday activities: installing adult lift and change facilities at Nobbys Beach and the Newcastle Museum, creating more inclusive play spaces in parks, and improving Local Centres across Newcastle with easier access to local services.

I am pleased that we have been adapting the way we deliver programs, activities and services, as well as the way we communicate with our community. We are not only thinking about accessible infrastructure, but about how people live and interact every day, and how we can deliver our services in a more inclusive way.

Through consultation with the community, we identified that there is more to do, and that inclusion is everyone's business.

Thank you to those who contributed through the consultation stage to form this plan, and to our Access Inclusion Advisory Committee for their advice and input towards implementing our previous Plan and in the development of this Plan. I look forward to the Committee once again assisting in the monitoring and implementation of the new plan over the next four years.

Councillor Nuatali Nelmes
Lord Mayor of Newcastle

Statement of Commitment

Through this DIAP and other actions, City of Newcastle (CN) commits to:

Advocate for the equal rights of all

Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our city and community

Collaborate with business, government and community groups to make Newcastle a more disability-confident city

Improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Provide services, programs, events and facilities that are respectful and inclusive of people with disabilities, their families, carers and significant others.

Acknowledgment of language.


CN chooses to utilise person first language such as "people with disabilities" acknowledging that we put the person first. This is consistent with the language used within the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities.

CN acknowledges that there is diversity within disability and that some people prefer what is known as "identity first" language, for example using the term "Autistic person" instead of "person with Autism".

CN acknowledges and respects that individuals may prefer one use of language over the other.



Newcastle
Lions


Count Us In
Program Guide
and Event Calendar

all abilities
natural activities

Integrating with International, National and State Policy

CN's second DIAP is aligned with the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS) 2021-2031 and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2022-2026.

The Federal and State Governments released their new Disability Plans in December 2021 and November 2021 respectively. Themes of each plan have remained consistent with the former plans, however the Federal plan, ADS 2021-2031 also aims to deliver Targeted Action Plans on specific focus areas, this may present more opportunities to deliver more closely aligned actions into the future.

Federal, State, and Local Disability Plans all recognise that people with disabilities should be treated equally to any other members of the community. The UN Convention, the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* state that people with disabilities are entitled to enjoy all human rights, and to have these rights protected by law.

Section 4 of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* sets out legal protection for people with disabilities to have the right to:

Respect for their worth and dignity as individuals

Participate in, and contribute to, social and economic life and be supported to develop and enhance their skills and experience

Realise their physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and intellectual capacities

Make decisions, as other members of the community do, that affect their lives (including decisions involving risk) to the full extent of their capacity to do so, and to be supported in making those decisions if they want or require support

Respect for their cultural and linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs

Have their privacy and confidentiality respected

Live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation

Access information in a way that is appropriate for their disability and cultural background, and enables them to make informed choices

Pursue complaints, as other members of the community do

Have acknowledgement of, and respect for, the crucial role of families, carers and other significant persons in the lives of people with disabilities, and the importance of preserving relationships with families and carers and other significant persons

Respect for the needs of children with disability as they mature, and for their rights as equal members of the community

Respect for the changing abilities, strengths, goals and needs of people with disabilities as they age.



What does NSW legislation require a Disability Plan to include?

Section 12 (3) of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* requires each public authority to prepare a Disability Action Plan, which must:

Explain how the council regards disability principles

Detail strategies for providing access to public buildings, events and facilities

Provide details about how to access information

Explain how employment opportunities for people with disabilities are to be supported

Demonstrate opportunities for people with disabilities to access the full range of services and activities available in the community

Include details of consultation about the plan with people with disabilities

Explain how the plan supports the goals of the State Disability Inclusion Plan

Through this DIAP, CN aligns its strategies and actions with the principles defined by Section 4 of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, which are also consistent with the national and international frameworks.



Types of Disability

Mental	Hearing	Vision	Cognitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Depression • PTSD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf • Hard of Hearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blind • Low Vision • Partially Sighted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism • ADHD • Learning Disabilities

Source: Inclusive Design

What are the focus areas of the DIAP?

The DIAP's four focus areas (consistent with the NSW DIP) aim to create long-term change to enhance inclusion, both within CN's delivery and across the community. These are:

Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Creating liveable communities

Supporting access to meaningful employment

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

What is classified as a disability?

The UN Convention and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* describe 'disability' as long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a large reform piece implemented by the Federal Government. It has resulted in significant changes to the disability services sector and to the way some people with disabilities access services. Many people with disabilities are not eligible for the services provided under the NDIS, and it is not a vehicle to achieve overall disability inclusion across our community.

The NDIS and other reform actions highlight that *inclusion is everyone's business*. CN and the community can all make a difference. Implementing the strategies and actions of this DIAP will demonstrate that our city is an inclusive place to live, work and play.

Our city

Community Strategic Plan

In 2030, Newcastle will be a smart, liveable and sustainable global city

We will celebrate our cultural heritage and history, protect our natural environment and support our people to thrive and prosper. As an inclusive community, we will strive for equal rights and access for all. We will face challenges with integrity, innovation and creativity. Support business growth, education and employment opportunities. We will be a leading lifestyle city with vibrant public places and spaces, connected transport networks and unique urbanism. This will be achieved within a framework of open and collaborative leadership.

Vision Definitions

Smart - is a city that puts its community at its centre; enjoys smart and digitally connected public and urban infrastructure; and works to develop a thriving ecosystem to drive innovation and creativity.

Liveable - are the factors that influence our quality of life, including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.

Sustainable - are both environmental and financial sustainability. Sustainability is about meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Inclusive - is used to reflect the community's desire to not just be welcoming and open, but to actively recognise and embrace differences.




Community - refers to everyone; residents, workers, businesses, visitors and stakeholders.

Newcastle Urbanism - (refer to CN's Local Planning Strategy) is the built environment that addresses public spaces, is scaled for pedestrians, and respects culture, heritage and place. It includes urban form that encourages safe and activated places, promotes active and healthy communities and provides opportunities for social interaction.

Our Global Commitment – The Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015, Australia was one of 193 countries to commit to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since this commitment, CN has been proactive in the strategic implementation of the SDGs and has included them in core strategic documents.

CN has an essential role in educating and leading the achievement of the SDGs for the region. Their core alignment and implementation has been outlined as follows.

	SDG and targets	How it is addressed in the DIAP
4. Quality Education 	SDG 4: Quality Education – Ensure inclusive and equitable high-quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	Education has a strong link to employment outcomes. CN will partner with stakeholders to enhance opportunities for learning, especially lifelong learning.
8. Decent Work & Economic Growth 	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	Employment is a key theme of the DIAP. People with disabilities have a lower average income than others. CN will increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities internally and across the community, enhancing individual prosperity and community/economic benefit.
10. Reduced Inequalities 	SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities – Reduce inequality within and among countries.	The DIAP's actions aim to reduce inequality by providing equal or equivalent access to employment, services, facilities, infrastructure and programs.
17. Partnerships For The Goals 	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.	The DIAP is centred around a collaborative approach to implementation. Our actions will be achieved through partnerships, including co-design by people with disabilities.



Newcastle at a glance

Our population


Newcastle population 2016: **160,700**
Population by 2041: **199,700**

Greater Newcastle population 2016: **569,900**
Population by 2041: **699,200**



Source: planning.nsw.gov.au

Our people



Median age **37**
31% residents aged under 24
13.9% residents born overseas




3.5% of our population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Source: Remplan, Id profile

Our work



Regional employment hub
102,800 jobs
54,376 workers live in another local government area



19.7% jobs in healthcare and social assistance

Source: Remplan

Our economy



Median property price
\$~600,000



\$17.62 billion gross regional product



Largest industry
Manufacturing
\$4.86 billion in economic output



5 million annual visitors

Source: Id profile, Remplan

Demographics and Disability

People with disabilities are diverse and disability can be very different from person to person. Disability affects many people, directly and indirectly, in large and small ways. It can be physical, intellectual, sensory and/or psychosocial (i.e. arising from a person's mental health experience). It can be temporary or permanent and can occur from birth or during a person's lifetime. Some disabilities are visible, such as people using a mobility aid to get around, whereas others are invisible, such as a person who is hard of hearing or has Autism. Disability encompasses people across all socioeconomic and demographic groups.

Knowing how many people in an area are living with disabilities, as well as their characteristics, can improve our understanding of their varying experiences. This information helps to foster inclusivity for all by informing planning and provision of the supports, services and communities that enable people with disabilities to participate fully in everyday life.

In 2018, the diversity of people with disabilities in Australia (4.4 million people) included:

76.8% who had a physical condition (including arthritis, stroke, acquired brain injury, hearing impairment, vision impairment)

– 29.6% of which had a musculoskeletal condition

23.2% who had a mental or behavioural condition

– 7.5% of which had psychoses and mood affective conditions (including stress-related conditions, depression, dementia)

– 6.5% of which had an intellectual and/or developmental condition (including autism spectrum conditions).

Disability prevalence was similar for males (17.6%) and females (17.8%). The likelihood of living with disability increases with age, meaning the longer people live, the more likely they are to experience some form of disability. In 2018:

7.6% of children aged 0–14 years had a disability

9.3% of people aged 15–24 years had a disability

13% of people aged 15–64 years had a disability

50% of people aged 65 years and over had a disability. (ABS 2019b)

Numbers of people living with disability

In Australia, the number of people living with disability is increasing. In 2018, 4.4 million Australians had a disability. Based on 18% of Australians having a disability, that number is estimated to have risen to 4.6 million in 2021 – almost one in every six people. While there has been a slight decrease in the disability prevalence rate across Australia from 18.5% in 2009, the prevalence rate continues to remain relatively stable.

For the Newcastle local government area (LGA), the actual number of Novocastrians living with disability is not available through the ABS Census or other sources with currency. However, extrapolating the 18% of the Australian population living with disability to the Newcastle LGA suggests an estimated 30,835 Novocastrians are living with disability (based on the Newcastle LGA population being 171,307 in 2021).



Level of core activity limitation

Of the estimated 4.6 million Australians who live with disability, approximately 88.5% or nearly 4.1 million people have a limitation on the core activities of communication, mobility or self-care, and/or a schooling or employment restriction. Of the total Australian population, it is estimated that:

5.8% have a 'profound or severe core activity limitation'

8.5% have a 'moderate or mild core activity limitation'

1.4% have a 'schooling or employment restriction'.

In the Newcastle LGA, available data from 2016 estimates 9,100 people had 'profound or severe core activity limitation' (5.9% of 155,411 LGA residents – this rate is slightly higher than the Australian rate of 5.8% and the NSW rate of 5.4%). Of these Novocastrians, 4,174 were male (45%) and 5,024 were female (55%). For these figures, core activity limitation is defined as 'needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a long-term health condition (lasting six months or more), a disability (lasting six months or more), or 'old age'. (Note: this definition is narrower than the earlier listed definition.)

In addition, just over 8,500 people (5.5%) in the Newcastle LGA in 2016 did not state whether or not they had a 'profound or severe core activity limitation (needing assistance with core activities)', so it is possible that the actual number and proportion of people with disabilities who have profound or severe core activity limitation is higher than stated above. Since numbers of those living with disability who have 'moderate or mild core activity limitation' are not available at the local level, it is possible those numbers could be equal to or greater than those with profound or severe core activity limitation in the Newcastle LGA.

Carers and support needs

Of the Australian population (aged 15 years and older), 2.7 million people are carers providing informal or unpaid assistance to family members or others because of a disability, long-term health condition or problems related to old age. Of this 2.7 million people, 15,600 live in the Newcastle LGA (2016). For Newcastle, this represents 12% of the population over 15 years of age, compared to the Australian rate of 11.6% and the NSW rate of 12%

In the Newcastle LGA in 2016, just over 10,000 people (aged 15 years and over; 8%) did not state whether or not they 'provided unpaid assistance', so the actual number and proportion of carers in the LGA could be higher than that recorded. Also, there is limited information capturing figures for young carers (under the age of 15 years) across the LGA

Of the people who 'provide unpaid assistance' in the Newcastle LGA over the age of 15 years, females are more likely to be carers (59%) than males (41%)

In Australia (2018), 37.4% of primary carers to someone with a disability have a disability themselves, compared to 15.3% of non-carers who have a disability

Approximately 60% of people with disabilities need assistance with at least one activity in daily life

As of 2020, 400,000 Australians are supported by the NDIS

Approximately 230,000 people under the age of 65 receive services under the National Disability Agreement.



Disability and diversity

Some people with disabilities may experience multiple layers of disadvantage and discrimination. Racism, ageism, sexism and ableism may all be present in the day to day life of an individual. This intersection of layers of potential prejudice and disadvantage can exacerbate employment, health, social, financial and other outcomes.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of all ages (living in private households) have a higher prevalence of disability than the general population, being 24% compared to 18% nationally and 17% in NSW (2018).

Across Newcastle 3.5% of our population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and this equates to over 1000 first nationals people having disability.

The developing Social Strategy of CN along with the DIAP outline how we can better acknowledge the diversity of our community.

Employment of people with disabilities

53% of people with disabilities participate in the workforce, compared with 83% of people with no reported disability (AIH&W 2020)

The weekly median income of people with disabilities is \$465 – less than half that of people with no reported disability

Graduates with disabilities take 61.5% longer to gain full-time employment than other graduates

Almost one in five (18.9%) people with disabilities aged 15–24 years experienced discrimination. In almost half of those instances, the source of discrimination is an employer

34% of people with disabilities are managers and professionals

The unemployment rate for people with disabilities in NSW increased from 8.2% in 2015 to 10.2% in 2018. In contrast, the unemployment rate for people without disabilities decreased from 4.8% in 2015 to 4.2% in 2018.

Disability inclusivity

A 2017 Australian Human Rights Commission report identified that:

36% of people with disabilities are often treated less favourably than customers without a disability

28% of people with disabilities experienced discrimination by one or more of the organisations they had recently interacted with

One in three people with disabilities report that their customer needs are often unmet

31% of people with disabilities have avoided situations because of their disabilities.



A snapshot of people with lived experience of disability in Newcastle

Estimates of the number of people living with disability

People with profound or severe disability in Newcastle LGA in 2016¹:



- 9,197 people (or 5.9% of the population) had a 'profound or severe disability, defined as people "needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a disability, long term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age" (NSW = 5.4%)
- An additional 8,549 (5.5% of population) did not state whether or not they had a need for assistance
- Had increased 2.1% since 2011.



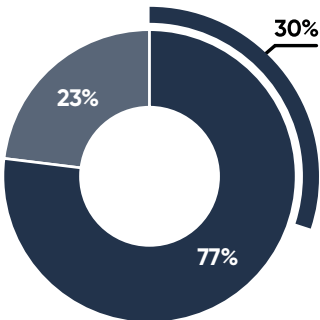
A disability is any condition that restricts a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions. Almost 90% of disabilities are not visible.

The likelihood of living with disability increases with age.

- 31% of 55-64-year olds are living with disability.
- Almost 9 in 10 people aged 90 and over (88%) have a disability

17% of the NSW population had a 'reported disability' in 2018², as opposed to 5.4% being recorded as 'requiring assistance' in the 2016 Census- suggesting that the number of people with disability in Newcastle may be higher.

In June 2020³, there were **7,542 people** receiving the Disability Support pension in the Newcastle LGA, being 6.8% of people aged 16 to 64 years (NSW=6.4%). This has decreased since June 2017, when there were 8,385 or 7.8% (NSW=5.3%)



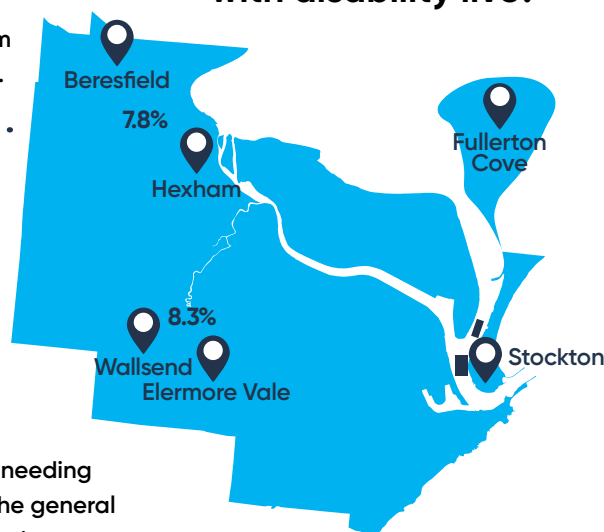
In Australia in 2018 of people living with disability:⁴

- 77% reported a physical disorder as their main condition, the most common being a musculoskeletal disorder (30%)
- 23% reported a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition.

In Newcastle LGA in 2016⁵:

- Stockton - Fullerton Cove SA2 had the highest proportion of people 'needing assistance' (16%) followed by Wallsend - Elernmore Vale (8.3%) and Beresfield - Hexham (7.8%). In total, these 3 areas accounted for 2,687 people.

Where do people with disability live?



Age

In Newcastle LGA in 2016⁶:

- 74% of people who required assistance were aged 45 years and over (NSW=77%)
- 35% were 75 years and over (NSW=39%)
- The largest age bracket was for 85 years and over (19%)
- Only 12% were under 20 years of age.

Although there was a 5% increase in the number of people needing assistance from 2011 to 2016 (compared to 4.6% growth in the general population), there were marked differences in changes in various age groups:

- younger people between 5 and 34 years = 31 to 38% increase
- older people = decreases of up to 19% (75-84 years).

Income



In the Newcastle LGA in 2016⁷:

- Only 21% of people 'requiring assistance' had a weekly personal income of \$650 or more, compared to 60% of people not requiring assistance
- The most represented income brackets for people 'requiring assistance' were between \$300-\$500 per week – at 44%, compared to 18% of people not requiring assistance
- The proportion of people requiring assistance who did not state their income was 15%, compared with only 2% of people not requiring assistance.

Employment and labour force participation

In the Newcastle LGA in 2016, of people over 15 years who needed assistance with core activities⁸:

- 88% were not in the labour force (31% for people who have no need for assistance)
- 9.6% were employed (713 people) (63.6% for people who had no need for assistance)
- Unemployment rate was 17.7% (7.3% for people who had no need for assistance) – 60 were looking for full-time work and 93 for part-time work



Education level

In the Newcastle LGA in 2016, of people who needed assistance with core activities⁹:

- 25.7% had a secondary education of Year 9 or below (7.8% for people who did not require assistance)
- 4.9% had a Bachelor degree (18.2% for people who did not require assistance)
- 1.2% had a Postgraduate degree (5.6% for people who did not require assistance)
- 23% did not state or adequately describe their educational level (6.5% of people who did not require assistance)



¹ ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder
² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020. Cat No 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018.
³ Public Health Information Development Unit, Feb 2021 and 2020.
⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020. Cat No 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018.
⁵ ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder
⁶ ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder
⁷ ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder
⁸ ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder
⁹ ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder

A summary sheet of 'Demographic analysis to inform Newcastle City Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan
Prepared by Jan Fallding, May 2021

NB:

- SA = Statistical Area (geographical area used in Population Census)
- All references unless specified are: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census: data for Newcastle LGA

Economic benefit of universally accessible businesses and employing people with disabilities

Cities are enhanced when everyone can actively participate in social and economic life. Improving accessibility and inclusion of a city can attract domestic and international tourism. The ageing population of Australia also indicates that there will be a higher demand for accessible tourism, as the prevalence of disability increases with age.

Economic analysis by Monash University indicates that retail environments with universal accessibility can have a 20–25% higher turnover when compared to non-accessible environments. In 2019, PwC Australia identified that the annual disposable income of people living with disability is \$40 billion, and that there is potential for a \$4 billion increase in retail revenue by designing better products and services.

Regarding employment, research has shown that 89% of organisations that employ people with disabilities identify positive benefits, 61% report increased workplace morale, 49% indicate an increased ability to fill skill gaps and 42% report increased productivity.

Of employees with disabilities, 90% record productivity rates equal to or greater than other workers and 86% have average or superior attendance records.

'Australia's future prosperity depends on our ability to include people who bring difference in all its many dimensions to our national endeavours.'

PROFESSOR IAN HARPER, DEAN OF MELBOURNE BUSINESS SCHOOL

Work place inclusion starts the conversation for social inclusion. When a person is engaged in meaningful employment, earning a wage, it breaks a cycle of reliance on pensions and allowances as a primary source of income.

Why does workforce inclusion for people with disability matter?

Increasing the disposable income of people with disability, through employment, is projected to increase Australia's GDP by \$50 billion by 2050.¹

<https://www.dss.gov.au/indigenous/indigenous-employment/indigenous-employment-2019-2020>

Please Come In

FIRE SAFETY DOOR
Do Not Obstruct

NEWCASTLE STORY

Support Program

Our strategic approach

With the introduction of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, it became a mandatory requirement for local government authorities to have a DIAP. CN was the first council in NSW to adopt its mandatory DIAP, developing our plan a year earlier than required. Our first DIAP defined how we would undertake specific actions to reduce potential barriers faced by people with disabilities when living in, working in and visiting our LGA.

CN's DIAP is aligned with the NSW Government's Disability Inclusion Plan 2022-2025. Its aim is to remove barriers within systems and attitudes to give people with disabilities a better opportunity to live a meaningful life and enjoy the full benefits of membership in the community. This is achieved not only by actions within our organisation, but also by actions and collaboration focussed on the broader community.

The four key focus areas of CN's DIAP are aligned with the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2022-2026.

Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Creating liveable communities

Supporting access to meaningful employment

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

The initial DIAP (2016-2019) had 18 strategies with 57 actions. Over the life of the plan, we learnt that it was broad and ambitious, and could be improved by being:

More specific on internal delivery responsibilities and drivers

More effectively implemented through broader staff training

Better measured, monitored and reported on.



Our Progress

The initial DIAP achieved significant progress in multiple areas across the organisation. In total, 55 of the 57 actions have been completed or progressed towards completion, while two have been reconsidered and will be achieved by means other than the DIAP.

Some highlights of the initial DIAP include:

Establishing the Access Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC), whose members include people with lived experience of disabilities, carers, disability services sector employees and other disability advocates

The Count Us In Newcastle program, a month-long program of events and activities focussed on disability inclusion and increased engagement with the broader community

Installation of accessible adult lift and change facilities at Nobbys Beach and Newcastle Museum, and an audit of other potential locations for these higher-level facilities

Inclusion of people with lived experience of disabilities in co-design of specific projects and programs, e.g. Stevenson Park, Foreshore Park, Newcastle Ocean Baths

Incorporating inclusive design and consultation in our Local Centres Upgrade Program, to achieve accessibility improvements

Inclusion of accessible activities in events e.g. implementation of sensory zones at New Year's Eve celebrations

Training of external event organisers on how to run inclusive events, and encouragement to plan accessible activities and provide access information

Staff training on disability awareness and creating more accessible content, programs and built environments

Delivery of new and improved infrastructure in the public domain, including accessible and inclusive playground features

Facilities improvements, e.g. the introduction of wedge mats for better seating options at Civic Theatre for wheelchair users; improved access to City Hall via automatic doors

Improvement in program planning and inclusive customer service delivery at CN facilities including Newcastle Art Gallery, Libraries, Newcastle Museum and Civic Theatre

Data sharing to assist with better orientation and mobility across the city

Publishing of online mapping of accessible parking and other features

Development of an Inclusive Sports and Cultural Activities Guide

Increase in accessible-format CN documents available in hard copy and online.

Our Role 2022–2026

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by local councils as part of the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. It identifies the main priorities and aspirations of our community and provides a clear set of strategic directions to achieve the community's vision with a 10-year horizon. CN is currently reviewing our Newcastle 2030 CSP and working towards developing our next CSP, Newcastle 2040.

A guiding principle of the Newcastle 2030 CSP is 'consider social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights'. The development of the DIAP 2022–2026 demonstrates how we are aiming to deliver on the above social justice principles as they relate to disability inclusion within our community.

Many of the ways we deliver on social outcomes are outlined via our CSP. However, the DIAP specifically outlines our various roles in creating a more disability-friendly community. Our DIAP actions are focussed on how we will act as an organisation internally over the next four years, and on what we hope to achieve in the wider community.

CN will undertake a range of roles in delivering positive outcomes for the community, including the following:

We will **collaborate** with State and Federal Governments, community-based organisations and the business community, ensuring our collective efforts are aligned and targeted to achieve the greatest outcomes. We will aim to add value to each other's programs and projects for the benefit of our community.

We will **advocate**, where necessary and appropriate, to improve access to services and achieve positive social outcomes related to disability service provision and inclusion.

We will **provide** facilities, grants, services and programs that enhance and maintain the social, cultural, health and recreational needs of our community.

We will **lead** on key community issues, mobilise allies as needed, bring together partners, and facilitate and negotiate for our community.

We will enable our community to deliver equity for all its members through communication, planning, research and strategy.

We will be a **capacity builder**, facilitating local responses to identified needs. We will build capacity within the community for people to connect and support each other, reducing isolation and enhancing a sense of belonging.

We will **demonstrate** co-design principles, support evidence-based approaches, mentor and encourage innovation, and offer grants and/or support to community responses.

We will **build** more liveable places and spaces, accessible buildings, amenities and other infrastructure that caters to an ageing and diverse population.

We acknowledge the diversity within disability and **engage** with people with lived experience to inform our services and the development of solutions. For example, regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, we will listen to community, our Access Inclusion Advisory Committee, Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee and others to better deliver outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation

CN reports to the community on the progress of implementing the DIAP via our Annual Report. NSW Government legislation also requires local governments to submit an annual update on the progress of their DIAPs to the NSW Disability Council.

CN's Access Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC) was established as part of our inaugural DIAP. Through regular meetings, the AIAC shapes and advises on the development, implementation and monitoring of the DIAP. The AIAC's members include people with lived experience of disability, carers, disability service providers, disability advocates and councillor representatives. The committee provides CN staff with the unique opportunity to enhance delivery through insight from highly relevant stakeholders.

The actions identified in this DIAP should not be seen as the only actions CN is undertaking, or will undertake, to promote a more inclusive community between 2022–2026. However, the plan indicates identified focus areas and actions formulated in response to research as well as internal and community consultation.



Our collaboration

In developing this DIAP, CN has undertaken the following research, consultation and engagement activities:

Engaged a demographer to research the profile of disability across the city, including consideration of intersectional factors

Reviewed the previous DIAP and implementation reports

Reviewed other relevant literature, including the Sax Institute review of the NSW DIP 2018

Conducted internal stakeholder engagement with all directorates of CN

Conducted external stakeholder engagement and activities as indicated below:

Online Survey & Have Your Say

Initial consultation was undertaken in late 2019, including an online survey where 106 people participated. The highest three postcode responses were from 2300, 2303 and 2304.

A simplified form was also available on the CN Have Your Say website to broaden opportunity for comment.

In-Person Sessions

In November and December 2019, three community workshops were facilitated by CN and an external engagement specialist, with 29 people attending.

Drop-in Sessions were also hosted at Wallsend Library and Newcastle Library on four separate occasions in November and December 2019 to encourage community members to drop in and make comments.

Public Exhibition Feedback

The draft DIAP was on public exhibition between 24 November 2021 and 10 January 2022. Multiple formats of the draft were produced including accessible pdf, word only and easy read. Key communications activities included a dedicated Have Your Say page, flyers and displays, paid social media posts, newsletter articles, a memo for councillors, and coverage in local media outlets.

Twenty people provided feedback during the public exhibition period. Whilst there was general support of the plan improvements suggested included, clearer and more tangible outputs, improved infrastructure and access (parking, pathways, signage), proposed budget and timing improvements, ongoing collaboration with people with disabilities, including first nations peoples, disability awareness training enhancements, alignment of efforts with other stakeholders, and delivering greater employment outcomes.

Review of the suggestions indicated that the majority are within the 35 actions already identified in the Plan, however there is a desire to see them delivered earlier or more specifically identified.

Theme Consolidation Session

Initially delayed by COVID-19, this session was held in December 2020 at Newcastle Museum with a focus group of 12 people.

Engagement Promotion

Opportunity to be involved with the development of the DIAP was promoted across print media advertising, printed materials, radio advertising, email, online newsletters, social media advertising, and social media posts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Co Design with AIAC of engagement activities

The AIAC were consulted on the design of engagement activities throughout the consultation journey and were often in attendance as participants of face to face and virtual sessions.

Key Messages from Engagement: What you told us

The key message across engagement is that we have made progress as a community, but there is still more to be done.

This is some of what you told us:

CN could more broadly promote accessibility improvements to communicate the value of universal access for the whole community

Tailored communication towards people with disabilities could build community confidence and improve the understanding of progress being made on disability inclusion

Many people with disabilities experience a level of inequality in areas such as recognition, treatment with dignity and respect, appreciation of diversity, and access to economic opportunities, information, resources and employment

Public domain planning needs to routinely include engagement with and consideration of the diversity of disabilities and the realisation of public spaces and infrastructure which accommodate all people, including accessible parking and toilets

Access to information could be improved – such as accessible print formats and use of Australian Sign Language (Auslan)

Planning of engagement activities, events and programming should routinely include consideration of accessibility and inclusion

A higher profile of the AIAC should be supported

CN should aim to be a leader, advocate, capacity builder, business leader and employer of choice for people with disabilities, as well as a provider of inclusive volunteer opportunities

Access to social, recreational and cultural opportunities could be improved

Transport and access could be improved

Opportunity to work with industry to develop and promote inclusive tourism product

More diversity of disabilities should be represented in CN publications

People with disabilities should be supported to be business owners/entrepreneurs

People with disabilities should be considered during natural disasters and emergencies

There should be more accountability for delivery and improvement of accessibility and inclusion.

Our Focus Areas

Attitudes and behaviours

In 2020, the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health released a report based on a national survey of community attitudes towards people with disabilities in Australia. This report confirms why addressing attitudes and behaviours is so important in creating a more inclusive community.

'Attitudes can have a significant impact on the lives of people with disability. Attitudes are related to disability-based discrimination and social exclusion, which in turn impact the health and wellbeing of people with disability.'

In preparing the DIAP, CN collected comments through local consultation. These comments identified that many people with disabilities in our community experience inequality in areas such as recognition, treatment with dignity and respect, customer experience, and access to information, resources, economic opportunities and employment.

The above factors reinforce why this DIAP includes actions aimed at addressing attitudes and behaviours across our organisation and the wider community.

In our 2020 DIAP Consultation Report, we asked, *'What can we do to help build positive attitudes both within CN and the broader community?'*

The top three responses to this question were:

More inclusive and accessible events and spaces where all people can participate equitably

Consult with people who have lived experience

More public awareness and education.

Progress Example

At the request of the AIAC, CN developed a three year 'Count Us In Newcastle' program as a way to demonstrate the contribution that people with disabilities make to the community. Instead of a one-day event on 3 December each year on the International Day of People with Disability, 'Count Us In' is a month-long program including disability awareness training, cultural and arts events, inclusive sports and games, and a range of other events to highlight inclusion.

Count Us In Newcastle was held in 2019 and 2021, with the 2020 program being impacted by COVID-19. In 2021, 43 events were hosted, with nearly 1,000 people attending a wide range of activities. This included CN supporting the NSW Sports Inclusion Day at Newcastle Basketball Stadium, where 300 children participated in 10 different sports. The Count Us In Newcastle program was diverse, with everything from sessions on Guide Dog etiquette and improving customer service to events including a karaoke night, self-defence and art classes, accessible fishing at the wetlands, and salsa and Zumba dance lessons.

Learning Example

As a result of asking the community for ideas for the Count Us In program through an expression-of-interest process, 17 partnerships were formed and a broader range of events was included in the program. Many of these events were delivered by people with disabilities.

Community Outcome

Training and events are delivered by people with disabilities, enhancing understanding of their contribution to the community.

Staff are better equipped to deliver services in a disability-confident manner.

Opportunities for people without disabilities to engage with people with disabilities enhances understanding for all, builds networks and provides positive experiences.



Liveable communities

The NSW Government defines 'liveable communities' as places where people have the opportunity to exercise their rights to live, learn, work and play, to feel safe, to belong, to raise a family and to grow old. People with disabilities can experience fewer opportunities to engage with their community as a result of various barriers – constructed barriers in the built environment, as well as barriers to accessing transport, housing or other local services and supports.

Creating liveable communities is about more than just increasing physical accessibility. It is about creating opportunities for social participation, improving the quality of personal and commercial interactions, and ensuring equivalent access to information in various formats and platforms.

Liveable communities:

Enhance personal independence

Enable people with disabilities to live in the community instead of an institutional setting

Provide opportunities for people of all ages, ability levels and backgrounds to engage fully in civic, economic and social life.

In its 2019 report, *The Benefit of Designing for Everyone*, the Centre for Inclusive Design acknowledges that design that embraces diversity maximises widespread access and usability. Both individuals and organisations benefit from making inclusive design a standard practice. Inclusive design should be used at the beginning of the design process, as the cost to implement inclusive design increases the later it is introduced.

The challenge for CN is to make sure our public spaces, facilities, information and services are inclusive and accessible for all. This makes our city more attractive not only to residents but to visitors and tourists, improving our reputation as an inclusive community.

These factors reinforce why liveable communities are so vital to people with disabilities and the community as a whole. The actions below state how we aim to address these factors over the next four years.



Progress Example

As CN upgrades various Local Centres, inclusive design and delivery has seen significant improvements for accessibility. Some of the features that improve liveability in these Local Centres include examples such as choice of pavement material, creation of continuous pathways of travel, increased pathway widths, street furniture that supports people across the life span, accessible water fountains, improved accessible parking, safer crossings, and improved entry levels to premises.

CN has been implementing more inclusive play features and designs into our parks and playgrounds. Opportunities to encourage play for all children are important. Instead of developing separate play areas, prioritising inclusive features and design promotes greater interaction between people with disabilities and people without disabilities. Blackbutt Reserve, Brickworks Park and Stevenson Park are just a few examples.

Learning Example

CN makes significant investment in Local Centres, playgrounds and parks. It is more difficult to retrofit these locations during upgrades, meaning that consideration of ways to 'hub' features together to increase connectivity is vital – good design leads to savings in the longer term. It is equally important to listen to people with lived experience of disabilities so that the principles of co-design can be put into practice. This was demonstrated in CN's collaboration with Variety Australia, the Children's Charity, on the design of Foreshore Park.

Community Outcome

A current average of \$7 million is being spent each year on Local Centres upgrades, which include significant access improvements.

Maximum benefit for the community is obtained by focussing on improving access in Local Centres, and by delivering improvements in multiple locations across the LGA where people meet and do their daily tasks.

Making local communities accessible promotes independence and dignity for all community members.

Providing inclusive play equipment and playgrounds allows for people of all abilities to play together and encourages intergenerational play.

Employment

Access to meaningful employment for people with disabilities has a significant impact on health outcomes and socioeconomic circumstances. People with disabilities have lower personal incomes and are twice as likely to be unemployed as people without disabilities. With an ageing population, Newcastle and Australia can expect to have more people with disabilities within the workforce in the future.

Disability inclusiveness within employment has been shown to lead to:

Increased levels of engagement and productivity

Better workplace morale

Diversity in problem-solving approaches

Enhanced teamwork

Reduced absenteeism

Opportunities to learn about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities firsthand.

Employment opportunities contribute to a sense of self-empowerment and identity for people with disabilities. This can lead to positive health outcomes for the individual, as well as a potentially decreased reliance on social services, which has greater economic impacts.

In its 2019 review of the NSW DIP and sample DIAPs from across NSW, the Sax Institute identified that one effective measure to improve employment of people with disabilities within an organisation was the establishment of a Disability Employment Network (DEN). These networks are voluntary workplace groups comprised of employees with disability, employees with carer responsibilities and employees with an interest in disability inclusion.

Through local consultation, the following actions were suggested to address employment barriers (top three response themes):

Awareness, support and education for employers (29%)

Increase flexible working hours (16%)

Hire more people with disabilities (16%).

Additional suggestions included more training programs for people with disabilities, as well as incentives for businesses to employ people with disabilities, advertise targeted positions, provide more accessible parking and implement supportive workplace policies.

Progress Example

The inaugural DIAP identified that staff training on disability awareness could be enhanced. In 2016 and 2018, diverse programs of disability-related training were offered to staff, ranging from training in technical skills (such as conducting a building access audit) to creating accessible online content, delivering accessible events, improving access in libraries, museums and galleries, and implementing universal access in outdoor design. In total, 250 staff took part in these activities.

In 2019 and 2021, Count Us In Newcastle also offered and delivered opportunities for staff and some community members to take part in our training efforts, building on our desire to ensure Newcastle is an inclusive city to reside in, work in or visit.

Moving forward, CN will continue to develop our capacity to enhance diversity. We are currently developing an internal plan on diversity and inclusion, which will be led by our People and Culture directorate and will further build on our DIAP progress.

Learning Example

Cultural change takes time, both in a community sense and within an organisation. Significant and ongoing effort is required to listen effectively to people with disabilities about how to improve employment and deliver more inclusive programs and services, but this process can yield benefits for the whole community. Every dollar spent on ensuring more people with disabilities are in employment returns great value to the community and the individual.

Our developing Diversity and Inclusion Plan will guide us internally on this journey to ensure we increase the employment percentage of people with disabilities at CN. Our DIAP actions will also support our efforts to promote employment of people with disabilities within the broader community.

Community Outcome

Auslan training for staff in 2021/2022

Will help prepare our city for the Deaf Games and promotes the message that CN is a disability-friendly place to work.

Staff training via Guide Dogs NSW helps our customer-facing staff better understand how to provide services for people with low or no vision and helps create a more disability-friendly workforce.

Count Us In Newcastle provided employment opportunities for people with disabilities to show their job-readiness and skills.

CN's support of various Community Disability Alliance Hunter programs and Challenge Community Services' Start Up Program has promoted entrepreneurial opportunities and peer support employment projects.

CN's support of the National Innovation Games in 2021 focussed on disability inclusion.

Amplify Access & Achieve Purposeful Profit, a NewSkills program for the business community, demonstrates CN's commitment to business and employment opportunities.

Systems and processes

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

CN will continuously act to improve our systems and processes, enabling easier access to information, services and activities. We will actively encourage people with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of citizenship by providing equitable access to mainstream services.

Community feedback has identified that progress is being made to improve access to CN facilities and services. The community acknowledged Libraries, the Civic Theatre and Newcastle Museum have become more inclusive in their understanding, design and delivery of services. Examples include the trial of an orientation app, improved access within buildings, floor wedges for the Civic Theatre, automatic doors in City Hall, specific tours and programs, enhancement of staff skills, removal of high counters, and a better understanding of both the diversity of disabilities and the customer journey for people with disabilities.

Another highlight from the last four years has been the implementation of the AIAC. Feedback from Committee members indicates the group provided opportunities for engagement and direct access to both elected Council, CN staff and organisational processes for people with disabilities.

DIAP consultation identified the following:

Web content accessibility and document production is improving, however the number of documents available in alternative formats could increase, e.g., Easy Read, large print, Word only and accessible PDF

Engagement activities and communication processes have improved; however the continued use of interpreters and captions is vital

Event planning and delivery has improved, resulting in more inclusive events

Programs like Count Us In highlight staff disability considerations in service delivery

A commitment to increasing disability awareness training is evident

Co-design with stakeholders on key projects

Services like the Library Home Delivery service and the Bin Assistance program offered by Waste Services require increased promotion

A strong past focus has been on physical access considerations. A better understanding of the diversity of disabilities can make systems and processes more inclusive, supporting those with invisible disabilities.

CN will continue to actively engage with people with disabilities, their families, carers and significant others to enhance access to mainstream services.

We will also work with peak bodies and advocates to better understand how we can improve. Our actions on page 40 outline next steps.



Progress Example

Accessible Content/Website Accessibility

CN distributes a high volume of collateral every year, as well as documents and forms that assist us and the community in the delivery of services. Whether it is information about what's on in Newcastle, community engagement that is underway, new building projects, or media releases, our communications are legally required to be provided in an inclusive way, available in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

CN audited our web content and determined that improvements can be made to comply with accessibility requirements. We implemented a monitoring tool to also assist with this task. We are committed to achieving Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA compliance.

Over the last four years, CN has implemented staff training sessions about creating accessible content online and in hard copy. We continue to enhance the accessibility of our information for our community.

Being able to produce accessible content ensures that we encourage people with disabilities to come to events, visit our city, start their own business or undertake another economic activity, participate in the democratic process, or socialise in one of our venues.

Learning Example

The creation of inclusive content cannot be localised to one team or service unit. CN has many touchpoints with the community, and at times via third parties through grants. This requires an understanding of the maxim: inclusion is everybody's business. Content producers at CN will continue to enhance their skills and understanding of alternative formats, improve knowledge of mandatory requirements, and undergo training to facilitate improved delivery. In addition, information about how and where to access alternative formats will be promoted more broadly to increase community engagement with local government processes. We need to talk more with the community about alternate formats.

Community Outcome

The DIAP is produced in multiple formats including Easy Read, Word only and accessible PDF. Other strategic documents are also produced in multiple formats. CN utilises current and emerging platforms to reach our audience and will continue to enhance the provision of accessible information for our customers.

CN's Customer Experience Service Unit works to continually improve the customer experience focus of the organisation through process improvement. This is delivered primarily via the Customer Service Centre and the Customer Experience Strategy, though all service units have a role in delivering inclusive content for our customers.

US III

Programs for all abilities

Inclusive sport, recreation and cultural activities



Programs for all abilities

Inclusive sport, recreation and cultural activities



References and Key Documents

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Statement of Continued Commitment: National Disability Strategy (2020)

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Action Plan

Focus Area 1: Attitudes and Behaviours

City of Newcastle (CN) demonstrates positive attitudes and behaviours regarding disability inclusion across all aspects of our organisation and acts to facilitate positive attitudes and behaviours throughout the community.

Objective	Action	Output/Outcome
1. Demonstrate leadership in public programming.	1. Develop and deliver programming that promotes or enhances attitudes and behaviours related to disability inclusion and reflects the diversity of disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CN delivers and supports programs that enhance positive attitudes and behaviours and are accessible and inclusive.
2. Improve CN's visual representation of people with disabilities in content, promoting abilities and participation in all aspects of life, including employment at CN.	2. Use content that includes people with disabilities when representing/depicting the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporation of people with disability into photography brief where possible • City wide stock-photography shoot undertaken to include people with disability • Positive images of people with disabilities are regularly represented in CN publications and content • Increased awareness of disabilities across content producers and the community • Increased representation of staff with disabilities • Improved stock of images representing diversity.
3. Equip CN staff with knowledge and skills to demonstrate appropriate attitudes and behaviours regarding disability inclusion.	3. Enhance disability awareness component within staff induction process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via induction, all new staff complete an introduction to disability awareness and understand CN's legislated responsibility and commitment to disability inclusion.
	4. Deliver and promote staff opportunities for disability awareness training and specialist skills development training related to disability inclusion on an annual basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff have the opportunity to undertake disability awareness training and specialist training related to their role, and are accessing this training • Knowledge and skills are enhanced, improving customer experience • Staff are trained on accessible content development (including online content) and differentiated accessible formats of publications.
	5. Facilitate Access Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the AIAC, CN staff and councillors meet regularly to discuss implementation of the DIAP and other disability inclusion-related matters • People with disabilities, carers and significant others, disability advocates and service providers, including people from CALD and ATSI communities are engaged with local government and enhance service provision.
4. Improve promotion of CN programs and services to better inform internal and external stakeholders about continuous improvement in access and inclusion.	6. Promote and inform the community and CN staff about access and inclusion improvements, utilising internal and external communication channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and community have better information about inclusion deliverables from CN. Universal access benefits are appreciated for the whole community • Knowledge of improvements enhances community confidence in access and inclusion • A dedicated communications strategy is developed and implemented, with the primary focus being improvement and achievement in the access and inclusion space.

Responsibility	Timeframe-Target	Measure
City Wide Services	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program enhancements/additions • Numerical reach of programs • People with disabilities delivering, creating, co-designing, and participating in programs • Programs include an accessibility and inclusion statement/information.
Strategy and Engagement	Year 3 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images used include people with disabilities at a minimum of 5% • Year-on-year improvement.
People and Culture	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of disability awareness within staff induction process.
People and Culture	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and percentage of staff undertaking disability awareness and specialist training by directorate per annum • Range of training provided • Percentage of training provided by people with lived experience of disabilities.
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIAC meets a minimum of 4 times a year • Attendance at meetings by members including councillors and senior management • Range of projects brought to AIAC for consultation and advice.
Strategy and Engagement	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 pieces of content delivered annually, e.g. <i>NovoNews</i>, e-newsletters, media releases, social media articles.

Focus Area 2: Liveable Communities

City of Newcastle (CN) acts to create and enhance spaces, infrastructure, experiences, facilities, events, programs, services, opportunities, and neighbourhoods, improving liveability for the whole community. CN does this by listening to the community and seeking to co-design solutions that enhance health, wellbeing, housing, transport, socialisation, recreation, employment, business and other outcomes.

Objective	Action	Output/Outcome
5. Create and contribute to liveable and accessible public places.	7. Continue to improve the accessibility of the public domain via renewal programs, Local Centres upgrades and new capital projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public domain spaces and improvements enhance the liveability and accessibility of the city Increase of accessible shared pathways; creation of accessible connectivity hubs; creation of accessible thresholds and kerb ramps; improved materiality; installation of accessible viewing platforms, Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs), shade structures, accessible signage and inclusive furniture/fittings/play equipment; improved wayfinding Exploration and/or creation of innovative inclusion features in public domain such as designated quiet spaces, sensory areas or smart technology Public domain and recreation infrastructure is accessible; its design, maintenance and management enables people with disabilities to move through the city with dignity and independence.
	8. Upgrade accessible parking information resource linked to geospatial data and seek relevant tech solutions to enhance experience for people seeking accessible parking in Newcastle LGA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit/data management system developed and enacted Improved accessible parking information.
	9. Deliver accessible transport-related infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport-related infrastructure is enhanced and maintained, providing better access.
	10. Identify and deliver improvements to the pedestrian network to facilitate continuous accessible pathways of travel (CAPT).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People can better access streetscapes and shared pathways, and move more safely around the community.
6. Enhance CN assets and facilities to improve access and inclusion outcomes.	11. Identify and prioritise asset and building accessibility upgrades as part of asset management, service-level planning and strategic social infrastructure provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles of inclusion and ageing are considered in social infrastructure planning for access purposes Asset plans use access as a criterion for service levels Audits and upgrades are delivered in a prioritised manner, improving compliance and usability.
	12. Explore opportunities to increase adult accessible change facilities across the LGA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More opportunity exists across the LGA for use of adult lift and change facilities.
	13. Plan and improve access to aquatic services and the coastal environment for swimming etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with disabilities and others have more opportunity to utilise aquatic and coastal swimming locations.
	14. Explore and enhance provision of hearing augmentation systems in community facilities and venues owned by CN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing augmentation systems are increased and promoted in more CN locations, or equivalent access provided New and emerging technologies are considered.

Responsibility	Timeframe-Target	Measure
Infrastructure and Property City Wide Services	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access and inclusion deliverables considered at concept development and preliminary design • People with disabilities and specialist consultants engaged in co-design/planning of identified projects • Delivery of improved access and inclusion in public spaces, park, recreation and sporting assets and facilities.
Governance Strategy and Engagement	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible parking information updated on web and other applications • Tech solutions explored to improve access to accessible parking; upgraded Easy Park app/other.
Governance Infrastructure and Property	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of transport-related upgrades delivered.
Governance Infrastructure and Property	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian network and walking plan delivered • CAPT improvements delivered.
Strategy and Engagement Infrastructure and Property	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of audits conducted • Building upgrades designed and delivered based on asset condition annual inspection results.
Infrastructure and Property	Year 3 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CN delivers two additional lift and change facilities across our portfolio.
City Wide Services Infrastructure and Property	Year 3 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans/audits completed • Number of enhancements/improvements in beach and pool environments delivered • Ocean Baths access upgrade.
City Wide Services Infrastructure and Property	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of improvements delivered.

7. Advocate for improved access and inclusion outcomes in 'whole of government' policy settings.	15. Prepare submissions; participate in reviews, planning and inquiry opportunities; and collaborate with stakeholders to achieve improved outcomes for people with disabilities regarding Transport, Housing, Health, Lifelong Learning, Technology, Social Connectedness and Recreational Opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities are supported by CN advocacy actions.
	16. Deliver actions related to accessible, affordable and adaptable housing identified within the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Implementation Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities have better access to appropriate housing.
	17. Review relevance and currency of DCP controls for universal housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local planning controls support delivery of housing stock options for seniors and people with disabilities.
	18. Deliver an industry education program advocating for the benefits of adaptable design in all new dwellings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better information is obtained about standard of compliance with Silver Level. • Community is more informed about benefits of adaptable housing.
8. Contribute towards programs and services that aim to increase social inclusion and community connections.	19. Assist Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and other stakeholders to identify and improve access to businesses and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase businesses' knowledge and ability to deliver accessible and inclusive services and facilities.
	20. Collaborate with community partners and peak bodies in a community development model to improve sport, culture and recreation outcomes for people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcastle is a city where people with disabilities are included in sport, culture and recreation activities.
	21. Deliver and facilitate more accessible and inclusive events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events in Newcastle are inclusive for people with disabilities • Event organisers have clear information about how to create inclusive events.
	22. Continue to include Social Inclusion as a grant stream within Community Grant Funding Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inclusion is enhanced via grant access • Applications specifically relating to inclusion of people with disabilities are received, with specific emphasis on encouraging grant applications from disability-related organisations.
	23. Leverage new technologies and innovative models to improve liveability for all. Innovation and Internet of Things (IoT)-related projects always consider disability inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation delivers improvements in access and participation of people with disabilities and does not exacerbate digital divide • Technological and other solutions that help people with disabilities navigate within the public domain are supported.

Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of advocacy, submissions made, acknowledgement of submissions, collaborative stakeholder consultation and planning for submissions.
Governance	Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LHS actions monitoring increase in composition of housing stock.
Governance	Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DCP Review undertaken
Governance	Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education program delivered for community and industry stakeholders
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance provided to BIAs and other business leads Improvements made Funding/grants allocated Forums/training delivered.
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities/promotions delivered in partnership with community partners and peak bodies across sport, culture and recreation.
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Annual festival provides lead on accessible event delivery CN run and sponsored events demonstrate leadership and exemplify continuous improvement in inclusion Event organisers are provided with information on how to deliver inclusive events.
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of grants approved related to Social Inclusion via acquittals of grants.
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples where innovation has enhanced inclusion Inclusion-related projects supported/partnerships/collaboration.

Focus Area 3: Employment

City of Newcastle (CN) values diversity and inclusion in the workplace and acts to promote career opportunities for people with disabilities and their carers, both within our organisation and across the community.

Objective	Action	Output/Outcome
9. Lead by example and effectively attract, retain and support a diverse workforce that includes people with disabilities, their carers and their significant others.	24. Review current recruitment, support and retention policies and procedures related to inclusive employment and create a Disability Employment Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resources Diversity and Inclusion Policies and Procedures are best practice and deliver economic and other benefits to the organisation and community.
	25. Implement employment targets and identified positions to enhance percentage of employees with disabilities across the organization, including in leadership roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and percentage of people with disabilities employed at CN increases.
	26. Enhance data collection process of numbers of staff with disabilities and develop internal support/resource/advisory network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff with disabilities are retained and supported.
	27. Promote flexible work arrangements, carer's leave, workplace adjustments, wellness program/s and other options to help staff manage work/life balance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are well informed of employment flexibility and benefits, helping to retain staff.
10. Enhance employment opportunities across the community.	28. Support and promote the employment of people with disabilities across the community, including entrepreneurial opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher percentage of people with disabilities are in employment.
	29. Utilise procurement of goods and services as a way to support enterprises that prioritise employment for people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff awareness increased Data-capture mechanism identified and deployed Procurement utilised for social and local benefit.
	30. Provide inclusive volunteering opportunities across the organisation to enhance skills and experience of people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People with disabilities are welcomed as volunteers within CN and contribute and gain employability benefits.

Responsibility	Timeframe-Target	Measure
People and Culture	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review conducted • Implementation Plan adopted • Disability Employment Strategy adopted, including a Workplace Adjustment Policy • Managers equipped via training to effectively implement strategy.
People and Culture	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target set and monitored annually • Identified positions created/filled • Annual percentage increase of employees who identify as having a disability • Recruitment/onboarding includes consideration of candidates' accessibility and adjustment requirements. • Percentage of staff with disabilities in leadership roles.
People and Culture	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection process is reliable, confidential and informative • Internal support network established.
People and Culture	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type and number of promotions to staff related to disability inclusion. Monitoring of level of uptake of initiatives/supports.
People and Culture Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives supported and promoted; partnerships formed; business training delivered • Measurement from inclusive aspects of Economic Development Strategy • Collaboration with the Disability Employment Network, Disability Employment Advisory Group and other external stakeholders.
Governance	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimate/measurement of annual spend • Examples where CN has supported this action via procurement • Consideration of effectiveness as an action.
City Wide Services People and Culture	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement of number of volunteers who identify as having disabilities • Examples of reasonable adjustments made for volunteers.

Focus Area 4: Systems and Processes

City of Newcastle (CN) will continuously act to improve our systems and processes, enabling easier access to information, services, and engagement activities and actively encouraging people with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of citizenship.

Objective	Action	Output/Outcome
11. Ensure CN's information is accessible to all.	31. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems procured by CN are considered in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities (staff and community).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities have access to online information and services • Procurement and contract processes scope for vendors and products with appropriate skill and capacity • Guidelines specifying CN standards created and deployed with request for quotes (RFQ), tender brief etc.
	32. CN will towards WCAG 2.1AA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web accessibility is enhanced • Principal corporate website audited to monitor progress.
12. Ensure Customer Experience (CX) and community engagement processes are accessible and inclusive for all.	33. Ensure community engagement processes include access and inclusion considerations in planning and delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disabilities are equitably represented in engagement activities.
	34. Planning and design of CX Processes across the business are to embed access and inclusion considerations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CX principles framework embeds access consideration where relevant • Staff consider access and inclusion for their area of business in the planning and design phase of new processes • People with disabilities have confidence in dealing with CN, as their needs are at the centre of our consideration.
13. Embed access and inclusion considerations in project management and procurement processes.	35. Audit existing project management and procurement processes and seek improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant access and inclusion aspects are considered from inception and concept stage • Vendors and consultants have appropriate skills and capabilities • Budget planning adequately scopes for access in design and delivery • Improved project delivery and reduced access retrofitting.

Responsibility	Timeframe-Target	Measure
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefs for new ICT systems include accessibility requirements.
Strategy and Engagement	Year 1 to 2 (audit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auditing over time Progress made towards AA compliance (year on year Improvement)
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local demographics reflected in percentage of people who identify as having disabilities included in engagement activities
Strategy and Engagement	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of CX process designs completed
Strategy and Engagement Governance Infrastructure and Property	Year 1 to 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audits completed Recommendations identified/implemented Level of impact identified.

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