

# Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

2024 to 2028



We are committed to disability inclusion and to building a community where everyone is able to easily access opportunities and fully participate in their community.



**PORT STEPHENS**  
COUNCIL

# GUUDJI YIIGU

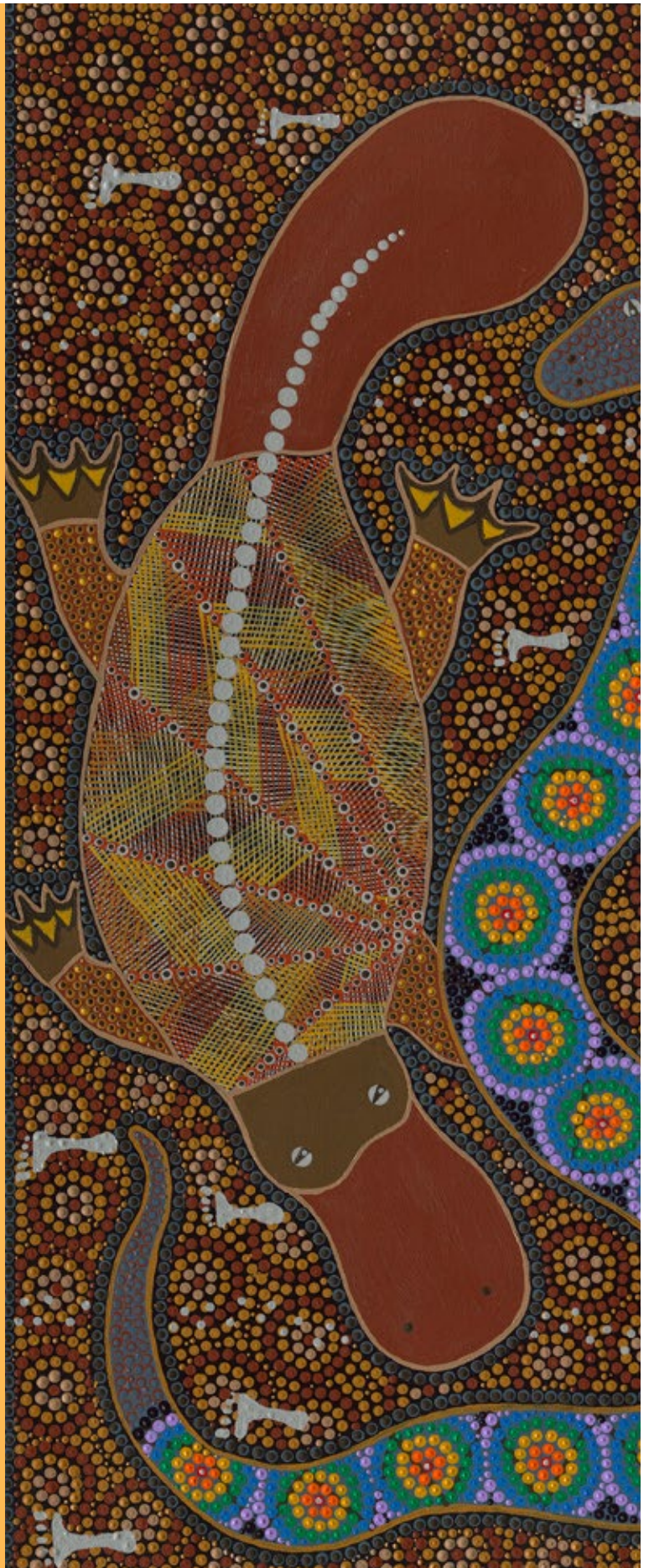
(GOO-JEE IK-KOO)

We welcome you to Port Stephens – part of the Worimi Aboriginal Nation. Port Stephens Council acknowledges the Worimi people as traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waterways on which we all live, learn, work and play.

We value and respect the Worimi people and the legacy 60,000 years of Aboriginal Nation traditions and culture brings with it. As part of Council's culture of acceptance, diversification and harmony we walk alongside the Worimi people on a journey of listening and learning.

Together we will strive to make this a better place for all peoples. As guardians of these lands, we ask that you tread lightly to help preserve the biodiversity and respect those who came before as well as those who will follow.

Artwork by Regan Lilley.



# A message from the Mayor

I am excited to present the Port Stephens Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2028.

We are committed to disability inclusion and to building a community where everyone is able to easily access opportunities and fully participate in their community. I would like to thank everyone from our community who contributed their time, ideas and opinions during the development of this Plan, particularly those people with disability, families and carers who have been kind enough to share their own lived experiences. These connections and partnerships are vital in the ongoing development of a more inclusive community where all people are supported to participate. This Plan is critical to achieving positive change and creating an inclusive society. A more inclusive society is diverse, stronger and more sustainable. Thank you to everyone that was a part of bringing this plan to life.



**Ryan Palmer**  
Mayor of Port Stephens

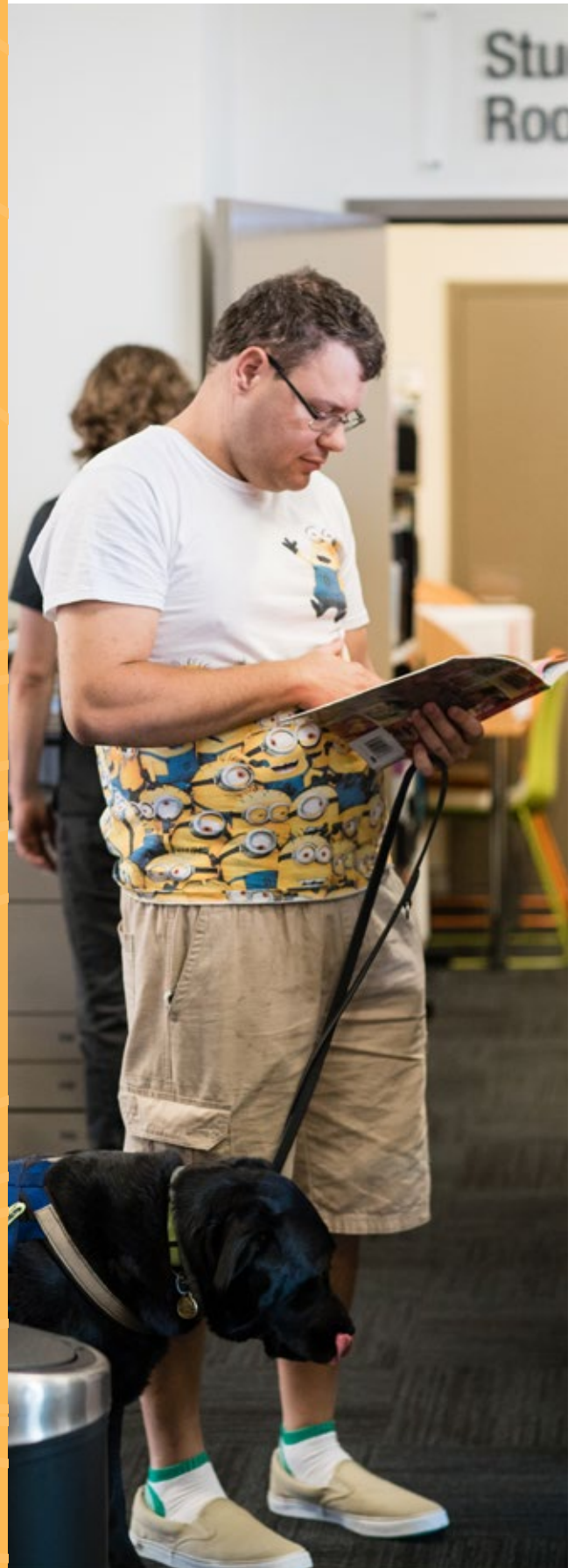


# Key achievements from our 2018 to 2022 Plan

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Disability is a physical, mental, 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.

NSW Disability inclusion Act 2014



1

## Focus area – Positive attitudes and behaviours

- Awareness and education campaigns targeting business owners network, newsletters and Port Stephens Business Chambers encouraging the companion care friendly initiative.

2

## Focus area – Creating liveable communities

- A disability lift installed at the rear of the Mobile Library.
- Ongoing provision and expansion of assistive and adaptive technology including large print books and Audio books in our libraries.
- Reviewed outdoor dining policy ensuring adequate footpath space for pedestrians at all times.
- Inclusion of tactile devices in new path/ramp construction projects.
- Inclusive assessment and audits of Emergency Evacuation Centres.
- Ongoing access to children's services programs for children with additional needs.
- Ongoing provision of wheel in wheel out garbage bin service for people with a disability living at home.
- New accessible amenities at Shoal Bay Foreshore, Bettles Park Raymond Terrace, Mallabula Sports Complex and Brandon Park.
- Shared pathway connecting Mallabula to Lemon Tree Passage and along Raymond Terrace Levee Bank.

- Accessibility compliance upgrades to the Nelson Bay street stage.
- Revitalisation of Robinson Reserve, Anna Bay, transforming it into a community hub with a skate and scooter park to cater for all ages and skill types.
- Upgrades to accessible amenities at sporting facility.
- Construction of an accessible SCUBA Dive entry at Nelson Bay.
- New accessible BBQs and Picnic tables at Longworth Park.

3

## Focus area – Access to meaningful employment

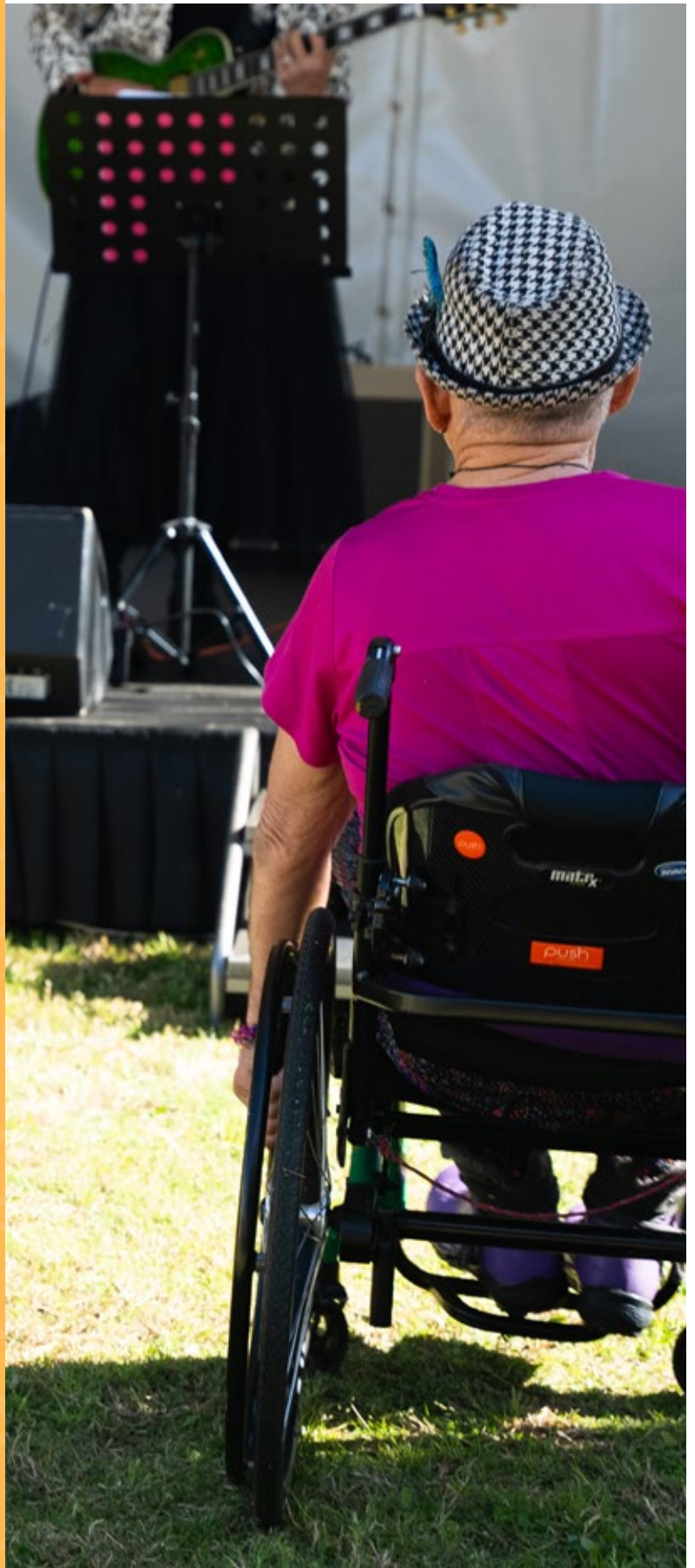
- Disclosure option for candidates with a disability enabling Council to ensure they feel supported throughout the recruitment process.

4

## Focus area – Systems and processes

- A new Council website that aligns with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 requirements.
- More self serve options on Council's website including a Read Speaker function that converts text to audio.

# Strategic context



The community vision for the Port Stephens' Community Strategic Plan is to have a "great lifestyle in a treasured environment". This vision can only truly be achieved in a place that is inclusive and accessible for people of all abilities and backgrounds.

Port Stephens Council has developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA). The plan must be developed in consultation with people with a disability and specify actions to deliver in partnership with the community.

A DIAP must identify 4 areas of focus that prioritise people with a disability. These are:



1. Developing positive community attitudes towards disability
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Increasing access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to mainstream services through improved systems and processes.

#### International

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

#### National

- National Disability Strategy (NDS)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

#### State - NSW

- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA)
- Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019
- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
- Government Sector Employment Act 2013

#### Other legislation and standards

- Australian Standard (AS 1428) Design for Access and Mobility
- Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

# Who we are



Be more inclusive and less judgemental. Disability does not mean illness.

Feedback participant





# Our community

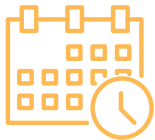
More than 75,500 people call Port Stephens home and this is expected to grow to over 87,933 by 2040.

## NATIONAL



18%

of all Australians have a disability



1/3

of people with a disability are only working part time and want to work more hours.

People with disability are more likely to be underemployed.



51%

of Australians aged 65 years and over live with disability

## LOCAL



6.4%

of residents in Port Stephens

reported as requiring assistance due to a profound or severe disability



7.3%

of Port Stephens residents

have reported requiring assistance with core activities

# What we've heard



People stare at me when [I'm] in public. Especially in coffee shops or the chemist.

Feedback participant



## Engagement findings

We listened to people from a range of backgrounds and experiences, including targeted consultation with people with a lived experience of disability, their carers, disability service providers and their staff, young people with a disability, Port Stephens Council staff, and more broadly, the Port Stephens community.

In 2020 we completed our first place census called the Liveability Index. During the census over 3,700 people told us what they value and how they rate their neighbourhood. The results have allowed us to understand the things most valuable to our community and what things have the biggest impact on our community's wellbeing.



### Improvements

We found that in Port Stephens our top liveable priority to continue to improve is access and safety of walking, cycling and/or public transport.



### Strengths

One of our strengths performing well is access to neighbourhood amenities.

Over 760 people shared their experiences and priorities for improving inclusivity and access in Port Stephens.

 <p><b>177</b></p> <p>Surveys completed</p>	 <p><b>60</b></p> <p>Workshop participants</p>	 <p><b>200+</b></p> <p>Comments from people at the Wellbeing forum</p>	 <p><b>12</b></p> <p>Staff took part in the Wheelchair challenge</p>	<b>DATA GATHERING</b>
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 <p><b>46</b></p> <p>Surveys completed</p>	 <p><b>18</b></p> <p>Workshop participants</p>	 <p><b>250</b></p> <p>People across 3 drop in sessions</p>	<b>CHECK IN</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater access to public spaces including parks, beaches and pools.</li> <li>• Expand and improve upon footpath networks and ramps.</li> <li>• Improve parking opportunities.</li> <li>• Feelings of discrimination and stigma.</li> <li>• Feeling unwelcome in private spaces like cafes and shopping centres, and public spaces like recreational areas and car parking areas.</li> <li>• Local business would benefit from employing people with a disability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design business to be inclusive to recruit local employees and encourage visitation of tourists.</li> <li>• Inclusion training for businesses (including Council).</li> <li>• Information that is easy for everyone to read and understand.</li> <li>• Lack of health and support services.</li> <li>• Access to community events to feel welcome and included.</li> <li>• More face to face engagement and networking opportunities.</li> </ul>	<b>WHAT YOU'VE TOLD US</b>
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# Action plan

## Focus Areas

The plan has been developed around four focus areas. These are based on the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and our engagement findings.

- 1 Attitude and behaviours
- 2 Liveable communities
- 3 Employment
- 4 Systems and processes

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I have a mental disability. I find the crowded areas and extra noise in and around town hard.

Participant feedback



# Attitude and behaviours



## AIM

We will develop and improve positive attitudes of the wider community towards people with a disability.

## What we will do – our plan for action

Action	Timeline	Measure
Ensure communications represent people with disabilities.	1 to 2 yrs	Increased use of inclusive imagery used in communications internal and external of Council.
Implement programs to educate businesses on the needs of people with a disability.	1 to 2 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase in accessible tourism experiences.</li><li>• Increase in accessible retail and hospitality experiences.</li></ul>
Activate the under-workers – mums, retirees, indigenous, youth and people with a disability.	3 to 4 yrs	Opportunities for people to gain experience, skills and employment in local industry.
Include disability awareness module within staff induction process.	2 to 3 yrs	Component included in staff Induction.
Deliver disability awareness and specialist training to Council staff annually.	1 to 2 yrs	Training provided.
Facilitate Councils Workplace Equity & Diversity Committee and implement road map.	1 to 2 yrs	Actions in road map implemented.
Facilitate quarterly listening sessions to understand the needs of those with a disability at Port Stephens Council.	2 to 3 yrs	Sessions completed.
Support the development of accessible tourism and business experiences.	3 to 4 yrs	Increased accessible tourism and business experiences.

# Liveable communities

2

## AIM

To provide infrastructure and services to enable people with a disability to fully participate in community life

## What we will do – our plan for action

Action	Timeline	Measure
Seek grant funding to support the further stages of the existing PAMP or an update of existing stages of existing PAMP.	3 to 4 yrs	Funding obtained
Review disability parking spaces and improve information for the community.	2 to 3 yrs	Accessible parking that is improved according to Standard
Audit footpaths and ramps in high traffic pedestrian areas to determine compliance with Australian Standards.	2 to 3 yrs	Identified footpaths and ramps not compliant
Develop a methodology for the prioritisation of footpath construction to ensure consistent and equitable outcomes.	1 to 2 yrs	Methodology put into practice to identify priority footpaths for improvement
Identify key locations for improved accessibility to pontoons, jetties and formal water access points for fishing and entry to boats.	2 to 3 yrs	Funding obtained for improvements
Identify and prioritise asset and building accessibility upgrades as part of asset management, service-level planning and strategic social infrastructure provision.	Ongoing	Upgrades included in Strategic Asset Management Plan with resourcing
Update the National Public Toilet Map.	3 to 4 yrs	National Public Toilet Map reviewed and facilities are added and updated
Manage the use of Grahamstown Aquatic Reserve for use by Sailability.	Ongoing	Positive feedback and relationship with Sailability and other users of the facility.
Deliver and facilitate more accessible and inclusive events .	1 to 2 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feedback from community on accessing events.</li> <li>• Increased participation of people with a disability at community events.</li> </ul>
Undertake accessibility assessment at key indoor and outdoor event locations	3 to 4 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of assessments undertaken.</li> <li>• Mitigation of access barriers undertaken for events at those locations.</li> </ul>
Build the use of the Inclusion Tent into event design to create a supportive and quiet space at our event for adults and children	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of events the tent is set up and utilised by the community.</li> <li>• Positive community feedback.</li> </ul>





Inclusion Tent at the Raymond Terrace Festival

Action	Timeline	Measure
Expand Event Site Inductions to include accessibility and inclusion	1 to 2 yrs	Inclusion added as regular checklist item for consideration in event design.
Facilitate and support community and cultural development programs, (including accessible arts) through the Strategic Arts Committee and Community Interagency and the Aboriginal Strategic Committee.	2 to 3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of community programs implemented.</li> <li>• Community participation in programs.</li> </ul>
Ensure P-CEP (Person- Centered Emergency Preparedness) awareness information available to community members	1 to 2 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of information sessions undertaken.</li> <li>• Training undertaken for service providers in disaster preparedness.</li> </ul>



## Employment

3

### AIM

We will reduce barriers to employment and volunteers opportunities for people with a disability at Port Stephens Council

## What we will do – our plan for action

Action	Timeline	Measure
Review recruitment policies and procedures when required to ensure they are in line with best practice.	Ongoing	Number of Policies and Procedures reviewed and/or developed.
Actively invite candidates to request adjustments throughout the online application process, at phone screen, and when organising interviews and testing or assessment.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of adjustments requested.</li> <li>• Reviews undertaken of implemented adjustments.</li> </ul>
Incorporate disability considerations into Councils Employee Value Proposition.	Ongoing	Person with a disability incorporated into Employee Value Proposition personas.
Review Council volunteer processes to encourage opportunities for people with a disability.	Ongoing	Process reviewed.
Develop and deliver more work, training and volunteer opportunities for people with a disability.	Ongoing	Number of work, training and volunteer opportunities.
Build systems to ensure Port Stephens Council is an accessible and inclusive place of work.	Ongoing	Increase in accessible systems.



## Systems and processes

4

### AIM

We will improve access to Council services through better systems and processes.

### What we will do – our plan for action

Action	Timeline	Measure
Implement Web Chat on the website as an additional form of contact with Council.	1 to 2 yrs	Web chat implemented.
Prepare Communication Plans that include live streaming and video where possible.	Ongoing	Communication plans developed and implemented.
Develop an engagement plan process that includes demographic analysis of stakeholders and diverse engagement method identification.	1 to 2 yrs	Engagement process developed.
Identify and convert key strategic plans that can be interpreted into easy read versions.	3 to 4 yrs	25% of identified easy read documents developed.
Implement a content experience platform for Council website.	1 to 2 yrs	Content experiment platform implements.
Implement screen reader software on Council's recruitment system.	1 to 2 yrs	Screen reader implemented.
Investigate Hearing Loop technologies and costs for installation in Council's administration building front counter and duty counter.	1 to 2 yrs	Investigation undertaken with proposal submitted to Business Improvement/Executive Leadership Team.
Review current technologies and upgrade or implement new improved solutions.	2 to 3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review undertaken.</li> <li>• Number of new improved technologies integrated into the libraries.</li> </ul>

## Monitoring review and reporting

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be forwarded to the Disability Council NSW and it will be made available to the public in a variety of formats.



### Monitoring

We will monitor the progress of the actions listed in the Plan as part of the key performance indicators in quarterly Operation Plan reports.



### Reporting

We will report on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan items as part of the Annual Report.



### Delivery

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be reviewed and updated in 2028.





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