



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021

An Inclusive City

EVALUATION REPORT

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES:

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017 - 2021: An Inclusive City focused on how Shellharbour City can be a more inclusive and accessible city and set the direction on how this can be achieved.

The plan covered all aspects of Council services and aimed to make Shellharbour City a place where people want to live, work and play. The plan was developed with community input from an extensive consultation program and recognises that people with disabilities and their families and carers are best placed to tell Council what needs to be done to enhance accessibility making Shellharbour City a place where people want to live, work and play.

The focus areas are:

FOCUS AREA 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

FOCUS AREA 2: Creating liveable communities

FOCUS AREA 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment

FOCUS AREA 4: Improving access to services through better systems and processes

The plan was implemented in response to the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and built on the successes of other Disability Action Plans that Council has implemented. The plan was extended for a further twelve months in line with sanctions from the NSW Government and was extended to end on 31 December 2022.

WHAT WAS NOT ACHIEVED:

FOCUS AREA 1 Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Our annual celebrations to recognise and acknowledge International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPWD) is one of the main ways that Council develops positive community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability. Each year Shellharbour and Wollongong Councils produce a Celebration of Ability Calendar that promotes events held by participating organisations from across the region. In 2020, Shellharbour and Wollongong Councils also did a 'Not all Disabilities are Visible' short stories project that captured and promoted stories from nine residents with disability on the impact that their disabilities have on their lives. These stories were then showcased on social media and on core flute signs displayed throughout the Civic Centre.

FOCUS AREA 2 Creating liveable communities

Council has a Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee that has met continually since the mid 1980's. The Committee receives an annual budget for capital works and other initiatives that create more liveable communities for people with disability and their carers. From 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2021 the Committee has contributed to over 80 capital projects including improvements to footpaths, kerb ramps, bus stops, car parking spaces and the total cost of these projects was over \$350 000.

Access improvements to Shellharbour North Beach. Staged improvements include modifications to the access pathways, provision of mobi matting, replacement of the beach wheelchair (with improved booking system) and improved signage. Improvements currently underway include the provision of a beach walker. This project was a collaborative project involving the Shellharbour Surf Club, Shellharbour Probus, Council's Life Guards and Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee in response to the need identified and advocated for by a local resident.

Actions relating to Focus Area 3:

Supporting access to meaningful employment were only partially met. Some actions were impacted due to the effects of the COVID pandemic and restrictions that were in place. To ensure that access and inclusion is considered and incorporated in all

areas of Council's operations, including employment, Council has committed to participating in the Australian Network on Disability's Access and Inclusion Index (AII). The AII is a suite of online tools for Council to use to understand, assess, benchmark and improve our disability confidence to meet the needs of our customers, community,

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

FOCUS AREA 3 Supporting access to meaningful employment

One way that Council supports access to meaningful employment for people with disability is through partnerships. A highlight was the EmployAbility campaign hosted in partnership with Wollongong City Council. Six people with disabilities working in paid jobs shared their stories to raise awareness about the challenges people with disability face in finding work. The project also showcases the contribution of people with disability and how working improves their lives. The project was launched at a forum that brought employers and employees together to discuss the issues people with disabilities have in gaining meaningful employment.

FOCUS AREA 4 Improving access to services through better systems and processes

Many systems and processes have been improved to ensure that access and inclusion are key considerations early in a project's planning stages. A highlight includes changes to Council's internal Development Assessment referral process to ensure access and inclusion comments are included across a broad range of key developments across the City. This has seen a marked increase in the number of development applications being reviewed and number of access improvements being made.

councillors and council. The tools will help us review our policies, procedures and practices to establish our process in being accessible and inclusive for people with disability. It will increase understanding of access and inclusion, and provide opportunities on how to be welcoming to people with disability across all our operational functions.