



Shellharbour
CITY COUNCIL

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2026

An Inclusive City





Acknowledgement

Shellharbour City Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Dharawal Country and recognises their continued connection to the land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and the contribution they make to the life of this city.

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Message from the Mayor



I am proud to present Shellharbour City Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2026. The plan was developed in collaboration with our community and builds on Council's previous plans and achievements.

I want to thank everyone who contributed their ideas and feedback during the development of the new plan. I particularly want to acknowledge the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee whose members provided invaluable guidance through their knowledge and lived experience. Council would also like to thank the many families, carers and disability service providers in our community who support and empower people with disability every day.

I support Council's leadership in improving the lives of our residents with disabilities. For over 32 years, Council has worked alongside the community to make our city more accessible and inclusive through improvements to access to the built and natural landscape of our City.

I am confident that we will become an even more accessible and inclusive place through the implementation of the 2023 – 2026 plan. Incorporating this plan into our corporate planning documents will ensure that access and inclusion becomes a core business of Council that all employees have a responsibility to deliver.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2026 will help us all work together to make Shellharbour City a place where people with disabilities and their families are able to live, work and play as equals. I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together as a community over the next four years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Homer', written in a cursive style.

Chris Homer
Mayor, Shellharbour City

Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee

The Shellharbour Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DAIAC) has been operating for over 32 years. The Committee is responsible for ensuring that Council is responsive to the diverse needs of the community and gives a voice to people within the community affected by access and inclusion. The committee advocates and provides advice and priorities to maximise opportunities for people with disability living or visiting the City.

The committee had a critical role in overseeing the development of this plan and will be actively engaged in the implementation and monitoring of the plan.



Members of the Shellharbour Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DAIAC)

What the DAIAC told us:

- More needs to be done in Shellharbour to make it more accessible and inclusive
- The whole community benefits by an accessible and inclusive community
- Being consulted makes me feel valued
- In the past, people with disabilities have been shunned, it is good to have a forum where the forgotten people can have a voice and present their views.
- We need to move towards co design and not just consultation
- It is better to engage with people at the design phase of a development than try to retrofit access inclusion at the end of the project.

Access:
is the ability for
everyone in the
community to be able
**approach, reach,
enter, or make
use of
something**

Reference: Modified from
Free Dictionary 2017

Inclusion:
is the process whereby
**every person who
wishes to can access
and participate fully**
in all aspects of an
activity or service in
the same way as other
members of the
community

Reference ACE Disability
Network 2022



Background

The Shellharbour City Council Disability Access and Inclusion Plan: 2023 – 2026 – An inclusive City aligns to our long-term vision to be an accessible and inclusive City where people with disabilities and their families are able to live, work and play as equals.

We have a vision to be a **naturally balanced, vibrant, connected and liveable community that is inclusive, accessible and safe for everyone** (Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032)

The plan was developed:

- In line with the legislative requirements from the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guideline
- To align with the Australian National Disability Strategy
- To meet our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities
- To align with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

This plan includes a series of actions designed to actively address barriers faced by people with disability. The plan builds on the success of our previous plans, and outlines how we will continue to improve access to Council's facilities and services as well as advocating for improvements across the City.

The plan has been developed through consultation with people with disability, people with lived experiences of mental health conditions and people with caring responsibilities, local disability service providers, peak disability representative, advocacy organisations, the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel, Councillors and Council staff.

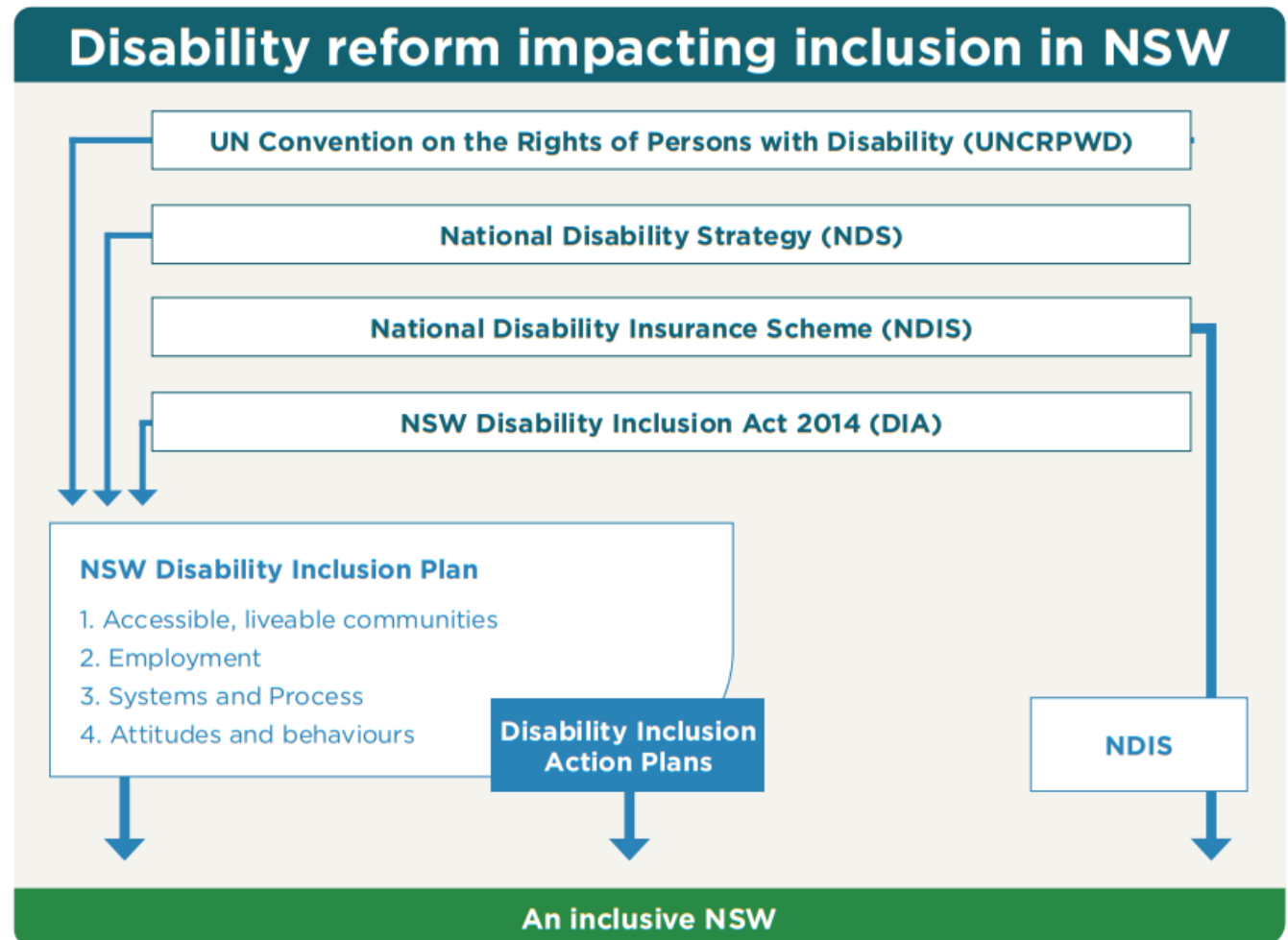
Under the Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022, a formal review of this Plan is required by 1 July 2025 with the new plan in place within twelve months of the review (by 1 July 2026).

Legislative and policy framework

There is a range of Commonwealth and State legislation that promotes access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires Council to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan to remove barriers and enable people with disabilities to participate equally in their communities.

The following diagram shows the key Commonwealth and State legislation that informs the development of local government disability access and inclusion planning.



Local context

Disability in Shellharbour City

In 2021,
5,392 people
(or 7.1% of the
population)

in Shellharbour City
reported needing help
in their day-to-day lives
due to disability
(NSW 5.8%)

(ABS 2022)



Low Income

Need for assistance
in day-to-day lives
due to disability:
82.5%

No need for assistance:
41.4%



Social Housing

Need for assistance
in day-to-day lives
due to disability:
15.7%

No need for assistance:
4.5%



Unemployment Rate

Need for assistance
in day-to-day lives
due to disability:
11.5%

No need for assistance:
4.2%



Car Ownership - No motor vehicle

Need for assistance
in day-to-day lives due
to disability: **10%**

No need for assistance:
2.2%



Education - completed Year 12

Need for assistance
in day-to-day lives
due to disability:
21.6%

No need for assistance:
43.3%

Council's role in disability access and inclusion planning

Council has a number of roles in delivering on the plan

Provider

Council will provide a range of facilities, services and events that make the City a place for people to live, work and play.

Strategic planner

Council will provide a City that meets the changing needs and expectations of the City.

Capacity builder

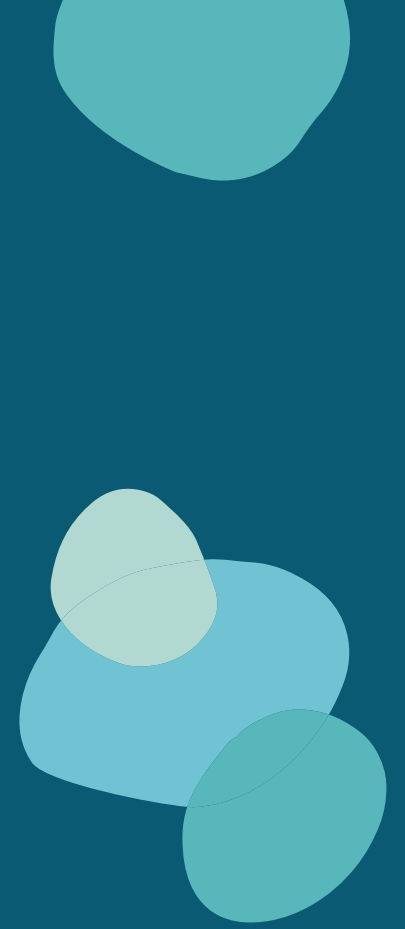
Council will provide education, professional development opportunities and policy development to build a knowledgeable and resourceful accessible and inclusive community.

Regulator

Council will monitor compliance to legislation.

Partner

Council will partner with community organisations and other levels of government on projects to deliver benefits to the community.



What the community has told us

How we engaged with the community

From January to July 2022 Shellharbour City Council organised and participated in a range of engagement methods to ask the community about disability, access and inclusion. Each engagement was targeted at finding out the community's thoughts and ideas on any of the four key focus areas of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

These engagements targeted people with disabilities and their carers; service providers for people with disability; schools and preschools; seniors; community event attendees; staff and Councillors.

The methods used included but were not limited to:

- Workshops and pop-up meetings
- A 'Let's Chat' page
- Social media campaigns
- Discussions with community groups and committees

79
service
providers
spoken to

193
people attended
workshops and
pop-ups

477
people visited
the Let's Chat
page

51
survey
responses



42,181
people reached on
our social media

Top 3 takeaways

From Let's Chat survey



59.8%

of respondents
describe the
current attitude
towards people
with disability as
above average

**Council
buildings**

were rated
the most
accessible
facilities

45.28%

of respondents
said they got
their Council
information from
our website



“By simply making everything accessible, changes people’s attitudes as they start to see it as the normal”

(Survey respondent)

Your top 10 ideas

1. Ensure everything is accessible and inclusive community as this benefits the whole community
2. All of Council’s events, activities and services need to be accessible and inclusive
3. Continued improvements must to be made to make ramps and footpaths accessible and to make public spaces inclusive (including accessible parking and facilities at the Shellharbour Airport)
4. Further work needs to be done to make parks and playgrounds inclusive – consider fenced parks and facilities beyond disc swings
5. The City needs at least one adult changing facility
6. Improvements to access are required to our beaches, pools and waterways
7. More accessible and inclusive recreation options are required in Shellharbour
8. More employment opportunities for people with disabilities are needed
9. Information needs to be provided in a range of formats, including easy read and non-digital formats
10. Disability awareness initiatives will help to make the City more inclusive ... for everyone.

What we already do to make Shellharbour accessible and inclusive

- The Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DAIAC) meets quarterly and is responsible for ensuring that Council is responsive to the diverse needs of the community and gives a voice to people within the community affected by access and inclusion.
- Qualified staff review development applications and other key documents to ensure developments in Shellharbour are accessible and inclusive.
- Developed and implement Accessible Event Guidelines.
- Ensure information on our website meets Web Content Accessibility standards.
- Public toilets are being upgraded or renewed include at least one accessible facility
- Ski Way Park, Oak Flats, has been upgraded to include full fencing to make recreation safer and more inclusive for families with kids with disabilities
- Most new playground renewals include at least one inclusive element
- People with disabilities can access most public accessible toilets out of hours through the use of an MLAK key
- Recharge points are available at Warilla and City Libraries to recharge mobility scooters and wheelchairs
- Mobi matting, a beach walker and a beach wheelchair are available at Shellharbour North Beach
- Library Services have inclusive book collections, including a new range of books that are dyslexia friendly and provided in formats for all abilities.



ACTION PLAN

What we will
do next



FOCUS AREA 1

Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

A city that is accepting of diversity

- 1.1 Provide programs that foster positive community attitudes towards people with disability
- 1.2 Increase accessibility and inclusiveness of Council's publications, digital platforms and media channels
- 1.3 Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to be engaged in matters that have an impact on them
- 1.4 Improve awareness of Council's inclusion initiatives and existing services
- 1.5 Explore and implement initiatives to enhance access and inclusion for people with disabilities

FOCUS AREA 2

Creating accessible, liveable communities

A city where everyone has equal opportunities to live, work and play

2.1 Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of Council facilities

2.2 Improve accessibility in the Community

2.3 Advocate for improved access and inclusion outcomes in the 'whole of government setting'





FOCUS AREA 3

Supporting access to meaningful employment

Increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities

- 3.1 Improve Council's inclusive employment practices through the completion of the Access and Inclusion Index audit and the development of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- 3.2 Collaborate with local business to become more accessible and inclusive and to enhance their own disability employment practices
- 3.3 Continue to implement social procurement practices that support employment for people with disabilities in the community

FOCUS AREA 4

Improving access to services through better systems and practices

Council systems and practices are easy to use and information is available in a format that meets my needs

- 4.1 Ensure access and inclusion are key considerations in all of Council's functions
- 4.2 Provide information in accessible formats and in line with relevant guidelines
- 4.3 Ensure Council meets the Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022 reporting requirements



Where to from here

Implementation Plan

An Implementation Plan has been developed that lists the priorities for Council over the next four years. The Implementation Plan will be incorporated into Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan making all staff responsible for the delivery of these actions.

Annual engagement will occur with the community and staff to monitor whether these actions are still priorities. The actions may change in response to the changing needs of the community and other factors.

The Implementation Plan has been set out to match actions across the four focus areas.

Funding

Many actions will be provided or upgraded as part of the usual business of Council and managed as part of the long-term financial management plan.

Some actions may require support from external funding bodies.

Some items identified in the plan are not considered part of Council's core business or they are shared responsibility for the provision of the items. Council will explore opportunities for external providers to deliver these services.

Monitor and evaluate

Council's plans and strategies are monitored and evaluated through the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2026 will be aligned with the Delivery and Plan and Operational Plan and reported through those reporting systems.

A range of evaluation measures will be used to gauge performance on listed actions and will include:

- Summary of what has been delivered
- Participants surveys
- Indicator changes
- Community and stakeholder feedback
- Evidence of policy/process change.

Results of actions and outcomes will be reported to the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee at quarterly meetings and to the broader community through the quarterly and annual IP&R reporting. An annual report will be provided to the NSW Minister for Disability Services and a full review will be conducted at the end of the four year plan.

Thank you

On behalf of the staff here at Council and our Executive Leadership Team we would like to thank everyone that contributed to the development of the Plan. With your input we were able to develop this Plan and help Council continue the work on building an accessible and inclusive Shellharbour, where people with a disability can live, work and play.

References

Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

Commonwealth Disability (access to Premises – Building) Standards 2010

Commonwealth Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA)

NSW Disability Discrimination Act 2014 and Disability Inclusion Regulation 2024

NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guideline

Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

See also

Disability Access and Inclusion 2023 - 2026: An Inclusive City - Implementation Plan

Disability Access and Inclusion 2023 - 2026: An Inclusive City – Easy Read



www.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au