



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021

An Inclusive City

Contents

Message from the Mayor	3
Disability Access Committee	4
Background	7
Legislative and policy framework	8
Local context	9
Continuing our commitment to disability, inclusion and access	11
What is Council's role in access and inclusion planning	12
What the community has told us	13
• Engagement	13
• Where good access is provided	14
• Where access improvements are needed	14
• Your top ten ideas	15
How the plan will be delivered	16
Action Plan	
Focus Area 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours	17
Focus Area 2: Creating liveable communities	20
Focus Area 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment	25
Focus Area 4: Improving access to services through better systems and processes	28
Where to from here	31
• Funding	31
• Measures	31
References	32

Message from the Mayor



It is my great pleasure to present Council's Access and Inclusion Plan 2017 – 2021, An Inclusive City.

Shellharbour City Council is proud of its diverse community and values the contribution that people with disability make to our community.

For over 28 years, Council has worked alongside the community to make our City more accessible 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 because of this plan.

The plan was developed with community input garnered 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.

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 plan will help us all work together to make Shellharbour City the place where people with disabilities and their families are able to live, work and play as equals.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marianne Saliba".

Marianne Saliba
Mayor, Shellharbour City

Disability Access Committee

The Disability Access Committee provides strategic advice to the City on the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the City's policies, strategies and plans to advance the inclusion of people with disability. The committee is a key source of advice and expertise on the City's access and inclusion issues.

The Disability Access committee is made up of up to 12 members that bring a diverse range of expertise from the disability sector. The committee has been providing advice and guidance to Council on access issues for over 28 years.

The committee has overseen the implementation of formal action plans since 2003 when Council released its first Disability Strategic Plan. The initial plan prioritised improvements to access to Council buildings and facilities. Subsequent plans focused on improvements to paths of travel to parks, pools, beaches, provision of Master Locksmith Access Keys (MLAK) and signage at accessible toilets as well as bus stop improvements.

The Disability Access Committee provided ongoing advice in the development of the Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021 and will continue to play a critical role in providing advice for the plan's implementation and monitoring its progress.



Since 2001, Council has spent over \$1 million on facility and bus stop upgrades to make the physical environment more accessible

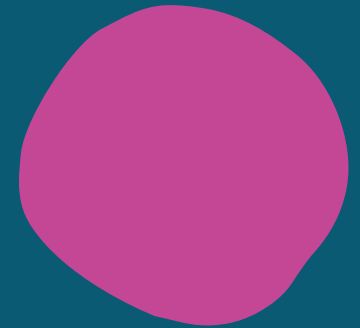
Left to right - Mel Gorman, Julie Larsen, Cr Marianne Saliba (Mayor), Narelle Williams, Luise Bourne, Mario Russo, Alex Trail
Absent from photo - Cr Helen Stewart, Paul Hartley, Eino Okkonen

"The Shellharbour City Council Disability Access Committee has been operating for the past 28 years. The committee make up comprises of community representatives, disability organisations and Council officers.

The committee is a proactive group who meet bi monthly and are requested to comment on development applications submitted to Council. Over the years many improvements relating to access of the built environment, access to buildings and services have been achieved and now with release of the Access and Inclusion Plan, allows for more stakeholders within the community to advocate for continued improvements to Shellharbour City."

A Traill

Committee member





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 ability for
everyone in the
community to 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 2006

Background

Shellharbour City Council is committed to being an inclusive and accessible city for everyone. Council has had formal disability action plans since 2003. These plans have concentrated largely on improvements to Council’s buildings, pathways and recreation areas. Many access improvements are available in our City because of these plans.

In 2013, Council prepared their first Community Strategic Plan. The vision in the plan was ‘In 2030, Shellharbour City is a dynamic City that values and celebrates the unique diversity of our people, places and environment. We are a connected community working together to create a safe, sustainable future that provides opportunities for all to achieve their potential¹. Based on the social justice principles of equity, access and participation and rights, the vision sets the foundation for the development of sustainable social, economic, leadership and environmental objectives.

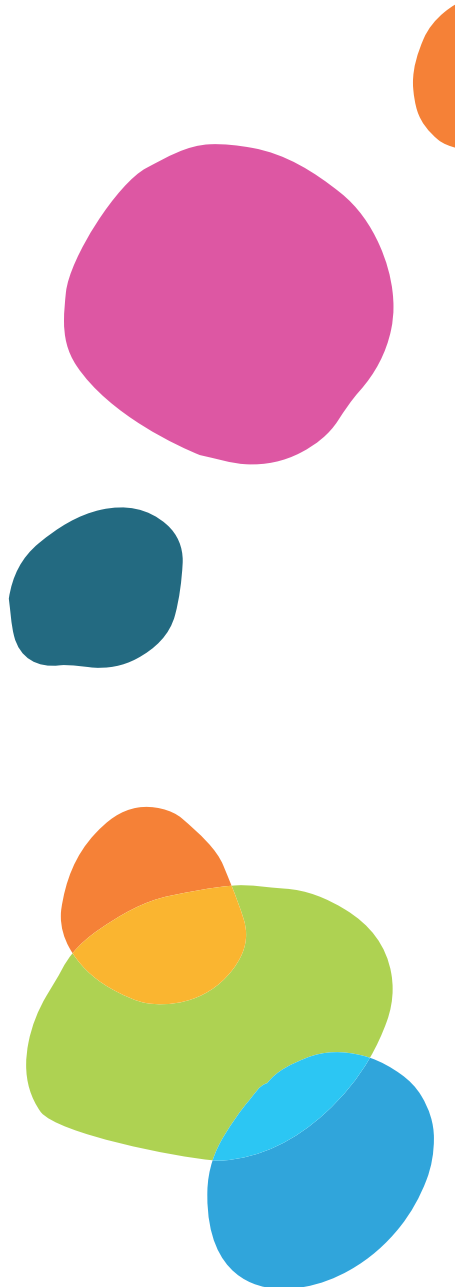
The Access and Inclusion Plan 2017 - 2021: An Inclusive City focuses on how Shellharbour City can be a more inclusive and accessible city and sets the direction on how this can be achieved. The plan will cover all aspects of Council services, making Shellharbour City a place where people want to live, work and play.

Linking the Access and Inclusion Plan to the Community Strategic Plan’s Delivery Program and Operational Plan will make creating a more inclusive City everyone’s responsibility, increasing the effectiveness of the plan.

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“Access and inclusion is important to me because:
It is a basic human right that every person in our
community should have.”
Resident

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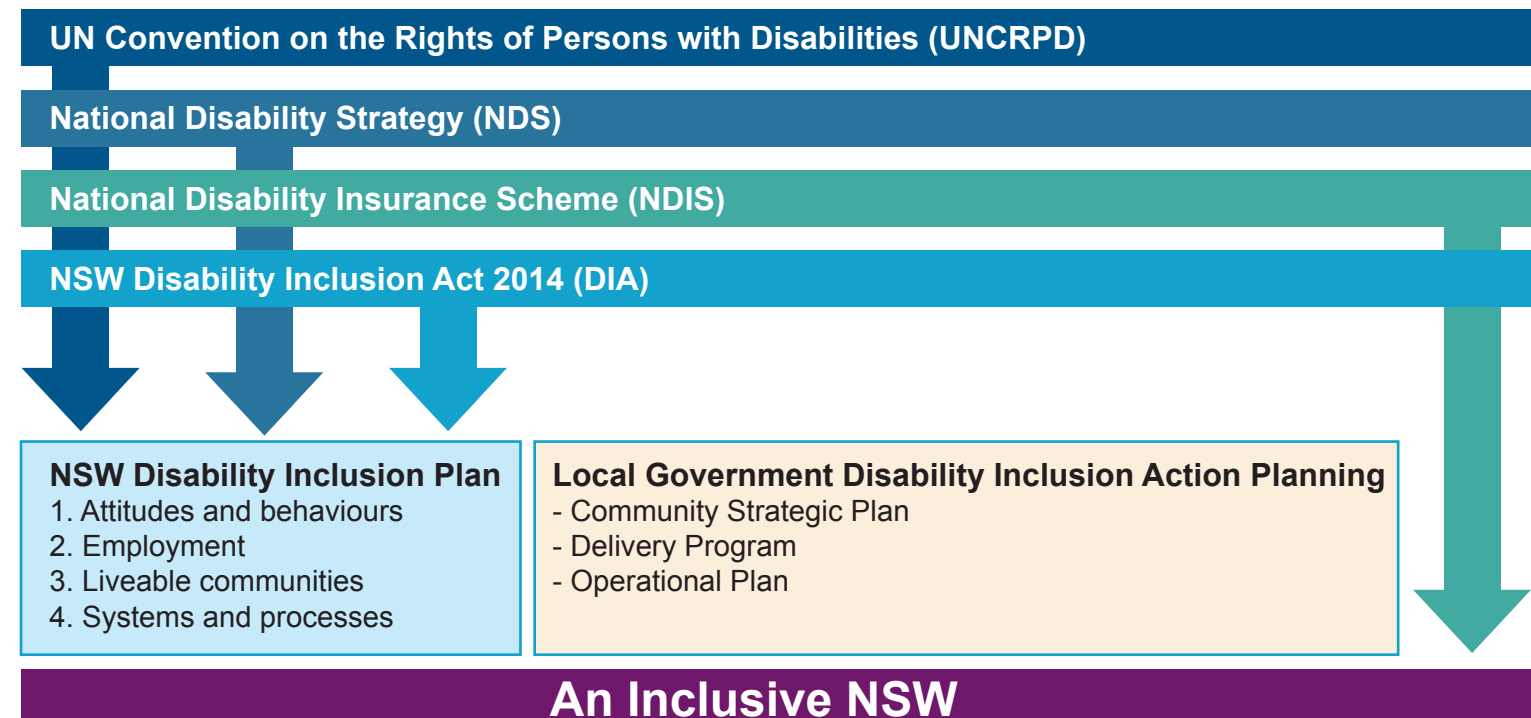


Legislative and policy framework

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 disability to participate equally in their communities.

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



Local context



Disability in Australia

Almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3% or 4.3 million people).
2015 ABS Data



Disability in NSW

4.9% of people living in NSW reported living with a disability profound or severe disability needing assistance.
2011 ABS Data



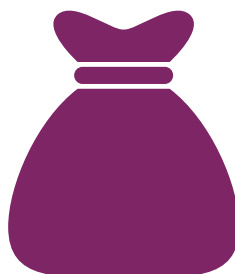
Disability in Shellharbour City

5.9% or 3,727 people living in Shellharbour City need assistance (help in their day-to-day lives) due to a profound or severe disability. This has increased from 4.9% in 2006.
2011 ABS Data



Need for assistance by age

2.4% of 0-19 year olds identified needing assistance 21.1% of people 65 years and older identified as needing assistance
2011 ABS Data



Income

33% of persons who identify as needing assistance are within low income households (earn less than \$600/week) compared to 16% of persons in low income households.

People with disabilities living in Shellharbour City experience a greater level of disadvantage than the general population



Labour Force and Unemployment

82% of people needing assistance are not in the labour force compared with 27% of the population.



Education

31% of the population who identify as needing assistance (aged 15 +) hold educational qualifications, compared to 50% of the population.



Social Housing

16% of people who identified as needing assistance live in social housing compared to 7% of the total population



Internet connection

52% of people who identified as needing assistance have an internet connection compared 80% of the total population



Car ownership

12% of people who identified as needing assistance do not own a car compared to 4% of the total population
2011 ABS Data

As our population ages, the number of people who have profound or severe disabilities requiring assistance with their day to day tasks will increase

Continuing our commitment to disability, inclusion and access

In the past much of Council's focus has been on physical disability and making the physical environment accessible. Now Council wants to build on this work and improve other types of accessibility.

Developed in line with the requirements of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and other legislative requirements, this plan covers the four focus areas:

Developing positive community **attitudes and behaviours**

Creating **liveable communities**

Supporting access to **meaningful employment**

Improving access to services through better **systems and processes**

To inform the plan, extensive engagement was conducted with residents, interested community members, staff and Councillors to determine barriers to full access and inclusion and actions to overcome these issues.

The plan acknowledges that whilst Council is moving in the right direction towards being a more accessible City, more work needs to be done to be fully inclusive.

This plan recognises that for Shellharbour City to be fully accessible and inclusive, Council needs to work with our residents, businesses and other government bodies towards the goal of equal access for all as this can only be achieved by everyone working together.

An action plan has also been developed that links the Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021: An Inclusive City to Council's corporate planning processes (Integrated Planning and Reporting). This makes reporting against outcomes in the plan the responsibility of all sections of Council.

What is Council's role in disability access and inclusion planning?

Council has a number of roles in the delivery of 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.

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Strategic planner

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

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Capacity builder

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

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Regulator

Council will monitor compliance to legislation.

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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

To inform this plan extensive community consultation was undertaken, as Council believes that people with disabilities, their families and friends, disability and aged groups, Council staff and Councillors are best placed to identify barriers to full inclusion in the City.

Community engagement was conducted during October 2016 to January 2017 using a variety of methods



43 Community Surveys

4 Staff Surveys



3 Forums



7 groups speaker at existing groups for people with disabilities, carers and older people (177 people)



10 Individual contact - phone calls, home visits



3 Staff drop in sessions (10 people)



Media including social media

1

Councillor briefing



15 people attended a Lets try Wheelchair Sports day

The four focus areas were addressed during the community engagement opportunities. These include:

Developing positive community **attitudes and behaviours**

Creating **liveable communities**

Supporting access to **meaningful employment**

Improving access to services through better **systems and processes**

Where good access is provided



Physical access:

Cycleways, parks, pools, public toilets

Access to information:

Libraries, environmental activities, acting promptly on repairs

Where access improvements are required



Accessible paths of travel - parking, kerb ramps, paths

Provision of accessible facilities - play and gym equipment, barbeques, adult change facilities, quiet spaces, beach wheelchairs, ramps or lifts to pools, fishing platform, beach matting, bus stops

Employment, training, awareness raising and advocacy

Access to information – signage, interpreters, content, layout, opportunities for engagement, signalisation of traffic lights

Your Top 10 Ideas

1. For access and inclusion to underpin everything Council does
2. Provide accessible communities for people of all ages and abilities
3. Talk to us on matters that affect us
4. All events are to be accessible
5. Improve access to beaches and waterways
6. Inclusive parks are needed across the City
7. Ensure buildings and facilities are accessible
8. Provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities and advocate for employment in the City
9. Provide information in simple English, a variety of formats including captioned and AUSLAN and web content is accessible.
10. Advocate for enhanced disability building standards and the provision of complimentary facilities

How the plan will be delivered

An action plan has been developed that lists the priorities for Council over the next four years. The action plan will be incorporated into Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan making all Council 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 the four focus areas of:

Developing positive community **attitudes and behaviours**

Creating **liveable communities**

Supporting access to **meaningful employment**

Improving access to services through better **systems and processes**

And looks at

■ What Council already does

■ What Council will do

■ What you can do

FOCUS AREA 1

Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

A city that is accepting of diversity

■ What Council already does

- Bases Council corporate planning on the social justice principles on access, equity, rights and participation
- Maintains and resources a Disability Access Committee
- Provides disability awareness training to staff
- Has policies and procedures that promote non-discriminatory practices
- Coordinates a calendar of events to promote events hosted to acknowledge International Day of People with Disabilities

■ What Council will do

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Raise awareness on the contributions that people with disabilities make to our City		Shellharbour City is a more inclusive community	All sections of Council Businesses Residents
Ensure that promotional material includes diverse, positive and inclusive images	Ongoing		
Distribute information and/or train Council staff in appropriate language	Ongoing		
Explore opportunities to award businesses that are accessible and inclusive	Ongoing		
Continue to support initiatives that celebrate diversity	Ongoing		
Work with the community to raise awareness on disability issues and increase the accessibility of the City	Ongoing		

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Provide accessible services and events		Events and services are more accessible	All sections of Council Businesses Residents Sporting groups National Public Toilet Map²
Review Council's event checklist to include access and inclusion considerations	Ongoing		
As part of the promotion of Council's public events, include the event details under the events tab on Council's website	2017/18		
Investigate the feasibility of introducing the Companion Card that promotes the rights of people with disability who require a companion, to fair ticketing at events and venues at Council events and relevant services	2017/18		
Collaborate with organisations on initiatives that promote access and inclusion.	Ongoing		
Make information available about the locations of accessible toilets in Shellharbour LGA	2017/18		
Improve information available about leisure, retail and entertainment services in Shellharbour	2018/19		
Improve information available about inclusive sporting groups or organisations	2018/19		

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to be engaged in matters that have an impact on them		Council services, facilities and events meet the needs of the community	All sections of Council Businesses Residents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that people with disabilities are provided with opportunity to contribute to community engagement initiatives 	Ongoing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host an annual engagement activity with an access and inclusion focus 	Annual		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to resource the Disability Access Committee 	Ongoing		

■ What you can do

Individual	Business
Participate in events	Look at ways to improve access and inclusion in your business activities
Share your knowledge and experience	Investigate whether introducing the Companion Card is right for your business
Participate in community engagement activities	Partner with Council to improve the accessibility of the City
Have your say when asked for comments on surveys	

FOCUS AREA 2

Creating liveable communities

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

■ What Council already does

- Lists accessible toilets on the National Public Toilet map website²
- Fits accessible toilets with a MLAK key
- Provides a beach wheelchair at two beaches
- Provides some accessible picnic tables for new or replacement tables
- Ensures that major council development requires an access audit from an accredited independent access auditor
- Provides ramps to Warilla beach and Little Lake
- Manage a capital works program that replaces ageing infrastructure with facilities that are more accessible
- Ensure that all new bus stops comply with legislation
- Have accessible train stations
- Provides a chairlift and stairs at Oak Flats heated pool

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“Inclusion allows me to contribute actively and positively in the community.”
Resident

.....

Inclusion
is created
through play

Service provider

■ What Council will do

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Create liveable and accessible places		People with disabilities have the opportunity to be engaged on matters that impact on them	All sections of Council Businesses Residents Government Bodies
Consult with the Disability Access Committee and the community when renewing/upgrading infrastructure or planning new works, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council facilities • Major public facilities • Paths of travel • Car parking • Public toilets • Sporting and recreation facilities • Parks, playgrounds, exercise equipment • Beaches and waterways 	Ongoing		
Continue to improve access to beaches, lakes and pools through the provision of ramps, lift, beach wheelchairs, matting, shade	Ongoing	More accessible and inclusive facilities are available in the City	
Continue to improve paths of travel in and around the community	Ongoing		
Ensure access and inclusion are key considerations when providing new or upgraded facilities, this includes but is not limited to, shelters, barbeques, picnic tables, play equipment, gym equipment, cabins, tables in meeting rooms and connecting paths of travel	Ongoing		

Continue to grow the bus stop upgrade program to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Disability Standards for Accessible Transport 2002	Ongoing
Review the provisions at the Regional Airport to monitor compliance with the Disability Standards for Accessible Transport 2002	2019/2020
Ensure street bins are installed at an accessible height, in an accessible location Council to investigate the promotion of wheel in wheel out services under the collections contract	Ongoing
Ensure Recharge points are provided at all eligible Council facilities	Ongoing

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Facilitate the provision of development that meets the changing needs and expectations of the City		More accessible and inclusive facilities are available in the City	All sections of Council Businesses Residents Government Bodies
Investigate the feasibility of requesting developers of public infrastructure projects and commercial developments to submit an access audit of their plans as part of the Development Assessment process prepared by accredited consultants	2018/19		
Advocate for the application of enhanced accessible building standards and complimentary provision including two tiered parking, 'quiet spaces', recharge points, adult change facilities	Ongoing		
Advocate for access improvements to existing facilities that do not meet access requirements	Ongoing		

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Advocate for improved access and inclusion outcomes in the 'whole of government' policy setting		More accessible and inclusive facilities are available in the City	All sections of Council Businesses Government bodies
Continue to advocate for accessible and affordable housing in the City	Ongoing		
Advocate for increased accessibility of public transport in the City, including additional train services in the City and improved bus/train linkages	Ongoing		
Explore funding opportunities for an accessible fishing platform and adult changing facilities	Ongoing		

■ What you can do

Individual	Business
Enjoy the accessible facilities in the City	Provide good access to and around your business
Let Council know when you notice or experience issues that prevent your full inclusion in activities	Partner with Council on initiatives to improve access and inclusion in the City
Let Council know about things you would like to see in the City	Talk to Council about becoming a RECHARGE Scheme partner
Apply to be on the Disability Access Committee when vacancies are advertised	Review the way your business operates to see if there are any barriers and work to overcome these

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“ A liveable community is where people with a disability can participate to their full potential, where they don't feel that they have to struggle to have their needs and rights met. A community where a person with a disability feels accepted and welcome, not an outcast. ”

Resident

.....

“ It is important to talk to people with disabilities on matters that impact on them. ”

Resident

.....

“ Just because a person has a disability does not by any means imply that they are not able to meet the inherent requirements of the role with the help of government agencies like job access and employment consultants. Don't DIS our ABILITY but most of all give people who identify as having a disability the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in a practical way during the recruitment process. ”

Resident

.....

FOCUS AREA 3

Supporting access to meaningful employment

Increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities

■ What Council already does

- Employs people with disabilities
- Is an equal opportunity employer and uses merit-based selection techniques
- Provides flexible working arrangements
- Provides reasonable adjustments to work practices to meet the needs of individual staff
- Provides support services through the Employment Assistance Program
- Provide opportunities for work experience and volunteering
- Only requires pre-placement medical assessments for high risk positions (hazardous or high risk work)
- Has policies that support employees achieving a work life balance
- Social procurement policies and practices

■ What Council will do

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Council is an inclusive employer		Recruitment practices are more inclusive	All sections of Council Residents
Review all recruitment policies, procedures and practices to ensure compliance with current legislation.	Ongoing		
Explore ways to advertise vacant positions more inclusively	2017/18		
Examine potential for targeted recruitment initiatives within the development and implementation of the next Workforce Management Plan	2020/2021		
Develop a corporate volunteer recruitment program	2018/19		

Provide refresher training to relevant staff on recruitment practices including an emphasis on inclusive practices and workplace adjustments	Ongoing	Staff have increased awareness of disability issues
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Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Council is an accessible and inclusive workplace			
Promote an inclusive workplace culture through the inclusion of a session on access and inclusion within Council's induction process	2017/18	All staff are aware of the need to provide accessible and inclusive services and facilities	All sections of Council
Provide opportunities for disability awareness training as needs are identified	Ongoing	Targeted training is provided to staff as required	
Ensure the Civic Centre is fully accessible	2018/19	The Civic Centre is able to meet the needs of a diverse workforce	

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Council supports employment opportunities in the community			
Continue to support initiatives that provide a social procurement benefit	Ongoing	Increased opportunity for more inclusive procurement practices	
Promote the benefits of employment for people with disabilities to external businesses	Ongoing	Raised awareness of employment opportunities	

■ What you can do

Individual	Business
Apply for positions at Council if you meet the eligibility criteria	Offer merit based employment opportunities
Let Council know if there are barriers for you in applying for work at Council	Consider social procurement practices
For current employees, talk to Council when you need adjustments to your work	Participate in awareness raising activities

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

■ What Council already does

- Council can be contacted in a variety of ways – in person, phone, email, letter
- Plain English is used when communicating with the public
- Interpretive services are available - Accredited Language Aid Officers, access to Telephone interpreter Service (TIS) and National Relay Service (NRS)
- Variable text sizes are available on Council's website
- Information is available in a variety of formats
- Some signage includes Braille (accessible toilets and lift in Council's administration building)
- Bus stop upgrades include tactile indicators
- Daisy readers are available for loan from the library
- The home library service is available for eligible residents
- Support is available to residents to use their electronic devices from the library
- Large print and audio books are available for loan from the library
- Childcare is available to enable people to attend Council meetings
- Public participation is encouraged prior to Council meetings
- Free Wi-Fi is available at some Council sites, including our libraries

“ Information needs to be in simple English and available in a number of formats to make it readable to everyone ”
Resident

■ What Council will do

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Ensure access and inclusion are key consideration in Council functions			
Ensure all new and reviewed Council policies, procedures and frameworks promote accessible and inclusive practices and are easy to read	Ongoing	Council practices are more inclusive	All sections of Council
Create an environment where a fully accessible and inclusive City is embraced			
Establish partnerships which address community wide barriers to access and inclusion			

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Provide accessible information			
Provide information in a range of formats that are easy to understand and with good colour contrasts.	Ongoing	Information provided by Council is more accessible and inclusive	All sections of Council
Work towards achieving Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA rating	2018/19		
Increase access to communication supports such as hearing loops, touch screen, translation / interpreter services, signage, Apps, QR codes	Ongoing		
Increase the promotion of accessible facilities and services	Ongoing		
Ensure access and inclusion are considerations when introducing new technology	Ongoing		
Review and promote our feedback process to ensure that this is easy for residents to raise access and inclusion issues	2017/18		

Action	Timeframe	Outcome	Partners
Ensure Council meets reporting requirements			
Report progress against the Access and Inclusion Plan to the community and NSW Minister for Disability Services	Annual	Reporting requirements under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act are met	NSW Minister for Disability Services All sections of Council Disability Council of Australia

■ What you can do

Individual	Business
Talk to Council about our systems and processes that you have difficulty using	Consider ways to make your business more accessible and inclusive
Let Council know when you have trouble accessing Council services, facilities, or events	Partner with Council on initiatives to improve access and inclusion across the City
Let Council know when you need information in a different format	

Where to from here

Funding

Many actions identified in the plan 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 such as the accessible fishing platform and adult change facilities

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

Measures

Council's corporate planning process involves the determination of measures. These measures will be incorporated as part of the link with Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan

Generally the measure will relate to the number of access improvements made to a priority area.

Measures include:

Seeking feedback on progress from people with disabilities and other community members

- Modifying strategies according to review and feedback findings
- Results of the review process presented to the Disability Access Committee for progressive evaluation and endorsement of achievements and strategies
- Providing an annual report to the community and the NSW Minister for Disability Services
- Conducting a full review after four years

Overall effectiveness of the plan is measured through increased contact and improved communication with residents with disabilities, through improved accessibility of facilities, services and employment.

References

1. Shellharbour Community Strategic Plan 2013 - 2023

2. <https://toiletmap.gov.au>

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

Commonwealth Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2010

NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA)

Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 20



www.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au