

Disability Inclusion Action Plan



**COBAR SHIRE
COUNCIL**
outback nsw

2018

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Message from the Mayor

I am pleased to present Cobar Shire Council's updated Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). The first plan was prepared a year ago and over the last 12 months we have worked hard to implement the actions identified in that plan. We have now had a chance to again meet with our community and update the actions in the DIAP. Council has always strived to improve the ability of those with disability in our community to be included and able to access our services and facilities, and this Plan allows us to focus on improving our efforts to address disability and inclusion.

Council has the opportunity to positively influence and support access and inclusion across all areas of the community, such as in our public buildings, parks and recreational spaces, how we provide information and encourage the community to input into our decision making. We are a major employer in the Shire, we can provide employment opportunities for those with disability and we can promote positive attitudes and behaviours both within our organisation and more broadly across the community towards those with disability.

Through this plan, Council aims to ensure that access and inclusion is core Council business and part of Council decision making. The actions in this plan will be integrated throughout our planning documents and will be reported on regularly.

This plan has been developed through the direct input from people with disability, their families and carers in our community and the service organisations that work with them. The community was encouraged to attend a workshop or to provide their ideas directly to Council, and also to provide comments outside of this process. These conversations were key to developing this plan to make Cobar a more welcoming and accessible Shire for everyone.

An inclusive community promotes diversity and is able to thrive from the opportunities diversity can provide. An inclusive community also provides greater choice to all residents. I thank all residents and service organisations who have taken the time to input into this plan and encourage you to continue to do so. By working together, we can all make Cobar Shire a better place to live, work and play.

Inclusion is everyone's business. Council cannot achieve all the outcomes alone. I look forward to continue working with all agencies, NGO and community groups to improve access and inclusion in our community.



Clr Lilliane Brady, OAM
Mayor

Message from the General Manager

Through this plan Council aims to demonstrate our commitment to people with disability to improve access and inclusion over the next four years. The development of this plan was the impetus for us to consult with the community in targeted groups and sessions to ensure that those impacted had a true say into the future plans and actions of Council. We are committed to continuing this consultation into the future and value the feedback and input we gained through this process.

This plan aims to identify the issues our residents face when it comes to access and inclusion. These very residents, their families and carers, as well as the service organisations were also key in developing the solutions outlined in the action plan. Whilst Council is always limited in what activities we can undertake and the outcomes we can achieve through our resource constraints, we aimed to identify priority actions that are achievable in the timeframe and that would make a real difference to our community. We will continue to undertake projects together.

A key example of working together is the disability spinner project undertaken in 2017-2018 where Council worked with LiveBetter who were able to access funding through Peak Gold Mines to purchase the equipment and then Council undertook the installation of it. This is a truly community project. Council has also made great progress in improving the safety of footpaths in high pedestrian traffic zones to assist those with mobility constraints by investing \$200,000 in footpath replacement and a number of grant applications have been submitted that will allow Council to improve accessibility to buildings across the Shire. Council continues to employ a diversified workforce and to assist the community to access our services and provide input into the decision making process.

Inclusion is everyone's business at Council. All staff and Councillors can positively impact on the liveability of Cobar Shire for all people, including those with disability. As a leadership organisation, we can make a difference by improving our own practices, processes and systems.

Council's leadership team is committed to implementing this plan. More importantly, we are committed to its continued improvement and enhancement to ensure real inclusion and accessibility outcomes for our community, and build on the projects undertaken in the last 12 months.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the development of this plan and I look forward to continuing to work with the community to deliver the actions outlined in it.



Peter Vlatko
General Manager

Cobar Shire Council

Vision

Our Vision is for Cobar Shire to be an attractive, healthy and caring environment in which to live, work and play, achieved in partnership with the community through initiative, foresight and leadership.

Mission

Our Mission is to provide sound and sensible government and ensure that works and services are delivered effectively and equitably to the community of Cobar Shire.

Council will also develop and constantly review its policy on the maintenance of its road network with current priorities to include the sealing of the following strategic roads within the Shire: The Wool Track, Louth Road and Tilpa Road.

Values

Council has adopted the following Values that should be reflected in how the whole organisation operates and interacts with others:

- Continually strive for improvement in every aspect of Council's activities and recognise initiative;
- All activities are to be customer focused and provide equity for all;
- Involve the community in decision making through open government and consultative processes;
- Foster and promote sustainable ecological and economic development, rural pursuits and industries that contribute to the wealth of the region and in keeping with the environment and residents lifestyle;
- Conserve and protect the natural beauty of the area;
- Promote a spirit of regional cooperation particularly in regard to planning, infrastructure, economic development, tourism and employment.

About this Plan

Cobar Shire Council has developed this plan as a four year framework, outlining the key strategies and actions to be delivered by Council in its commitment to disability access and inclusion within the Shire. The original plan was adopted in June 2017 and it has now been updated 12 months later. Council is committed, through the actions in this plan, to make continual improvement to reduce barriers that people face when living, working and visiting our Shire. The strategies and actions outlined in this plan will be incorporated into all of Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.

The Case for Inclusion

- As a community, we are poorer without a diverse range of viewpoints and individual perspectives.
- Exclusion leads to disadvantage and discrimination, which have far reaching negative impacts across all aspects of life, including health, welfare, education and employment. These impacts are felt beyond the individual, with families and the broader community being negatively impacted by a non-inclusive community.
- Employment can provide independence, reduce reliance on benefits and improve the living standards of people with disability. This can also have positive health impacts and contribute to a greater sense of self-worth.
- Providing physical access to businesses benefits not only people with disability, but older people, parents with prams and business owners by expanding their business reach.

Consultation

Council is committed to undertaking true consultation with the community to continually update and develop this plan and during its implementation. Council's leadership team drove the development of this plan and are committed to implementing it. A specific workshop session was held with Councillors prior to the development of the original plan and Councillors attended the community workshop session held to update the plan.

To start the conversation, Council organised a workshop on 9 November 2016 with the relevant service providers and NGO's that service Cobar to outline Council's commitment to developing a DIAP and to gain their input into the DIAP. There were 10 participants at the workshop with representatives from Flourish Australia, Ability Links, Cobar Shire Council, CentaCare and Carewest in attendance. This group provided excellent input into the issues they believed their clients face in the Shire and provided their ideas on how to address these issues. These organisations also played a key role in promoting the development of the DIAP to their clients and encouraged participation in the community workshop held on 30 November 2016.

At this meeting, around 8 community representatives participated in a similar workshop with more ideas contributed. Also, Council encouraged the community to have their say by directly contacting staff, which yielded further responses. This meeting was advertised in the

local paper and social media and was well promoted by the service organisations that attended the 9 November meeting.

During the workshop, participants believed that they generally have good access to Council and are able to provide input and feedback. As such, there was no need for a specific committee to be formed. Council has agreed to hold an annual workshop to outline progress in implementing the DIAP and to provide the opportunity to update it.

In March 2018 a workshop was held to update this plan with 9 participants and 5 email responses. Since then a number of conversations have been held, following up on the issues identified.

A draft of the updated plan was placed on exhibition during May 2018 to encourage further community input.

Policy Background

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was developed in partnership between the Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments. It sets out a national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a major reform to deliver a national system of disability support focussed on individual needs and choice over how, when and where support is provided. Individuals, rather than service providers will determine how their funding is spent. Disability inclusion action planning is complementary to the NDIS and assists Councils to break down local barriers to full participation by people with disability in our community.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA)* defines disability as:

The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability is not just about the individual or their impairment, but rather for the whole community to work together to break down the barriers that exist. Under the *Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014*, Councils were required to prepare a Disability Inclusion Action Plan by 1 July 2017. This plan can be addressed through the integrated planning process. Cobar Shire Council wants to show the importance of access and inclusion by developing a stand-alone plan that is then integrated through Council's plans. Disability inclusion action planning plays a critical role in identifying and delivering on practical measures to transform intent into action by local government.

Council has chosen to update this policy annually to ensure the community views and values are represented and to ensure that appropriate actions are included in the IP&R documents (including the Long Term Financial Plan).

Council's Policy Context

Whilst Council may not have had a DIAP in the past, there has been much work undertaken in this area. In 2013, Council adopted their first Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) for the Cobar town centre and PAMP Access Audit. Council has been implementing priority actions under these each year as funding becomes available, as part of their Annual Operational Plan. Other Council documents include the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan and the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

Again, this DIAP will be integrated across Council's integrated planning and reporting documents as they are being reviewed and adopted by 30 June 2018.

Council also addresses access through the DA process, ensuring appropriate measures are included when buildings are built or altered.

Councils Planning Process

Council has one Vision and one Plan. This is the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Annual Plan. The Disability inclusion Action Plan is a supporting document that will inform the actions in our Annual Plan.



Community Profile

Demographics

Of the 68,189 people living in the Far West and Orana regions of NSW, 9,703 have identified as having a disability (SSI Data Cube). Closer to home, Cobar Shire has 453 aged pensioners, which represents 72% of those over 65 years old. There are 180 disability support pensioners in the 16-64 age group, which equates to 5.7% being on a disability pension. There were 312 people over the age of 15 years who were providing assistance to someone with a disability in the Shire, which represents 8.5% of this age group. 3.1% of the population identified as having a profound or severe disability, or 154 people. Of these, 122 live within in the community. Of those 154, 80 are aged under 65 years old and all but 5 of those 80 people live within the community. The remaining 74 people who have a profound or severe disability are aged over 64, which is 12% of this population group. Of those 74 people, 46 live within the community (Public Health Information Development Unit – PHIDU December 2016).

Whilst these statistics help to understand the prevalence of people who need support in the community, it is acknowledged that the statistics do not include all people living with and caring for people with a disability in the community. Nor do they include information on those who have milder disability, including mobility concerns.

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is rolled out in Cobar, there continues to be a great deal of change for the community and the disability sector. The sector will continue to evolve over the time period of this strategy and as changes are implemented. At the time of writing the community expressing concern regarding access to services post full implementation of the NDIS with some sectors unable to access services required, which they are currently able to access. Some in the community have plans written, others are trying to meet the 30 June 2018 deadline. Council will continue to monitor the situation and work with groups such as the Health Council and Community Services Forum to try to prevent any loss of services to the Shire.

Accessibility to Public Buildings

Council is committed to improving access to public buildings in the Shire. This includes the constant search for grant funding to assist us to meet our ambitions. However, it is a goal of our planning documents and one we are committed to achieving.

The Council chambers and administration building are accessible, including with the fit out of appropriate amenities. The library is accessible and appropriate amenities are available to users of that building. Council has funding to refurbish the front arcade and as part of that project, a compliant ramp will be installed.

The Cobar Memorial Swimming Pool is probably the best pool in the region, with both pools fully accessible with access ramps, the provision of a water wheelchair and accessible change facilities. New works will be undertaken in the grounds, with all new facilities made accessible and appropriate pathways installed.

An accessible toilets will shortly be installed at Dalton Park and grant funding sought for accessible toilets at the Mount Hope hall and Nymagee sports complex. Over the last 12 months, Council has installed accessible toilets at the Cobar Youth and Fitness Centre, along with wheelchair storage (for wheelchair basketball). Grant funding has been sought to improve accessibility at the Great Cobar Heritage Centre.

The NSW Government has announced a priority area for them is improving accessibility to playgrounds. Council is eager for grant funds to be available to assist us to develop projects for our major playgrounds, with priority parks being Drummond Park and Dalton Park.

Many commercial buildings have poor access in Cobar. This will continue to be an issue. Council will, through the Development Application process, continue to strive to improve accessibility and can work with groups such as the Cobar Business Association to alert business owners of the advantages of improving access. However, with a large proportion of proprietors who live out of the Shire and the cost of undertaking the works, it will continue to be a challenge that must be addressed over time.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The actions outlined in this plan will be integrated across Council's integrated planning documents (The Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Annual Operational Plan and Resource Strategy). As such, actions from this plan will be included in these documents and will be reported against in line with reporting for each document – quarterly for the Annual Operational Plan, six monthly for the Delivery Program and annually as part of the Annual Report. These are public documents, available on our website or in hard copy. The Annual Report is provided to the Minister.

In addition, an annual review of the DIAP will be prepared, with a copy supplied to the Disability Council of NSW.

Council will hold an annual meeting of service providers and people with disability, their family and carers, to gain feedback on the implementation of the DIAP and new initiatives to be included in the following years. This method of monitoring and feedback was agreed to during the consultation period. However, Cobar Shire is a close community and it is expected that more frequent feedback will be received when appropriate from the public.

In addition to the annual review of the DIAP implementation, the plan will be updated and evaluated in line with the IP&R reviews.

Attitudes and Behaviours

The attitudes and behaviours of the community towards those with disability have been described as the single biggest barrier to full participation and inclusion. It was identified in workshops that mental health issues in particular in Cobar are poorly understood and there is a need to ensure adequate socialisation opportunities for all in the community, as well as education on promoting strong mental health and how to assist those with poor mental health.

Disability awareness is at the core of disability inclusion. Training, particularly for frontline service delivery staff, regarding the importance of, and practical steps toward disability inclusion is critical.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
1. Improve staff awareness of disability issues to improve customer service for those with a disability.	1.1 Include disability awareness training in staff inductions.	1.1 Training included in all staff inductions held throughout the year.	HRM	Implemented 2018 and ongoing thereafter.
2. Train staff to a high degree in disability awareness and infrastructure requirements	2.1 Train staff in the Liveable Housing Australia Design Assessor Course.	2.1 To have at least one staff member registered as a LHA Design Guideline Assessor. This will allow Council to assess designs and home modification proposals against the appropriate Liveable Housing Design Guidelines.	DPES	Training 2017 with Council able to provide this service to the community ongoing.
3. Promote access and inclusion at Council facilities	3.1 Partner with community organisations to deliver projects and programs that support inclusion in Council facilities.	3.1 Number of activities undertaken in partnership with other organisations.	DCED	Ongoing.
	3.2 Work with the Mental Health Network to promote strong mental health in the community, and provide education around mental health.	3.2 Number of activities Council has endorsed or participated in.	DCED	Ongoing.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
4. Ensure continued consultation with those with disability and key service organisations to ensure there is targeted opportunity for input into decision making.	4.1 Hold at least one consultation meeting with key stakeholders on the implementation and updating of this plan annually.	4.1 This plan is updated annually and changes are made when needed. Those with disability and their families and service organisations have the opportunity to continually input into Council decision making.	DCED	Annually.

Employment

Employment and economic security for most people are closely related. Employment contributes to independence and feelings of self-worth, social interaction and mental health, and increases opportunities to support individual choice and control. Council maintains its commitment to equal employment and workplace opportunities and to reducing barriers to employees to encourage them to grow and contribute to the organisation.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
5. Develop Council employment opportunities for people with a disability	5.1 Work with organisations to target funding where appropriate to employ people with a disability into roles designed to suit them and Council	5.1 Number of people employed as a result of the initiative	HRM	Ongoing.
	5.2 Consider issues of disability, access and inclusion when updating Council's policies and procedures.	5.2 Access and inclusion addressed in Councils documents where appropriate.	HRM	Ongoing.

Liveable Communities

Liveable communities are important for all people in the community and are achieved by applying the principles of universal design. This is important across Council facilities, housing design, transport access, community recreation and social inclusiveness.

Major issues identified in the community consultation were around the lack of options for public transport for those in a wheelchair and a lack of community transport for residents who have to travel to medical appointments but cannot take themselves. It was also noted that there are long waiting periods for an Occupational Therapist to come to Cobar to undertake in-home assessments for residents to be able to access modifications (up to a 12 month waiting period). It was noted that Cobar's footpath network is difficult to navigate for those with mobility issues.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
6. Continuously upgrade Council assets to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, relevant Australian Standards and the National Construction Code.	6.1 Identify and prioritise public buildings that require access audits in accordance with AS1428.1 – Access to Premises Standards.	6.1 Priority buildings identified and audits completed.	DPES	2018
	6.2 Review the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and progressively upgrade high priority areas to improve access as funding becomes available.	6.2 Pedestrian access continues to be improved in high use areas.	DES	Ongoing.
7. Improve the liveability and accessibility of public places	7.1 Include community input at the concept stage on projects in public places.	7.1 Develop a procedure for including community input into the design process	DCED	2018

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
	7.2 Undertake an assessment of key community infrastructure to identify and prioritise design, delivery and management of accessible toilet and change facilities.	7.2 Assessment completed	DPES	2018
	7.3 Install accessible playground equipment into Drummond Park	7.3 Accessible playground equipment installed into Drummond Park.	DCED	2018
	7.4 Investigate moving some gym equipment downstairs to make it more accessible at the Cobar Youth and Fitness Centre and investigate options to purchase specific accessible equipment.	7.4 Gym equipment more accessible to all users.	DCCS	2018
	7.5 Ensure any new public buildings and works undertaken by Council on public buildings meet universal design principles.	7.5 New public buildings all meet universal design principles.	DPES	Ongoing.
	7.6 Investigate the option of free pool admission for disability pension holders.	7.6 Council determines if free pool admission is given and if so, this is included in the 2018/2019 Fees and Charges.	DCCS	2018
	7.7 Facilitate specialist training for technical staff for access auditing and compliance with relevant codes and standards.	7.7 Staff member trained. 7.7 Reduction in waiting times to have in-home modifications undertaken resulting in improved health outcomes.	DPES	2017

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
8. Advocate for improved access and inclusion outcomes in the CBD	8.1 Promote to shop keepers access issues faced in the central business district and how this limits their ability to reach customers and make sales.	8.1 Material produced and distributed to business owners.	DCED	2018
9. Advocate for improved and more equitable public transport options	9.1 Coordinate community groups to determine the feasibility of introducing public transport options for those with wheelchairs and mobility impairments.	9.1 Agreed understanding in the community of the demand and supply of equitable transport options 9.1 Agreed position on way forward and issue progressed if need identified.	DCED	2018
	9.2 Investigate if there is adequate community transport available for the community and advocate for additional transport if required.	9.2 Agreed understanding in the community of the demand and supply of equitable transport options 9.2 Agreed position on way forward and issue progressed if need identified.		DCED
	9.3 Liaise with community and police to increase awareness of appropriate use of disability car spaces to reduce noncompliance.	9.3 Those with disability cards are more able to find appropriate parking spots.	DES	2018
	9.4 Audit linemarking in disability car parking spots and repaint where needed.	9.4 Line marking clearer and a reduction in noncompliance.	DES	2018
	9.5 Liaise with Cobar Show Society to ensure adequate disability parking available at the Cobar Show.	9.5 An increase in the availability of disability car parking during the Cobar Show.	DES	2018
10. Advocate for provision	10.1 Lobby for a respite home to	10.1 Respite options	DCED	2020

of respite services in Cobar	be established in Cobar to assist carers of those with disability.	available to family and carers.		
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Processes and Systems

Council is committed to improving our capacity to assist our community to gain access to the information and council services they need within Council's resourcing limits. Council wants the community to actively participate and partner with us for improved decision making and service delivery.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
11. Increase the range of formats that information is provided in to support different needs and capabilities.	11.1 Investigate the option of having a button available on the website to allow larger text.	11.1 Material on the website is more accessible to visually impaired persons.	DCED	2018

Version Control

No.	Date Adopted	Minute No.	Date Commenced	Date notified in Local Paper
1	24.04.2017	74.4.2017	28 April 2017	N/A
2				
3				