



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2017-21

PLANNING FOR OUR PEOPLE
OUR PLACE OUR FUTURE

Acknowledgment of **Country**

Cessnock City Council acknowledges that within its local government area boundaries are the Traditional Lands of the Wonnarua people, the Awabakal people and the Darkinjung people. We acknowledge these Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices and operations are located, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now live within the Cessnock local government area.

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Mayor Foreword

COUNCILLOR BOB PYNSENT

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CESSNOCK

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 is an important Plan for our community.

At Census 2011, there were over 3,300 people living in the Cessnock local government area who needed help in their daily lives for a profound or severe disability.

It is of paramount importance we ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy all aspects of community life. Council has implemented a range of programs to remove access barriers and increase the participation of people with disability, this Plan builds on our previous work.

This Plan has been developed and informed by community consultation including hearing from people with disability, carers and service providers. This community input is vital and I look forward to what we can achieve over the next four years through the implementation of the actions set out under this Plan.

The time generously provided by people and service providers who participated in the community consultation process is appreciated. Council looks forward to developing and maintaining strong working relationships with the community in delivering the Plan's actions.



General Manager Message

MR STEPHEN GLEN

GENERAL MANAGER OF CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 provides Council with a path to improve access and inclusion for its services, infrastructure, communications and business systems.

The development of the Plan has provided Council with an opportunity to formally identify issues facing both people with disability and their carers. This framework developed with the support of the community will better inform Council on how to create a more inclusive community for both residents and visitors to the Cessnock local government area.

Council will build on and improve accessibility for people of all abilities and demonstrate by example, inclusive practices and attitudes.

We will work collaboratively with other government departments, businesses, community organisations and groups in advocating for and achieving inclusive and accessible communities.

Council recognises that for the successful delivery of the Plan and its actions, collaborative partnerships are the key to improving access and inclusion for all people.



In demonstrating Council's commitment in delivering the Plan's listed actions, it has been embedded within Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The progress in delivering the listed actions including the Plan's achievements will be reported back to the community including being documented in Council's Annual Report.

Council looks forward to collaborating with the community in delivering this important Plan.

Statement of Commitment for an Accessible & Inclusive Community

Council's Commitment for an Accessible and Inclusive Community

The following principles have been embedded in the Plan and guide its actions:-

- Council will demonstrate leadership in providing and advocating for an inclusive and accessible community.
- People with disability will be provided with equal opportunity to access Council services and facilities.
- Council community events will be inclusive of people with disability.
- Council will provide the community with information that is easily understood.
- People with disability will be encouraged to participate and have inclusion in community consultation processes.
- People with disability will be provided the same opportunities to obtain and maintain employment at Council.
- Council will collaborate with other government departments, businesses, community organisations and groups in advocating for and achieving inclusive and accessible communities.

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires all Council's in New South Wales to have a Disability Inclusion Action Plan by July 2017.

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 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” (NSW Government, NSW Legislation).

The Context of the Plan

Overview of the Plan

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 demonstrates Council's commitment to improving access and inclusion. The Plan identifies what Council can do to promote and achieve equality for residents and visitors to the Cessnock local government area.

A Plan that considers the needs of people with disability is important as it is estimated that 18.3% of the population have some form of disability¹. If you consider profound or severe disability, 6.5% of people in the Cessnock local government area were recorded at Census 2011².

In developing the Plan, Council consulted with 160 people and included people with disability, carers of people with disability, families of children with disability, community groups and service providers to understand opportunities to improve inclusion and access.

The Plan lists actions for all areas of Council and includes the services it delivers, the facilities it provides and its business practices and they being accessible and inclusive. It also guides Council in how it can be responsive to the needs of people with disability living and visiting the Cessnock local government area.

The goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan set the framework for Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The goals are:-

- **Develop positive community attitudes and behaviours**
- **Create liveable communities**
- **Support access to meaningful employment**
- **Improve access to services through better systems and processes**

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Disability Australia Catalogue 4430.0

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011

The Plan has been prepared with consideration given to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), along with commonwealth and state legislation and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan. Both the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and Council's Plan are grounded in the principles of equality, respect, social justice, diversity, participation and inclusion.

The actions listed within Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan align with Council's Community Strategic Plan, Cessnock 2027 and its vision "Cessnock will be a cohesive and welcoming community living in an attractive and sustainable rural environment with a diversity of business and employment opportunities supported by

accessible infrastructure and services which effectively meet community needs".

The implementation of the Plan not only has benefits for people with disability, but also carers of people with disability, people who have temporary impairments such as damaged limbs, older people and parents/caregivers pushing prams and strollers. These groups too face access barriers when participating in community life.

To ensure the Plan's implementation it has been embedded within Council's integrated planning framework and this includes the Delivery Plan and annual Operational Plan. In monitoring the progress of the Plan's actions, a review will occur annually and will be documented in Council's annual report.



Above: Accessible wheelchair at Branxton Pool and is available for use by the community.

Supporting Cessnock 2027 Community Strategic Plan

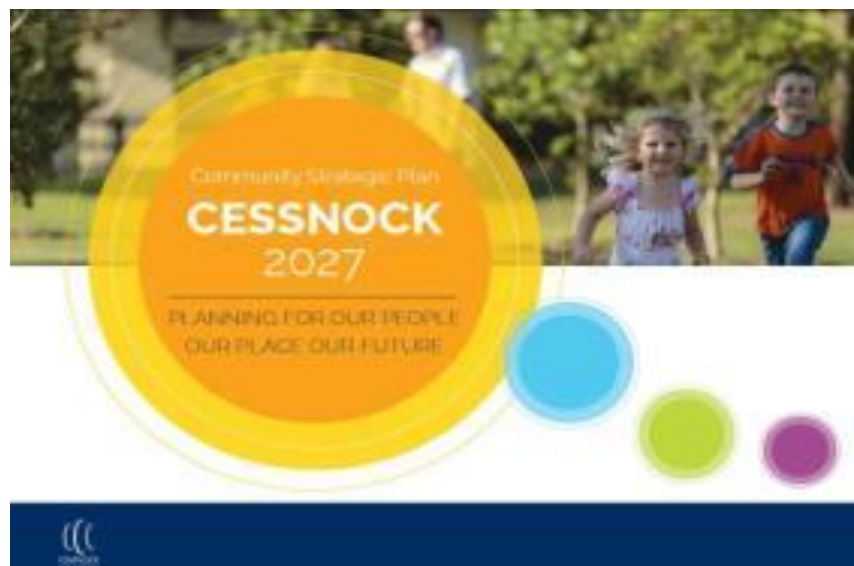
The Plan has been developed to align with the Community Strategic Plan, Cessnock 2027 and is the highest level Plan prepared by a Council. Its purpose is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and to develop and implement strategies for achieving these goals.

There are five desired outcomes identified in the Community Strategic Plan, Cessnock 2027 and are:-

- A connected, safe and creative community
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- A sustainable and healthy environment
- Accessible infrastructure, services and facilities
- Civic leadership and effective governance.

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan has a specific focus on people with disability, access and inclusion. It provides the detail for what needs to be done, identifies specific actions and outlines how they are to be measured.

It has been embedded within the Community Strategic Plan, Cessnock 2027 and sits under the community's desired outcome for 'A connected, safe and creative community'. Under this desired outcome, the 2017-21 Delivery Program has the strategy 'Commence implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan'. The 2017-18 annual Operational Plan has the strategy "Commence implementation of the priority actions from the Disability Inclusion Action Plan".



Legislative and Policy Context

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Australia is currently undergoing major reform in the disability sector. This includes the launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and in July 2016, the scheme was rolled out to people with disability living in the Cessnock local government area. The scheme is in support of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and was ratified by Australia in 2008.

The convention comprises eight guiding principles and they have been considered and incorporated into the Plan's actions. Figure 1 on page 12 lists the eight guiding principles.

Disability Inclusion Act 2014

Council's Plan has been written to align with the requirements of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and its principles.

In 2014, the NSW State Government passed the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and the Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014. The Disability Inclusion Regulation requires all Councils within New South Wales to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan by 1 July 2017.

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 is based on equality for people with disability, human rights, independence, social and economic inclusion and choice. It sets out the legislative requirements for what should be included in a Plan and advises that Councils have a responsibility to support people with disability.

The requirements of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 are (Division 3, Part 12):-

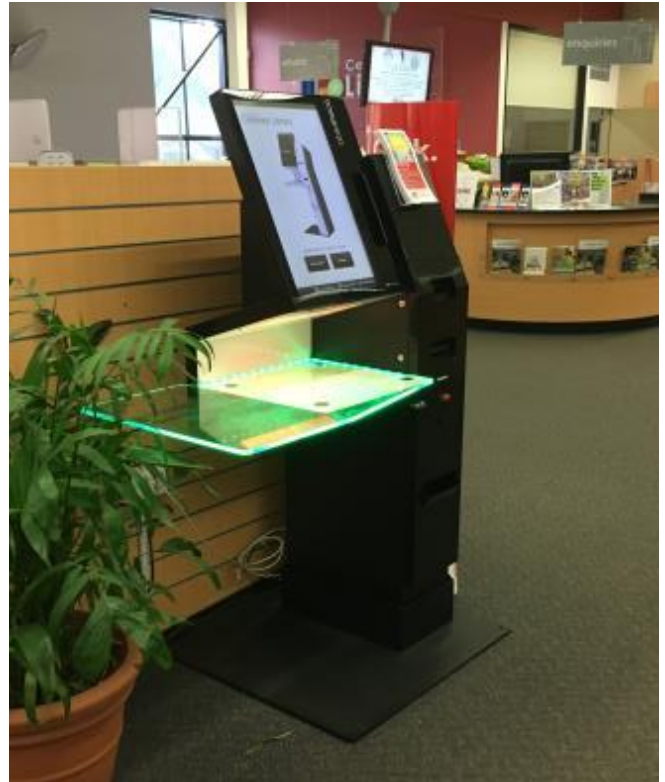
- Council must consult with people with disability.
- Council may consult with individuals or other entities considered appropriate.

A Disability Inclusion Action Plan must:

- Specify how Council proposes to have regard to the disability principles in its dealings with matters relating to people with disability.
- Include actions to support people with disability, including, for example, actions about the following:
 - Providing access to buildings, events and facilities.
 - Providing access to information.
 - Accommodating the specific needs of people with disability.
 - Supporting employment of people with disability.
 - Encouraging and creating opportunities for people with disability to access the full range of services and activities available in the community, and
- Include details of the Council's consultation about the plan with people with disability.
- Explain how the plan supports the goals of the State Disability Inclusion Plan.

NSW Disability Inclusion Plan

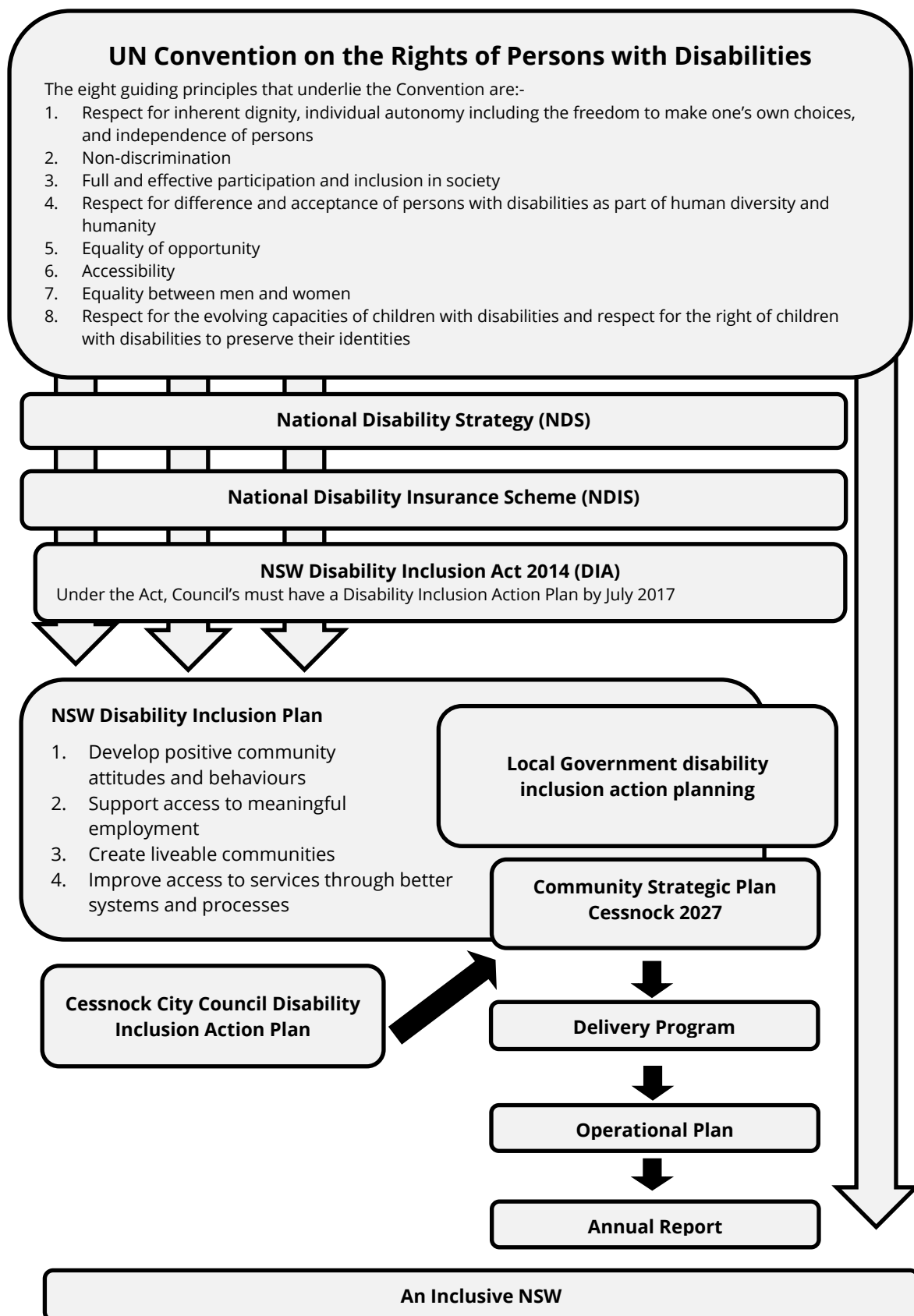
In 2015, the NSW state government developed its NSW Disability Inclusion Plan. The goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan are to develop positive community attitudes and behaviours, create liveable communities, support access to meaningful employment and improve access to services through better systems and processes. Council's plan supports the goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan with the actions listed in this Plan being centred on the same four goals.



Above: Cessnock City Library and Kurri Kurri Library each have a height adjustable self-checkout kiosk.

Height adjustable equipment and furniture provides greater flexibility and is accessible for people in a wheelchair.

Figure 1: Legislative and planning framework



Source: Diagram adapted from Local Government NSW (2015), NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines for Local Government

Summary of Legislation, Policy, Plans and Standards that Guide Council to Improve Access, Equality and Inclusion

International

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Commonwealth

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020
- Disability (Access to Premises Standards – Building) Standards 2010
- Australian Standard (AS 1428) – Design for Access and Mobility

NSW State

- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
- NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (2015)
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and includes references to the Building Code of Australia

Cessnock City Council Policies and Strategies

- Cessnock 2027, Community Strategic Plan
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Cessnock Development Control Plan 2010, C.1 Parking and Access, C.6 Access and Mobility
- Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan 2016
- Community Access Policy



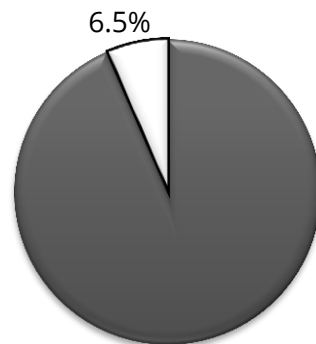
Above: Braille signage at Cessnock Performing Arts Centre indicating toilet facilities.

Community Profile

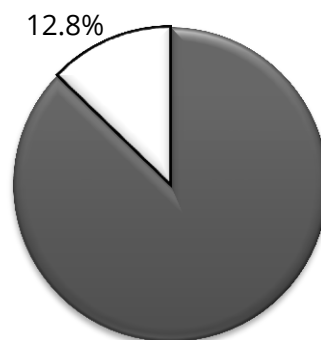
At the time of the 2011 Census, a population of 50,840 people was recorded for the Cessnock local government area. If to use more current data, the estimated resident population as at 30 June 2015 was 55,862.

The 2011 Census sought to understand the number of people in the Cessnock local government area with disability. It found 6.5% of people with a profound or severe disability required assistance and 12.8% of people provided unpaid support to people with disability.

People with a profound or severe disability in the Cessnock local government area



Residents that provide assistance to people with disability in the Cessnock local government area



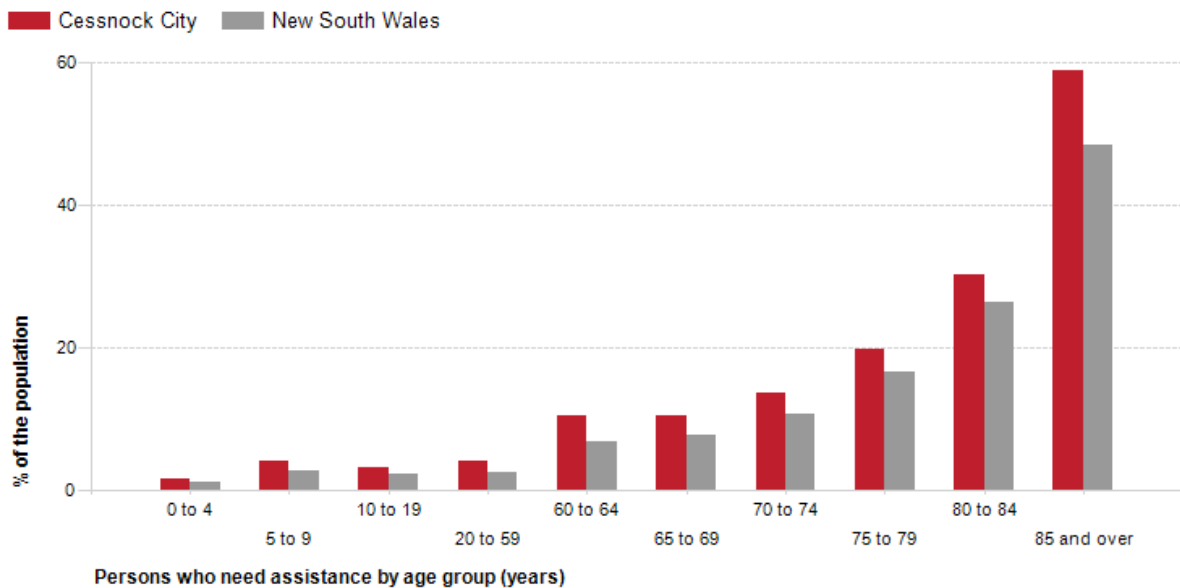
The number of people with disability is increasing and this is expected to continue due to population growth, ageing and increased life expectancy. Between Census Years 2006 and 2011, there was an increase of 709 people providing unpaid assistance to a person with disability, long term illness or old age.

Ageing has an impact on rates of disability. Ageing will be of considerable importance to the Cessnock local government area as the population for people aged 70 years and over is forecast to grow almost 50% between Census years 2011 and 2021. If to consider the 2031 population projection, the total population for people aged 70 years and over is expected to grow by over 90%.

Need for Assistance with Core Activities per Age Group

The graph below indicates the need for assistance with core activities due to a profound or severe disability. Core activities include assistance with self-care, physical movement and communication activities. The graph is categorised into age groups and indicates for the Cessnock local government area all age groups had higher incidence of people requiring assistance with core activities when compared to New South Wales. Also, the need for assistance with core activities rises as people age.

Need for assistance with core activities, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Usual residence data)
Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



It is estimated that 18.3³% of the Australian population have some form of disability.

Snapshot of demographic data for the Cessnock local government area indicates:-

- **6.5% of people have a profound or severe disability⁴**
- **21.8% of people aged 65 years and over require assistance with core activities⁵.**
- **12.8% of people provide unpaid support to people with disability⁶.**

People with disability when compared to people without disability experience lower levels of income; increased barriers in accessing employment opportunities, community facilities and public spaces; and financial costs in accessing required support needs.



Left: Liberty swing at Peace Park, Weston. The swing is located within the children's playground and is wheelchair accessible.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Disability Australia Catalogue 4430.0

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing (2011)





⁵ As above

⁶ As Above

It is acknowledged that demographic data specific to people with disability living in the Cessnock local government area is limited. However, at the national level data is captured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics via its Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2015). The survey measures the prevalence of disability in Australia and provides a national demographic

profile of people with disability. Around 75,200 people participated in the survey and included people who live in private dwellings and establishments (establishments include hospitals, nursing homes, aged care hostels, cared components of retirement villages and group homes).

The findings of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers (2015) national survey indicate:-

	Income The median gross income for a person with disability aged 15 to 64 years was less than half the weekly income of a person without disability.
	Labour Force 53.4% of people with a disability and of working age were in the labour force, compared to 83.2% of people with no disability.
	Employment For people with disability, the 2015 unemployment rate was almost double when compared to people without disability.
	Education When compared to 2012 data, there were more people aged 15 to 64 years with disability that had attained as the highest year of school completed, Year 12 or equivalent.

	Need for Assistance 2.4 million Australians with disability (living in households) needed assistance with at least one activity of daily life.
	Transport 40.2% of people aged 5 years and over with disability (living in households) used public transport.
	Community Participation 77.4% of people with disability (living in households) participated in physical activities, visited public places and engaged with friends and family.
	Discrimination Discrimination was experienced by almost one in 12 Australians with disability aged 15 years and over (living in households) during a 12 month period.

Community Facilities

Access and Inclusion

In addition to ensuring community facilities meet the Building Code of Australia, Council for many years has implemented a range of initiatives that encourage and increase access and inclusion. These initiatives have sought to reduce barriers and increase community participation for Council services, community events, community infrastructure and facilities that Council owns or is reserve trust manager. A range of initiatives are listed below.

Table 1: Current initiatives and programs that improve access to Council services, community infrastructure and facilities

Council Facility or Service	Number of Facilities	Accessible Features
Cessnock City Council Administration Building	1	Lift to enable access from car park area to ground floor customer service area; accessible car parking spaces provided on site; accessible public toilet with MLAK key access and is available for after-hours use.
Swimming Pools	3	Acceptance of companion card; accessible pool entry ramps installed at all facilities; water proof wheelchair available for community use, mobility aqua hoist available at Kurri Kurri pool to enable wheelchair entry into pool; accessible toilets.
Libraries	2	Large print books and audio books available for borrowing; a range of e-resources can be accessed from home; accessible toilet at Cessnock Library; height adjustable self-service kiosk for borrowings provided at both libraries.
Community Halls	15	Most community halls have accessible entry ramps; eight facilities have accessible toilets.
Neighbourhood Centres	2	Both centres have a lift and accessible toilets.
Youth Centre	1	Accessible toilet on site; from the carpark to the youth centre there is a ramp with paved pathway access.
Performing Arts Centre	1	Toilets and change room doors have braille signage; hearing loop in 466 seat theatre; access ramp at main entry; accessible car parking spaces on site; acceptance of the companion card for ticketed performances; moveable seats within theatre to accommodate a wheel chair.

Council Facility or Service	Number of Facilities	Accessible Features
Council Events	Various	Hire of accessible toilets for outdoor events (where facilities are not provided); provision of shade structures; use of the International Symbol of Access in the Seniors Week 2016 & 2017 calendar for activities that were accessible; participation in the 2016 International Day of People with Disability community event held in the Cessnock local government area.
Parks/Playgrounds	Various	Liberty swing at Peace Park (Weston); accessible BBQ at Peace Park; accessible picnic table at Peace Park and The Basin; accessible picnic settings now routinely installed for situations where replacement is required and for new installations.
Recreation Facilities	Various	Council's recreation facilities have hosted a range of events and include wheelchair tennis (Cessnock Tennis Club), Special Olympics (Cessnock Pool) and Relay for Life (Cessnock Sportsground).
Pedestrian Pathways	Various	Council in 2016 adopted the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan and the actions listed will increase and improve key pedestrian routes.

Below: Connectivity from accessible carpark to Crawfordville Millfield Community Hall.



Community Consultation

What Research and Consultation Methods Did We Use?

In developing the Plan, the research process occurred over eleven months beginning February 2016 and concluding December. In total, 160 people participated in the consultation. A number of methods were used to encourage people to participate in the consultation including engaging with people at local community events. For example, consultation occurred with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people as part of a local NAIDOC Week event and people from multicultural backgrounds were consulted at a local Harmony Day event.

Figure 2: Summary of Research and Engagement Methods

Summary of Research and Engagement Methods Used:-

- Discussions with people with disability
- Discussions with people that care for a person with disability
- Posts on the Cessnock City Council Facebook
- Media stories published in local papers
- Community survey (available online and hardcopy format)
- Social Pin Point (online mapping tool)
- Meetings with community groups that have a disability focus
- Forum with families and included families that have a child with disability
- Service provider workshops
- Consultation at events (Harmony Day & NAIDOC Day)
- Pop up consultation within Cessnock Library foyer
- Access audits of key Council owned/managed community buildings

160 PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITY WERE CONSULTED

How Did We Consult with the Community?

Consultation was undertaken with people that have disability, carers of people with disability, families with children with disability, disability focussed community groups and service providers to understand opportunities to improve inclusion and access.

Table Two: Summary of community consultation methods and participation

Community Consultation	Number of Participants
A local disability service on behalf of Council administered at the 'Harmony Day' community event a short survey to understand what "access" and "inclusion" means to people.	23
A community survey with 14 questions was made available online and in hardcopy format. It sought views on acceptance, inclusion and access for community events and community buildings; along with identifying need for accessible formats. The surveys were also made available and administered at a NAIDOC Week event. Of the survey participants, 14 people had disability.	49
Discussions were held with people that have disability or carer of a person with disability regarding issues specific to their experience. These discussions occurred as individual interviews or part of a group setting.	47
A forum was held in Kurri Kurri and included families that have a child with disability and providers of services that work with children with disability.	13
Individual meetings were held with staff in the disability services sector and focussed on experiences occurring within the community and barriers to participation including access to employment.	3
Two service provider workshops were held. Participants worked in the disability services sector or represented a community group that had an interest in disability services.	22
Social Pin Point, an online mapping tool was made available to the community to enable the identification of physical access issues.	3
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	160 People

What Other Consultation Methods Did We Use?

Access Audits

Access audits of key Council owned community buildings in the Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Central Business Districts was undertaken by a Consultant and was a person who required a wheelchair for mobility. The aim of the audit was to identify infrastructure in place that supports access to the facility along with identifying access barriers.

Examples of infrastructure and supports that were considered included:-

- entry ramps
- accessible toilets
- accessible pathways to the facility from the car parking area
- availability of hearing loops
- signage, including braille signage

A subsequent audit of all remaining Council owned/or managed community hall buildings was undertaken by Council staff to identify the

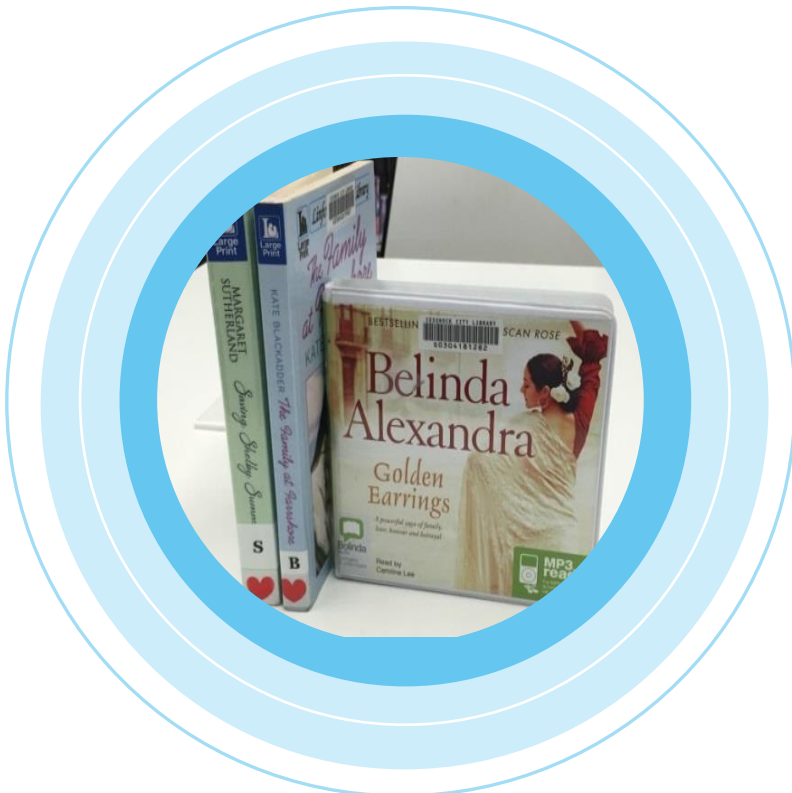
infrastructure in place that supports people with disability to access the facility.

Discussions with Cessnock City Council Staff

Discussions occurred with Council staff responsible for human resources, information technology, land use planning, community and customer services, programs and infrastructure such as recreation facilities and community buildings. These discussions assisted to identify actions that could be included in the Plan and continuous improvement opportunities for access and inclusion.

Review of Previous Planning Processes

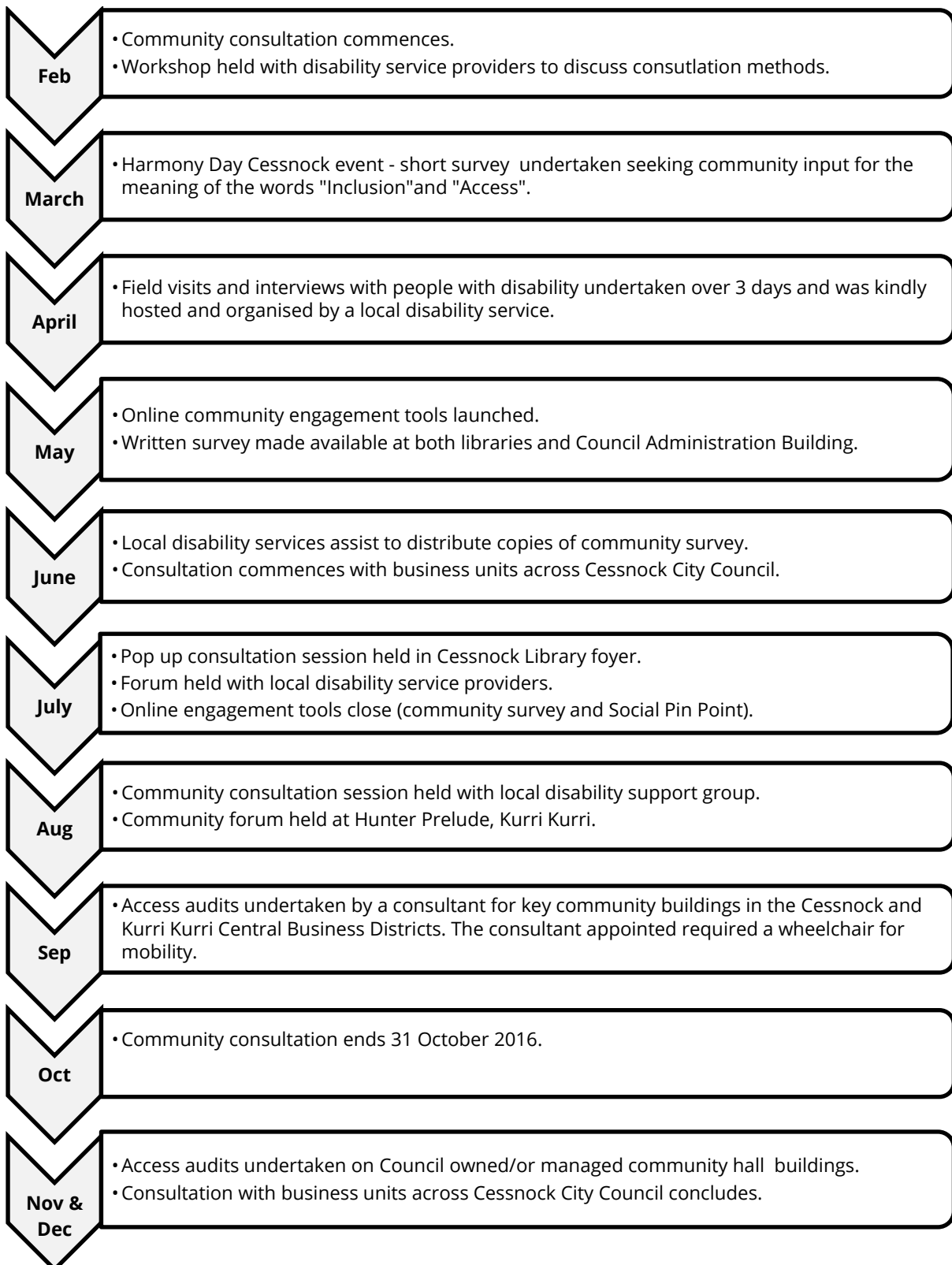
Council has other strategic plans that have synergies to this Plan. They include the adopted Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan 2016 (PAMP) and Draft Health and Well-being Plan. Both were considered in developing this Plan and assisted to ensure actions were aligned.



Left: Both library branches have a range of audio books and large font books.

What Was Our Research and Consultation Journey?

Figure Three: Consultation and research journey for the Plan





Above: Signage advising hearing loop within the theatre at Cessnock Performing Arts Centre. The Cessnock Performing Arts Centre theatre has capacity for 466 people.

Goal One:

Develop positive community attitudes and behaviours

Council will take a leadership role in advocating for, along with delivering services to the community that are supportive of people with disability. We will encourage positive attitudes and behaviours that seek to engage and include people of all abilities.

What Did People Say?

- People with disability want to participate in community life.
- The International Day of People with Disability is an important community event for recognising people with disability and developing positive community attitudes.
- Community events must be accessible and inclusive.
- People want to be informed of community events and have access to information about what's available in the local community.
- Awareness needs to be heightened for improved access and greater inclusion for all.
- Services collaborating and working together is an asset of the Cessnock local government area.
- Publications and promotional material need to be inclusive of people with disability and could include audio, pictorial and easy read formats.



Above: International Day of People with Disability local event flyer for Cessnock (2016).

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
1.1 Council's community events are inclusive of all people.	Encourage services and community groups to include in mainstream celebratory events, such as Seniors Week, NAIDOC Week and Youth Week activities that are accessible. The International Symbol of Access to be used to identify accessible activities in promotional material issued by Council.	i. Accessible activities listed in the Youth Week, Seniors Week and NAIDOC Week event calendar.	Ongoing	Objective 1.1 Promoting social connections
1.2 Community events are accessible and inclusive of people with disability.	Develop a practice guideline outlining and encouraging the host of community activities to provide activities that are accessible. The practice guideline would be issued to stakeholders in planning for Seniors Week, NAIDOC Week and Youth week programs.	i. Qualitative feedback from event organisers on value of the guideline. ii. Increase in accessible activities offered for Seniors Week, Youth Week, NAIDOC Week with comparisons to previous years. iii. Feedback from the community.	2019	Objective 1.1 Promoting social connections
1.3 Council collaborates with external organisations to raise awareness within the community on the importance of disability issues, access and inclusion for all.	Participate in and/or promote within the community local International Day of People with Disability events and engage in other collaborative opportunities that improve access and inclusion.	i. Levels of engagement. ii. Increased participation at local events. iii. Range of promotional materials issued and widely circulated. iv. Provision of information to the community on how they can contribute to improving access and strengthening inclusion.	Ongoing	Objective 1.1 Promoting social connections

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
1.4 The community is aware of the abilities of all people in the community.	Promote within the community public awareness campaigns of the abilities of all people.	i. Range of promotional materials issued and circulation rates.	Ongoing	Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture
1.5 Council services are accessible and inclusive of people with disability.	Provide staff with opportunities to participate in disability access and inclusion training, including encouraging staff to be aware of and be proactive in identifying and responding to service barriers.	i. Council staff attendance and participation in training that focusses on access and inclusion. ii. Procurement of a person with disability to be the trainer.	Ongoing	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community
1.6 Council publications are inclusive of people with disability.	Images of people with disability to be used in mainstream publications and in promotions of community events.	i. Images published in Council documents and promotional material is inclusive of people with disability.	Ongoing	Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture
1.7 The community is aware of programs and services available within the Cessnock local government area.	Council will continue to provide an online community directory and events calendar. Event programs for example Seniors Week, Youth Week and NAIDOC Week will continue to be promoted within the community and to service providers.	i. Level of usage. ii. Increased services listed. iii. Increased events listed. iv. Circulation rates for community event promotional material. v. Circulation rates for community event and promotional material within the disability services sector.	Ongoing	Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture

Goal Two:

Support access to meaningful employment

Council is committed to workforce diversity, inclusion and equal employment opportunities. It will be an advocate for encouraging increased employment opportunities for people with disability across the wider Cessnock local government area.

What Did People Say?

- Cessnock City Council is a major employer in the local government area.
- People with disability want to participate and be included in the workforce.
- The removal of barriers is important for people with disability in engaging and participating in the workforce.
- Volunteering and training programs are vital in encouraging people to participate in the workforce.
- The purchasing of goods and services needs to be considerate of social justice principles.
- Libraries are safe places to access resources that assist with job finding.



Above: Cessnock Central Business District, a place of employment.

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
2.1 Council's workforce is welcoming, respectful, diverse and inclusive of all people.	Review the Workforce Management Plan to ensure diversity and inclusion is a consideration in workforce planning.	i. Completion of the review.	Ongoing	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community
2.2 People with disability are provided with equitable employment opportunities at Council.	Undertake an analysis to determine a benchmark for the number of people employed at Council with disability and assess if it is reflective of the demographics for the Cessnock local government area.	i. Completion of benchmarking analysis. ii. Findings of the benchmarking analysis to be considered when developing the Workforce Management Plan.	Ongoing	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community
2.3 People with disability employed at Council are provided with opportunities for career development.	Continue to ensure that staff with disability, have access to training and professional development opportunities.	i. Staff satisfaction with opportunities for career development.	Ongoing	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community
2.4 Council is a supportive workplace.	Council policies and staff induction to continue to provide awareness of flexible work and leave arrangements and the process for applying for such arrangements.	i. Outcome of feedback with staff.	Ongoing	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
2.5 Council provides opportunities for people with disability to engage in the workforce.	In collaboration with local disability employment services Council to discuss the provision of volunteer and work placement training programs for people with disability.	i. Outcome of discussions with local service providers.	2020	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community
2.6 Improve and promote access to volunteering opportunities for people with disability across the Cessnock local government area.	Promote to local services the importance of including and listing volunteering opportunities within the online community directory.	i. Online records list the availability of volunteering opportunities.	2018	Objective 2.2 Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities
2.7 The employment of people with disability is considered when procuring goods and services.	Continue to provide procurement opportunities to suppliers that employ people with disability and/or organisations that support access and inclusion, in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy.	i. Social justice principles are considered in the procurement of goods and services. ii. Awareness of local procurement opportunities that support the employment of people with disability.	Ongoing	Objective 2.2 Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities
2.8 People with disability are employed in a range of jobs across the Cessnock local government area.	Council will encourage local business to be inclusive employers.	i. Outcome of collaborative projects with stakeholder groups and includes business groups and the disability services sector.	Ongoing	Objective 2.2 Achieving more sustainable employment opportunities
2.9 People have access to resources that assist with job finding and training courses.	Promote libraries as an accessible facility with free access to computers and the internet.	i. A wide range of promotional material is issued. ii. Public computers at both Cessnock and Kurri Kurri Libraries are available and used by the public.	Ongoing	Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture

Goal Three:

Improve access to services through better systems and processes

Services delivered by Council will be inclusive of all people. They will be delivered equitably and where service barriers exist, Council will look for business improvement opportunities.

What Did People Say?

- People with disability and the disability services sector want to be included and participate in community consultation.
- Information needs to be accessible, easily understood and provided in a range of formats, including audio and pictorial.
- Planning instruments that address access and mobility are vital in making built environments accessible.
- Responsive customer service is important to people with disability.
- Removal of service access barriers is important to people with disability and allows for greater participation and inclusion.



Above: Promotion of local services is important to people and promotes inclusion and participation within the community.

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
3.1 The participation of all people in community consultation processes is encouraged.	Review Council's Community Engagement Strategy to ensure all people are included and can access community consultation opportunities.	i. Council's community engagement plan is inclusive of all people. ii. Council's community plans identify as part of their consultation methodology, how people with disability were provided opportunity to participate.	2017	Objective 5.2 Encouraging more community participation in decision making
3.2 Council's website is accessible for people with disability.	Review Council's website to understand the amendments required and the financial costs in complying with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 at AA level.	i. Outcome of the review of Council's website. ii. Development of a budget proposal in seeking funding for any software upgrades.	2020	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community
3.3 Materials published by Council are available in accessible formats.	Staff that develop strategic plans and publications to be provided with training to gain knowledge and understanding for accessible formats.	i. Staff are aware of accessible formats. ii. Documents are provided in an accessible format. iii. Outcome of feedback from service providers and the community.	2018	Objective 5.2 Encouraging more community participation in decision making
3.4 Council's planning instruments reflect local requirements for access and inclusion.	Review the Cessnock Development Control Plan to ensure adequate guidance is provided for access requirements.	i. The Development Control Plan is responsive to the community in considering access and inclusion. ii. Qualitative feedback from Council planning staff.	Ongoing	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
3.5 Customers of Cessnock City Council are provided with a service that is accessible and inclusive.	Undertake an audit of the Administration's Building customer service area to assess and consider opportunities for access improvements.	i. Completion of audit. ii. Findings of the audit implemented. iii. Feedback from the community.	Ongoing	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community
3.6 Staff in front line customer service roles are aware of a range of communication methods used by people with hearing or speech impairment.	Council to investigate becoming Relay Service Friendly.	i. Staff have awareness of the National Relay Service.	2018	Objective 5.3 Making Council more responsive to the community

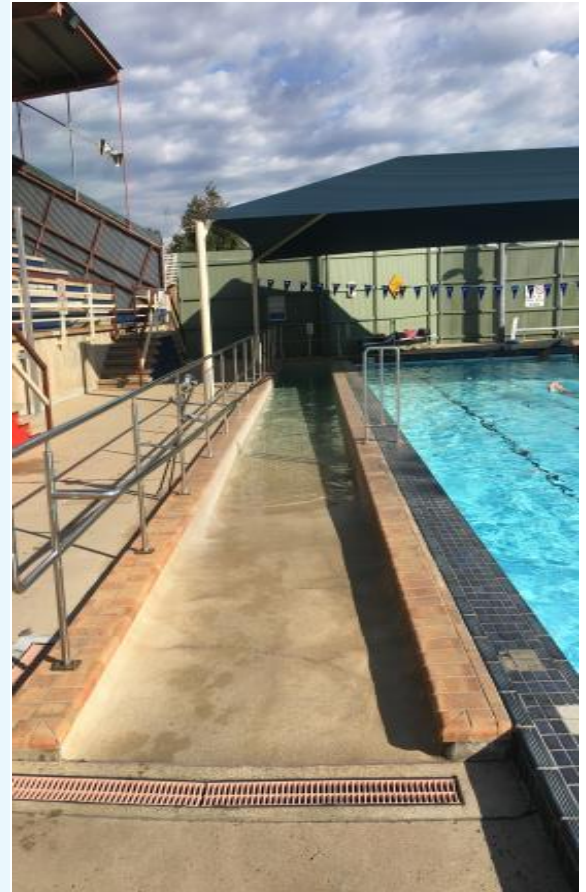
Goal Four:

Create liveable communities

Council has a key role in designing and providing civic, recreation and community spaces that engage, encourage and enable people to participate in life. It also has a role in advocating for improved access to services and this includes access to public transport and housing.

What Did People Say?

- The availability of accessible car parking is important for people with disability and carer's of people with disability.
- Services that support inclusion in community life are important and include access to transport and affordable housing.
- Services that outreach or are based in the Cessnock local government area are vital in overcoming access barriers. Affordability and lack of transport options were common barriers experienced by people in accessing services.
- Community facilities need to be well designed, accessible and welcoming.
- The Australian Standards for Mobility and Access (AS 1428) provides guidance for making community facilities accessible. The use of the standard is encouraged for Council buildings.
- Families want safe places for children to participate in play and include fencing around playgrounds.
- The availability of battery charge stations for mobility aids such as scooters would be beneficial across the Central Business Districts.



Above: Accessible pool entry ramp at Cessnock Pool.

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
4.1 Community members are engaged in Council processes.	Investigate upgrading the hearing loop within the Cessnock City Council Chambers to ensure compliance with current standards.	i. Investigation complete and determination made. ii. Finalise project costing.	2017/2018 2018/2019	Objective 5.2 Encouraging more community participation in decision making
4.2 Newly constructed Council owned community buildings are designed to be inclusive and accessible.	If any new community buildings are to be constructed during the life of this Plan, people with disability will be consulted on building design and accessibility.	i. Accessible features are included in the design. ii. Outcome of feedback from people with disability, carer's and disability service providers. iii. Once constructed, qualitative feedback from people who use the facility.	Ongoing	Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture
4.3 The Australian Standard for Access and Mobility (AS 1428) is understood by Council staff responsible for community infrastructure.	Council staff with responsibility for asset maintenance, revitalisation and/or the planning of new community facilities to be made aware of the Australian Standard for Access and Mobility (AS 1428).	i. AS 1428 distributed to staff. ii. Staff understanding of AS 1428. iii. Building works are compliant with AS 1428.	Ongoing	Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture
4.4 The works required for existing community facilities to be compliant with the Australian Standard for Access and Mobility (AS 1428) is understood.	Where resources and funding allows, undertake audits of community buildings, public toilets and pool facilities to assess compliance with the Australian Standard for Access and Mobility (AS 1428).	i. Completion of audits. ii. Outcome of audits in complying with AS 1428. iii. Works program developed to guide future capital works that improve access to facilities.	Ongoing	Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
<p>4.5 Council has a capital works program in place for its community and recreation facilities to improve access and inclusion.</p>	<p>Council's Asset Management Plans, Plan of Management, Strategic Documents and Masterplans will identify and program access improvements for community buildings, recreational facilities, including pools and parks, to enable improved access, safety and inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Works program developed. ii. Funding for works budgeted. iii. Required works undertaken. iv. Feedback from the community. 	Ongoing	<p>Objective 1.2 Strengthening community culture</p>
<p>4.6 Council has in place an improvement program for accessible car parks.</p>	<p>Undertake an audit of accessible car parks to determine their compliance with standards and findings to be used in guiding future improvement plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Completion of audit. ii. Works program, developed and funding secured. iii. Works program implemented to improve accessible car parking. 	2019	<p>Objective 4.1 Better transport links</p>
<p>4.7 Central Business Districts are designed to enable access to and participation in active transport.</p>	<p>Council will continue to implement its adopted Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (2016).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Implementation of the Plan. ii. The community is provided with improved pedestrian routes. 	Ongoing	<p>Objective 4.1 Better transport links</p>
<p>4.8 The Cessnock local government area has a range of transport options available to residents and visitors.</p>	<p>Continue to advocate for increased transport options and includes public and community transport services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The community is provided with a range of transport options. ii. Feedback from the community. 	Ongoing	<p>Objective 4.1 Better transport links</p>

Goal	Action	How will we measure this	Timing	Links to Cessnock 2027
<p>4.9</p> <p>The Cessnock local government area is provided with a range of social and health services that meets the needs of the community.</p>	<p>Council is a member of a number of networks and includes Cessnock/Kurri Kurri Local Health Advisory Committee, Cessnock Healthy Lifestyle Network and General/Youth Inter-agencies. Council will continue to network and advocate for increased disability, social support and health services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Council is an advocate for increased services being based and/or outreach to the local area. ii. Council participates in a range of collaborative partnerships. 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Objective 4.3</p> <p>Improving access to health services locally</p>
<p>4.10</p> <p>Council is an advocate for affordable and accessible housing options being made available to residents with disability.</p>	<p>Council to develop a housing strategy that considers future supply and demand for affordable housing and includes supported accommodation, boarding homes and group homes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Development of housing strategy. ii. Implementation of housing strategy. 	<p>Project commenced and is for completion in 2019</p>	<p>Objective 1.2</p> <p>Strengthening community culture</p>
<p>4.11</p> <p>The community is aware of the access supports available at Council owned facilities and its services.</p>	<p>Council's website will include a dedicated webpage for Access and Inclusion. The webpage will provide information on the range of initiatives and programs that support access and inclusion for Council services and Council owned and/or managed community and recreation facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Webpage developed that lists the initiatives and programs in place that support access and inclusion. ii. The community is aware of a range of community facilities and the access supports in place. iii. Feedback from the community and service providers. iv. Number of times the webpage is viewed. 	<p>2018</p>	<p>Objective 1.2</p> <p>Strengthening community culture</p>

Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan

Monitoring and Annual Review of the Plan

Networking and collaborating with the community is central to implementing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

In ensuring the implementation of the Plan, it will be embedded within Council's integrated planning framework including Council's Delivery Plan and annual Operational Plan.

To monitor the progress of the Plan's implementation, a review process will occur annually for each action and will consider:-

- Has the action been delivered?
- Did the action occur as scheduled (timing)?
- What did the action achieve?
- Was the action a success or otherwise?

Council's progress towards implementing the entire plan will be documented in its annual report. The annual report is one of the key points of accountability between Council and the community. Accountability is an important principle of the integrated planning framework and as mentioned this Plan is embedded within that framework.

In being accountable to the community and in reporting on the Plan's implementation, Council will:-

- Include within the annual report a section that documents the progress towards achieving the actions listed in the Plan.
- Report on the Plan's achievements on its website. A dedicated webpage for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan has already been established and will be updated regularly.

- Hold an annual network meeting with community representatives and will include people with disability and carers of people with disability along with providers of service to people with disability and/or carers. The meeting will include discussions on the progress of the Plan and any proposed modifications to actions. It will also provide an opportunity to canvas whether the Plan is still being responsive to current needs identified by the community.

Throughout the four year delivery of the Plan, Council will continually seek improvement opportunities to ensure people are included and have access to Council services and programs. This includes for example Council publications and the website having accessible options along with training being made available for staff with responsibility for implementing the actions listed in the Plan.

Council will also continue to participate, promote and raise awareness of the importance of services and programs being accessible and inclusive of both residents and visitors to the Cessnock local government area.

Evaluation Process

At the conclusion of the four year Plan, a written evaluation will occur and will be reported to Council. As part of the evaluation process, an online community survey will be made available and will consider the outcomes of this Plan along with identifying issues for inclusion in Council's next Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The written evaluation will also advise of the achievements and identify any actions that remain outstanding. The written evaluation will be made available on Council's website. Any actions that remain outstanding will be considered for inclusion and subsequent adoption in future planning processes.

What does “inclusion” mean to you?

“The community being fully available to me, so that there is nothing that I can't do that I want to”.

(Community Member, March 2016)

What does “Access” mean to you?

“Access is having no barriers or obstacles (physical or attitudinal) to me as a result of my disability”.

(Community Member, March 2016)

Thank You

Thank you to the following services and community groups for contributing to the Plan's development:-

Ability Links St Vincent De Paul

Castle Personnel (Cessnock)

Cessnock Wheeling and Able

Cessnock City Council Access Advisory Committee (Committee established for the term 2012 to 2016)

Cessnock Intellectual Disability Rights Peer Support Network

Challenge Community Services

Coalfields Neighbour Care Inc

Endeavour Group Australia (Cessnock)

Hunter Prelude Early Intervention Centre (Kurri Kurri)

Kurri Kurri Contracting Service

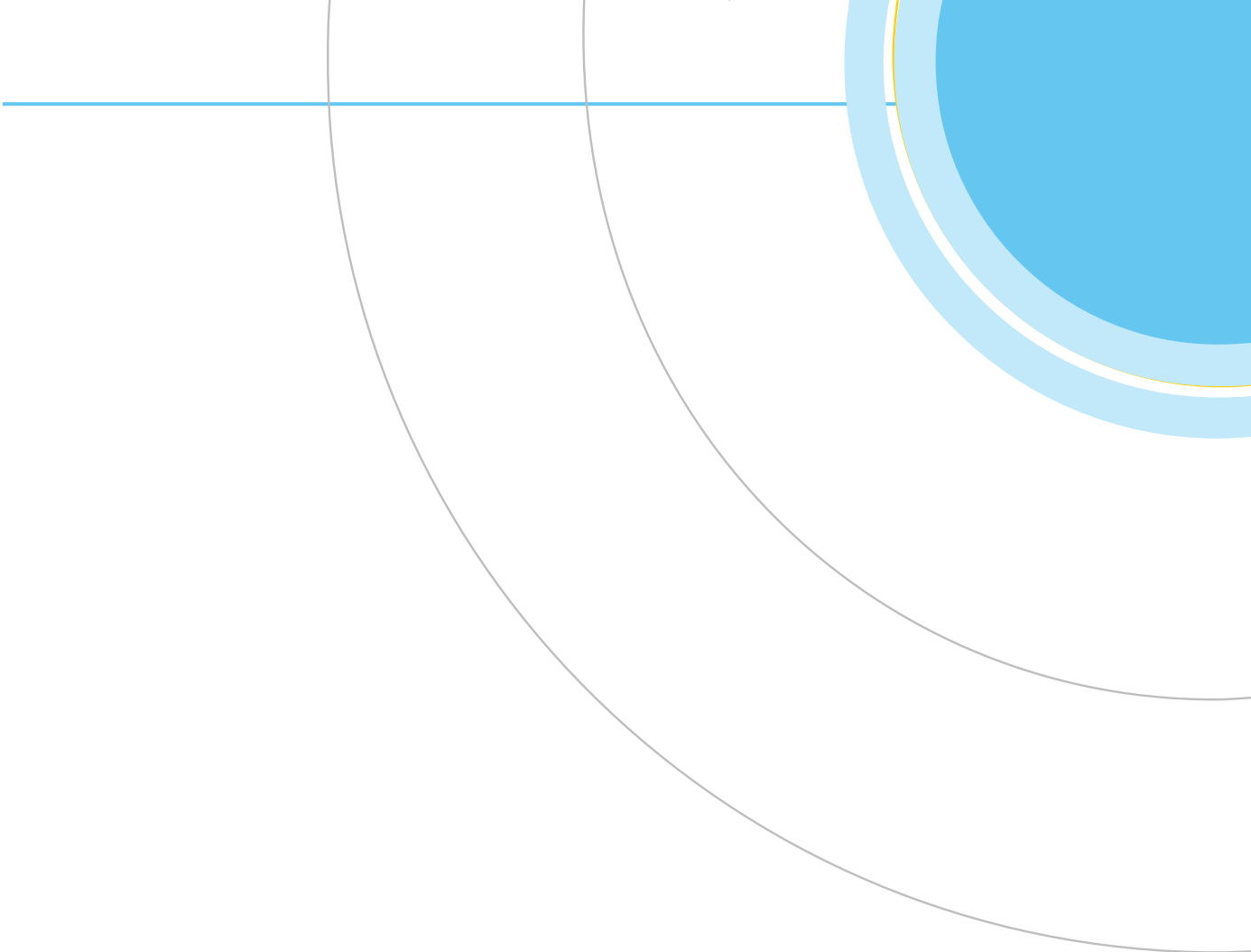
Rob Kerr Consulting

Strive for Autism Inc

The Mai-Wel Group (Cessnock)



Thank you to all people who generously provided their time to assist in the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.



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