

CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2026-2030

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Cumberland City Council acknowledges the Darug Nation and People as Traditional Custodians of the land on which the Cumberland Local Government Area (LGA) is situated and pays respect to Aboriginal Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.Cumberland City Council also acknowledges other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living in the Cumberland Local Government Area and reaffirms that we will work closely with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to advance reconciliation within the area.

Statement of Commitment

Council is working towards making Cumberland a great place for all by providing opportunities for everyone to **welcome**, **belong** and **succeed**.

This Plan sets forward Council's commitment to improve access to services, facilities and employment opportunities; create more liveable places and inclusive communities; recognise the rights and contributions of people with disability; and champion diversity in our community.

Welcome
Belong
Succeed

Message from the Mayor



As Mayor of Cumberland City Council, I am proud to introduce our Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026–2030 — a renewed commitment to building a community where every person is valued, included, and able to participate fully.

This Plan reflects the voices, experiences, and aspirations of people with disability, as well as those of their families, carers, advocates, and the many community members and organisations who contributed their insights. Your feedback has shaped a roadmap that is practical, ambitious, and grounded in the belief that inclusion strengthens all of us.

Over the next four years, Council will focus on improving access to our facilities and public spaces, enhancing inclusive programs and services, strengthening employment pathways, and fostering a culture that celebrates diversity. These actions are not just obligations — they are opportunities to create a more connected, equitable, and welcoming Cumberland.

I want to thank everyone who played a role in developing this Plan. Your contributions ensure that our approach is informed, collaborative, and aligned with the needs of our community. This is both a shared responsibility and a shared opportunity.

Together, we will continue working toward a Cumberland where people with disability can thrive, participate, and belong.

Councillor Ola Hamed
Mayor

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Access and Inclusion

Governments, businesses, service providers and community members must work together to ensure all Australians are safe, included and can participate as equal members of society.[1]

We champion access because Council services, programs and facilities should be available to all members of our diverse community. We promote inclusion because all individuals and groups in our community should be able to participate fully and access the same opportunities to achieving and maintaining social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

The Social Model of Disability

Council acknowledges the social model of disability as the universally recognised view of 'disability' according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[2]

People with disability are not disabled by their impairment, but by the barriers in the community that prevent equal access to things like information, services, education and employment. The attitudes, practices and structures of our community, rather than an individual's impairment, are what restrict people with disability from enjoying economic participation, social inclusion and equality.



1. Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 - 2031
2. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

About this Plan

Disability impacts a significant proportion of the population. Cumberland City Council strives for a community in which all people can participate and live as independently as possible.

The purpose of the Cumberland Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) is to ensure, as far as possible, that people with disability have full and equal access to the facilities, programs, services and information that Council provides on an equitable basis without facing discrimination or barriers.

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."

The Act also recognises that some people with disability experience multiple disadvantage and/or additional barriers to accessing services and supports. These priority populations include:

- LGBTIQ+ people with disability
- Children and young people with disability
- Women with disability
- People with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

This Plan is a legislative requirement under the DIA. It outlines strategies to positively shape Council practices over the next four years, ensuring greater inclusion of people with disability, their carers, families and the priority populations. Council is responsible for delivering this Plan in partnership with our community.

The Plan will also benefit other community members who may not identify as having a disability but will gain from improved access. These include people with limited mobility or temporary illness or injury, older people and parents or carers of young children - particularly those with strollers or prams.

The Plan focuses on four key areas, which are derived from the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan. These four focus areas are:

Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability

Creating liveable and safer communities

Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

The Cumberland Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed through consultation with people with disability, carers, service providers, advocacy groups, Council staff and interagency networks. For 2026-2030, Cumberland City Council has developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) that builds on the 2022-2026 DIAP. Many actions from the previous plan have become ongoing business-as-usual practices, now embedded across Council's operations. This new DIAP seeks to strengthen that foundation and further enhance Council's effectiveness in achieving outcomes across the four focus areas.

We believe our DIAP is a vital part of achieving Cumberland City Council's vision and delivering priorities outlined in our Community Strategic Plan:

Supporting a safe, healthy, creative and connected community

Enhancing the natural and built environment

Delivering sustainable, safe and accessible infrastructure and services

Providing transparent, accountable and strong local leadership

In accordance with the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA), this Plan will be lodged with the NSW Disability Council.

Council would like to sincerely thank and acknowledge all members of the community and Council staff for their valuable input and involvement in developing this Plan.



Categories of Disability Explained

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) definition

The DDA legislation that protects Australians against discrimination based on disability provides a broad definition of disability including these eight types:

- Physical disability: Impacts mobility or dexterity
- Intellectual disability: Impacts ability to learn or process information
- Mental illness: Impacts thinking processes
- Sensory disability: Impacts the ability to hear or see
- Neurological disability: Impacts the brain and central nervous system
- Learning disability: Impacts acquisition, organisation, retention, and understanding of information
- Physical disfigurement: Impacts physical appearance
- Immunological disability: Impact due to the presence of organisms causing disease in the body.



Community Profile: Meet Courtney



Courtney has lived in the Auburn area for more than five years.

For her, inclusion means a "sense of belonging to a group and having friends to hang out with, it's not being excluded". Inclusion plays a central role in her life.

Some of Courtney's most positive experiences in Cumberland happen when she is out in the community and people make the effort to talk with her and involve her naturally in conversations.

Courtney believes the best way to remove barriers is simple: "not make anyone feel they are unwanted, not make anyone feel they don't belong, be kind, loving and respect everyone".

What matters most to her is being treated the same as anyone else. As she puts it, she wants to "fit in and not feel that just because I have a disability, I'm treated any different".

Community Profile



In 2021, over 14,000 people in Cumberland reported the need for some assistance in their day to day life.[3]

Between 1 January 2015 and 4 January 2025 more than 7,356 refugees have decided to call the Cumberland area home.[4]

The top 5 Countries of Birth in Cumberland (other than Australia)[3]

8.5%	6.6%	4.8%	4.3%	2.6%
India	China	Lebanon	Nepal	Afghanistan

Cumberland is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse local government areas in Australia:

53%	30,860	74%
of populations born overseas (112,749 people)	people arrived in Australia within 5 years prior to 2021	of residents speak a language other than English

Top Languages[3]

14.1%	6.7%	4.4%	4%	3.3%
Arabic	Mandarin	Nepali	Cantonese	Tamil

3. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Census of Population and Housing 2021.
4. Department of Social Services (January 2025), Settlement Database www.data.gov.au/dataset/settlement-reports

Snapshot of Disability in Australia

People with disability represent a diverse group of people within our community. They include individuals born with a disability and those who acquire disability during their life through accident, ageing or illness. Disabilities vary in type and impact, and a person may also experience more than one form of disability.

1 in 5 people

(21.4%) in Australia have disability, this is approximately 5.5 million people.[5]

3 in 4 people

in Australia who have a disability say their main form of impairment is physical, while approximately 1 in 4 people say their main form of impairment is mental or behavioural.



In 2023-24, the most common areas of the Disability Discrimination Act under which people made complaints were:

33% Goods, Services, and Facilities

29% Employment

12% Disability Standards

11% Education[6]

People with disability are more than two times as likely than people without a disability to be unemployed.[7]

Only **57%** of LGBTQA+ young people with disability say they feel included in the LGBTQA+ community.[8]



5. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024, July 4). Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings. Australian Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Based on the ABS definition of disability.
6. Australian Human Rights Commission. (2024). 2023-24 Complaint statistics. Table 15 Disability Discrimination Act – Complaints received by area, p. 16.
7. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (October 2019). 44300DO010 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings. Employment characteristics of people with disability – Unemployment.
8. Hill, AO., Lyons, A., Jones, J., McGowan, I., Carman, M., Parsons, M., Power, J., & Bourne, A., (2021). Writing Themselves In 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University: Melbourne, p. 157. Young people = aged 14 – 21.

People with Disability Living in Cumberland

Disability statistics do not tell the full story. The definition of disability is limited and many residents are reluctant to disclose disability information in the Census.

Community consultations have highlighted that the term 'disability' does not have a universally understood definition, and in many cultures and languages, the word does not even exist. Attitudes towards people with disability also remain a significant barrier, impacting the availability of accuracy of data.

In 2021, there were 14,030 people with a need for assistance living in Cumberland City Council. This includes 6.3% of the non-English speaking population.

These statistics include people whose disability causes severe core activity limitation (i.e. people who require help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas; self-care, mobility and communication because of a disability, long-term health condition or old age).[9]

In March 2023, there were 769,000 people receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP) in Australia.[10]

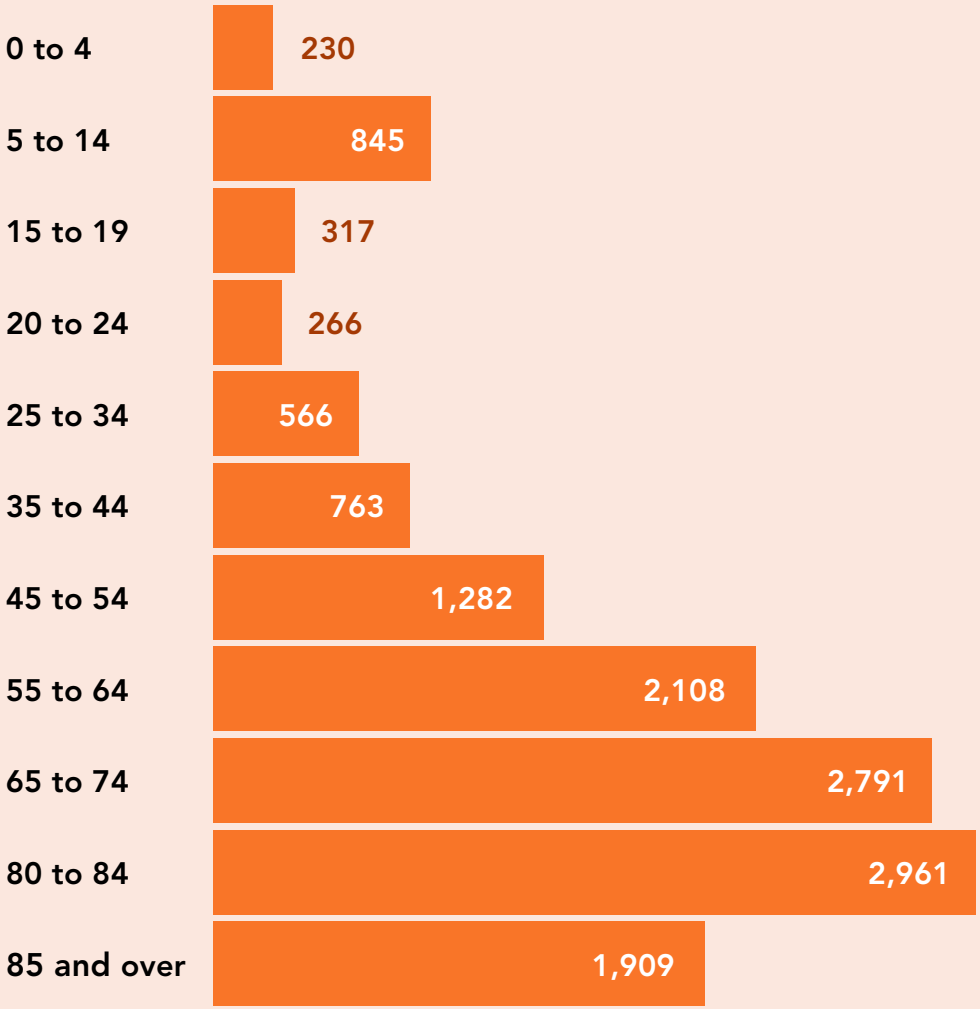
This includes 645,000 people aged 16-64 and 125,000 aged 65 and over who have a physical, intellectual, or psychiatric condition that prevents them from working or who are permanently blind. The DSP is a key income support payment for individuals with permanent physical, intellectual, or psychiatric impairments that prevent them from working.[10]

Council currently supports 54 adults with disability through its Seniors and Disability service area.

It is widely recognised that as people age, their experience of disability increases, particularly in areas such as mobility and physical function. With Cumberland's ageing population and, increasing longevity, the prevalence of disability is also expected to increase substantially over time.

9. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Census of Population and Housing 2021.
10. Australian Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, People with disability in Australia 2024.

Cumberland City Council - Need for assistance 2022



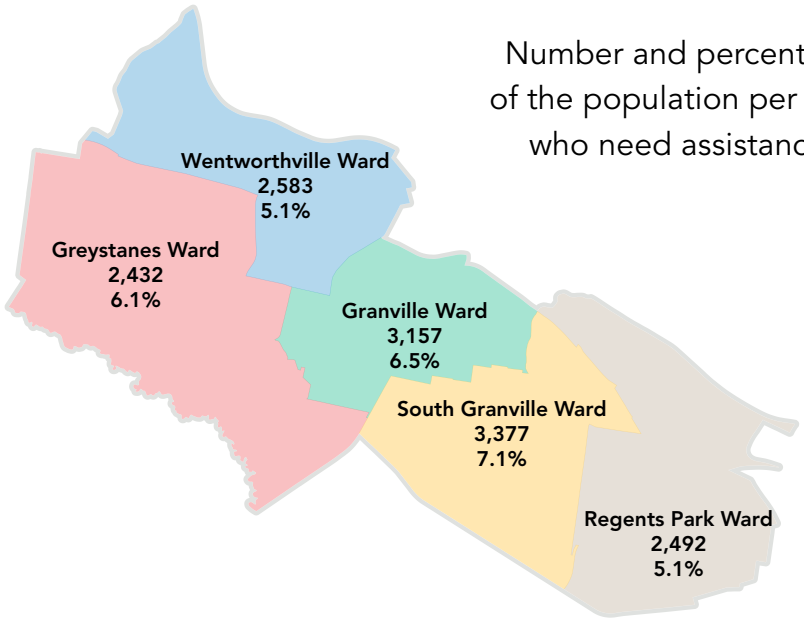
Unpaid Carers

Unpaid carers are the main providers of assistance to people with disability. Research has identified that carers and families of people with disability experience high rates of mental ill health, poorer physical health, employment restrictions, financial hardship and relationship breakdown.

18,093 Cumberland residents over the age of 15 provide unpaid care to a person with disability, with long-term illness, or due to old age.[9]

Assistance with Core Activities

Number and percentage of the population per ward who need assistance[9]



9. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Census of Population and Housing 2021.

Community Profile: Meet Jared



Jared has a long-term connection to the Cumberland community through his association with Wentworthville Magpies (JRLFC). He has been a coach since 2002 and is the current coach for Wentworthville Try Time (Inclusive Rugby League Team). Wenty Magpies was the foundation Club for Try Time in 2013, and Cumberland City Council remains a home for Inclusive Rugby League.

Jared believes that inclusion is important in so many ways, it empowers people and gives people an identity. Through Try Time Inclusive Rugby League, people gain a sense of belonging, are welcomed to a team environment, earn a place in the team and discover their identity in the local area.

During his involvement, Jared has seen not only individual success, but also the positive impact it has on parents as they watch their child grow in confidence, skill, and build a genuine sense of belonging within the club and community.

Jared says "Inclusion is so important as it brings us together as a community and connects us to one another, how we respect each other holds great significance". He remembers to this day how the 'Try Time' captain received his 10-year player jacket and commented that he never wanted to take it off.

The Plan in Context

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) makes it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services or facilities against people on the basis that they have or may have a disability.

Council is committed to working in partnership to achieve greater outcomes of inclusion and equity for people with disability, their carers and networks.

National and Legislative Context

In 2008, all levels of Government across Australia committed to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) through the development of the National Disability Strategy (NDS). This Strategy sets out a national, unified approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) were introduced in NSW to provide greater individual choice and control for people with disability.

Council and the NSW Disability Inclusion Act

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) recognises that disability results from barriers in society that prevent or limit inclusion.

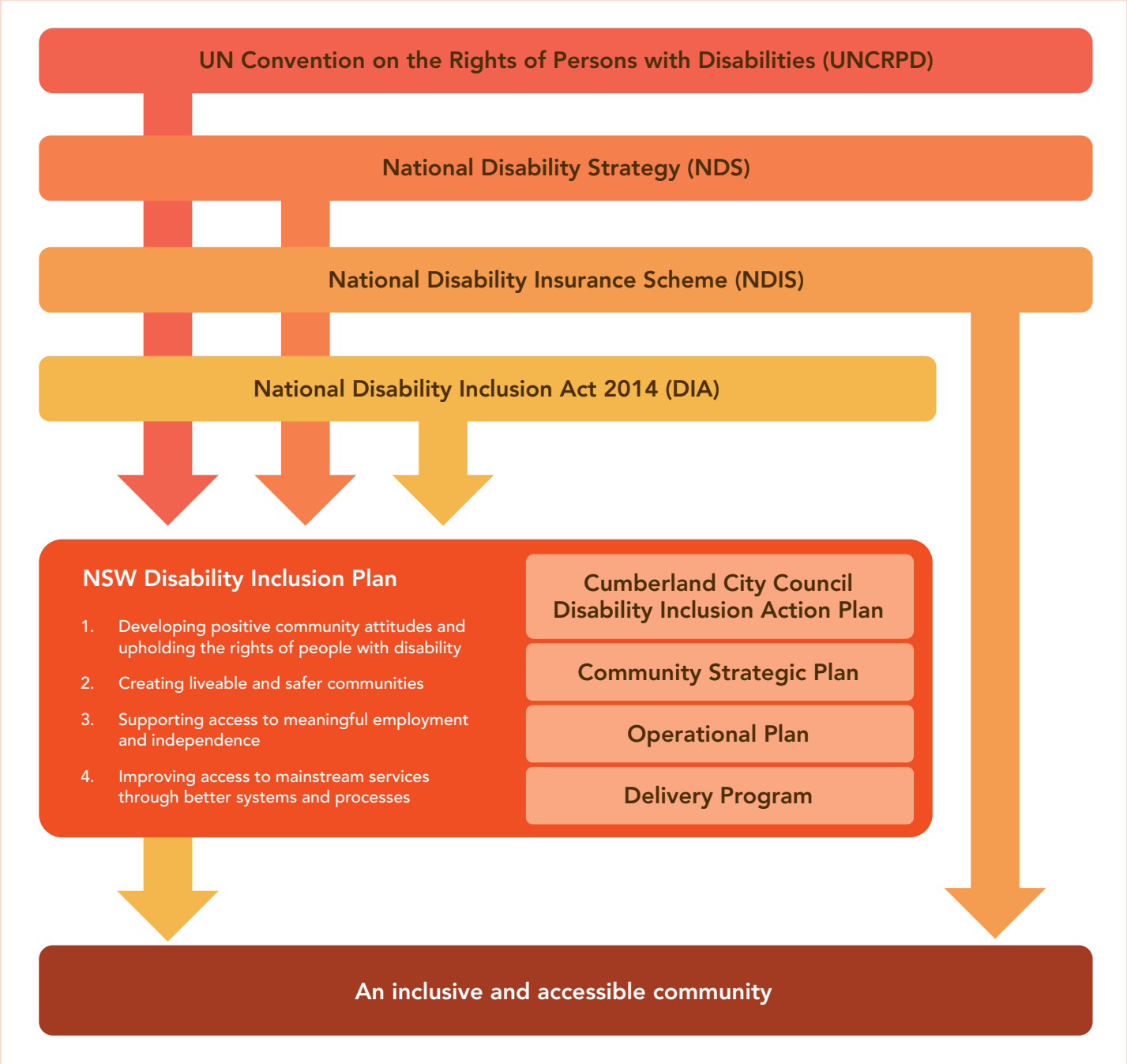
The DIA reinforces Council's general obligation to reduce barriers for people with disability. The DIA recognises that people with disabilities have a right to participate as fully as possible in the life of the community. Under the DIA, Council has an obligation to make its facilities and services accessible and inclusive.

Section 12 (3) of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires each government agency to prepare a Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The purpose of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to set out a series of principles and strategies to guide Council's actions over the next four years and to empower people with disability to have greater access to Council facilities, services and information.

Our Plan aligns with the intentions of:

- Australia's National Disability Strategy
- United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
- NSW Disability Inclusion Plan
- NSW DIAP Guidelines
- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014.

The Relationship Between the Relevant Policy and Legislative Instrument



Community Engagement

How We Engaged with the Community

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed by listening to and engaging with residents, external stakeholders and staff over many months throughout 2024 – 2025. Feedback was provided by completing surveys, attending a face-to-face consultations, participating in telephone survey, or joining forums and focus groups, Their feedback played a central role informing the development of the Plan.

6,235 responses were received

Community Strategic Plan Survey

Council delivered a comprehensive engagement program to understand the community priorities, challenges and long-term vision for Cumberland over the next decade. Additional questions explored community awareness and attitudes of people with disability, as well as priority access issues to inform the DIAP.

2,500 responses were received

Community Wellbeing Survey

The Community Wellbeing Survey (PlaceScore) conducted in March 2024, gathered online feedback about what residents value in their community and how they rate the effectiveness of Council's community strategic plan indicators.

1,965 responses were received

Community Satisfaction Survey

In July 2024 Micromex conducted a telephone survey to assess community attitudes and perceptions towards Council's current and future services and facilities. In addition to the phone interviews, 15 online surveys were completed. Two questions specifically explored Council's performance in access and inclusion.

615 Residents participated

Create Cumberland Consultations

Council undertook a series of face-to-face consultations across the Cumberland LGA during October - November 2024. Seven sessions were delivered with participation from all Council departments, providing information and seeking feedback across a wide range of service areas. Local businesses, service providers and residents of all ages took part.

970 Residents participated

Focus Groups

Three focus groups were held in March 2025 with people with disability, their carers and families, schools, local disability service providers and Council staff. These sessions explored lived experiences, identified barriers and highlighted opportunities to strengthen access and inclusion across Cumberlands.

42 Participants

Easy Read Survey About Disability

An ‘Easy Read Survey about Disability’ was conducted between February and March 2025 with service providers, people with disability, their carers, families, staff and the broader community. The survey was made available during the ‘Create Cumberland’ face to face consultation sessions.

Of those who responded, 50% were people with disability and 40% were carers of a person with disability.
38 surveys completed

Consultation with Council Staff

An internal consultation session was held in November with representatives of Council DIAP Steering Committee, comprising staff from across departments in Council. This session provided valuable insights to inform the development of Council’s proposed action plan.
105 Staff consulted



What Did We Hear from the Community

The following key findings and recommendations were identified through the community engagement process.

Strengths and What's Working Well

Participants acknowledged the meaningful progress Council has made toward becoming a more inclusive community. The cultural diversity of the Cumberland area was consistently highlighted as a key strength, with noting a strong sense of welcome, belonging and representation.

Council's inclusive programming, improvements to accessibility in selected parks and public spaces, and commitment to ongoing community engagement were all positively recognised. These existing strengths provide a solid foundation for Council to continue building on, as it works to embed access and inclusion more deeply across its operations, services and decision-making processes.

Key Recommendations

The Community Wellbeing Survey (PlaceScore) conducted in March 2024, gathered online feedback about what residents value in their community and how they rate the effectiveness of Council's Community Strategic Plan indicators.

1. **Raise Awareness and Promote Inclusion**
   Key focus area: Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability
   Promote the benefits of inclusion across the community by sharing positive stories, highlighting lived experiences and encouraging local businesses and service to adopt inclusive practices. Strengthen community understanding of disability and the value of accessible, welcoming environments.

2. **Improve Physical Access Across the Built Environment**
   Key focus area: Creating liveable and safer communities
   Undertake a comprehensive access audit of Council-owned spaces and amenities. Apply universal design principles to all new infrastructure projects and upgrades to ensure equitable access to footpaths, playgrounds, crossings, public toilets and other community facilities.

3. **Embed Co-Design and Representation**
   Key focus area: Creating liveable and safer communities
   Actively involve people with disability and carers in the co-design of Council services, infrastructure, and policies. Shift from consultation to genuine collaboration, ensuring inclusion is considered from the outset rather than added later.

4. **Advance Inclusive Recruitment and Career Development**
   Key focus area: Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence
   Strengthen inclusive hiring practices by clearly promoting adjustment options throughout the recruitment process. Explore identified roles, traineeships, and mentoring opportunities for people with disability. Ensure career pathways are flexible and recognise the diverse strengths and experiences of the workforce.

5. **Establish a Clear and Supportive Adjustment Process**
   Key focus area: Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence
   Develop a consistent, streamlined process for workplace adjustments, supported by guidance materials and training for people managers. Encourage early conversations and normalise adjustments as part of everyday practice so all staff can perform at their best.

6. **Build Disability Confidence Across Council**
   Key focus area: Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence
   Provide ongoing, role-specific disability awareness training to all employees. Training should cover inclusive language, hidden disability, neurodiversity, and practical scenarios. Involve people with lived experience in delivery to ensure authentic, relevant content.

7. **Demonstrate Consistent Leadership on Inclusion**
   Key focus area: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes
   Champion inclusive leadership at all levels of Council by embedding responsibility for accessibility and inclusion into team goals, KPIs, and strategic planning. Equip leaders with tools and training needed to confidently support disability inclusion shifting from individual goodwill to systemic accountability.

8. **Make Information and Services More Accessible**
   Key focus area: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes
   Standardise accessible communication formats across Council, including Easy Read, translated materials, and printed alternatives. Create a public-facing accessibility hub that provides clear service information, support options and guidance to help residents to access services without barriers.

To make our community truly liveable, Council needs to:

- Promote benefits of disability inclusion across the community.
- Engage local businesses and services in meaningful inclusion efforts.
- Continue conducting access audits of public spaces to identify and address barriers.
- Ensure equitable access to all public amenities and facilities.
- Shift from consultation to genuine collaboration with people with disability and carers.
- Provide communication materials in accessible formats to support inclusive information access.



Community Profile: Meet Kerry



Kerry has lived most of her life in the Cumberland area, growing up in Lidcombe and now living in Toongabbie. Inclusion is deeply important to her — she believes everyone should be valued and have equal opportunity to participate fully in community life. With more than 20% of Australians living with disability, Kerry feels that society loses out when barriers prevent people from contributing their strengths and perspectives.

A moment that made Kerry feel a strong sense of belonging was seeing accessible playgrounds in Cumberland, such as the one at Central Gardens. As a child, many playgrounds were not accessible to her, so these inclusive spaces represent meaningful progress and that the rights and experiences of all children and adults are valued.

Kerry acknowledges that physical, systemic, communication and attitudinal barriers still exist, but believes they can be addressed by listening to people with lived experience and ensuring they are involved in policy and decision making. Her community connections include family, friends, colleagues and peers, and what matters most to her is enjoying life, nurturing relationships, and contributing through meaningful work that gives back.

Kerry says, “Inclusion means that everyone is valued and is given equal opportunity and access to participate fully in all areas of life”.

Action Plan - Introduction

For 2026-2030, Cumberland City Council has developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) that recognises the significant progress made under the 2022 - 2026 Plan. Many of the previous actions have now become ongoing business-as-usual activities and are embedded within Council's policies, procedures and day-to-day operations.

Building on this foundation, the 2026 – 2030 DIAP sets out a strengthened and forward-looking approach to further advance disability inclusion.



Key Achievements from the 2022-2026 DIAP

Supporting inclusive employment pathways

Council has strengthened pathways to employment, volunteering and skill development for people with disability through sustained partnerships and improved internal practices.

- Stronger connections with disability employment providers and community networks have enabled more targeted promotion of job vacancies, placements and work experience opportunities. A structured outreach approach, including weekly engagement with key contacts, has improved access to Council employment pathways.
- Council has expanded opportunities for people with disability to participate in volunteering, including through programs such as Lend a Helping Hand, supporting social participation while building skills and confidence. Volunteer participation has grown over time, with increasing numbers of participants identifying as having disability and continuing in ongoing roles.
- Work placement opportunities have continued to be provided in partnership with disability employment services, ensuring individuals can gain experience in supportive environments with appropriate adjustments in place.

Building an inclusive and accessible workplace

Council has progressed a range of organisational initiatives to reduce barriers and create a more inclusive workforce.

- Recruitment and workplace practices have been reviewed and strengthened, culminating in Council achieving Disability Confident Recruiter status in 2025. This reflects a commitment to inclusive recruitment, accessible processes and equitable employment outcomes.
- Policies and frameworks such as Reasonable Adjustment Guidelines and flexible work practices have been embedded, ensuring employees with disability and carers are supported to participate fully in the workplace.
- Council became a member of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower campaign in September 2024 and focused on education initiatives for staff to build into our organisational culture for both staff who identify as having a hidden disability and education of staff to support community members with hidden disabilities.

Improving access to information and services

Council has made significant progress in ensuring that information, communication and services are accessible to all members of the community.

- A multi-channel approach has been implemented to improve access to information, including accessible digital content, printed materials and the use of QR codes across Council communications to support different access needs.
- Accessibility improvements to Council's website are ongoing, with compliance aligned to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and continued enhancements informed by audits and user needs.
- Dedicated DIAP web content has been expanded, providing accessible progress updates, resources and information in a range of formats, including Easy Read.
- Council re-opened the newly refurbished Wentworthville Pool which includes a beach entry in the 25-metre pool and a platform lift in the 50 metre pool. There was also an upgrade to the amenities for accessible change rooms with a hoist added.
- Participants of Council's Disability Program spent several months learning and practicing a performance which they showcased at the Mayoral Christmas Party. This gave people with disability an opportunity to learn new skills, feel valued, showcase their skills and impacted positively on attitudes.
- A marketing campaign 'Shared Spaces, Shared Responsibilities: Creating Accessible Environments Together' commenced in August 2024. The campaign included the creation of educational materials including posters, flyers and corflutes for residents to consider how all actions can impact on accessibility for people with disability.

Strengthening accessible communication and information practices

Council has embedded accessibility into its communication systems and tools to ensure inclusive engagement.

- Accessible communication practices are now integrated into style guides, staff resources and internal systems, supporting consistent delivery of clear and inclusive information.
- Printed and digital materials are designed to meet diverse needs, including captioned video content, plain language formats and inclusive design principles.
- Accessibility signage and wayfinding approaches continue to be reviewed and improved, supported by updated design guides and future integration with digital mapping tools.
- Easy Read Training was held for staff to enable more Council information to be translated into Easy Read format increasing access to information for people with disability.
- Driving continuous improvement and accountability
- Council has embedded systems and processes to ensure ongoing progress and accountability in delivering the DIAP.
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan actions are now incorporated into all Council service plans, aligning inclusion with organisational planning and reporting cycles.
- A formal reporting system has been implemented to track progress across departments, improving transparency and accountability for delivery.
- Regular internal and independent reviews of services and systems are undertaken to identify and address barriers to access, ensuring continuous improvement in service delivery.

Enhancing inclusive practices across Council operations

Council has continued to strengthen organisational capability to deliver inclusive programs, services and events.

- Staff training and resources have been expanded to support accessible content creation, use of accessible technologies and inclusive service delivery.
- An Accessible Events Guide and toolkit have been developed to ensure Council events are inclusive and accessible by design. In addition, Accessible Events training was provided to relevant staff across the organisation.
- Ongoing investment in tools, checklists and internal guidance supports staff to consistently consider accessibility in everyday decision-making.



Community Profile: Meet Margaret



Margaret has lived in Merrylands all her life, she is the legal guardian for her sister Suzy.

For both of them, inclusion is fundamental. As Margaret explains, "Inclusion is so important because it gives people dignity and a sense of belonging – your struggles, differences or limitations should not define your choices or quality of life. It means giving everyone a voice and allowing them to be heard."

Margaret recalls many positive experiences of inclusion within Cumberland, but one moment stands out. After a period away, Suzy wished to return to Council's Lifestyle and Leisure Links program. During the meeting to support her return, staff presented a collection of photographs and memories documenting Suzy's achievements over the years. These included moments where she had won races, overcome hesitation, and reached personal milestones.

For Margaret, this was deeply moving. Suzy's journey had been captured in a way that showed she was not just a participant, but a valued member of a community that celebrated her strengths and supported her individuality. Margaret shared that she never expected such care to be taken in preserving Suzy's story.

While acknowledging that unintentional barriers can arise in a diverse, multicultural community, Margaret emphasises the dedication of staff saying, "they continuously go beyond the call of duty to make Suzy feel comfortable and heard – it never ceases to amaze me - the level of care and support that Suzy is provided, and the hope and happiness this brings her".

Action Plan

In 2026-2030 Council will be focussing on the following actions to build on and strengthen the foundations of what has become our Business as Usual.

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
1 Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours	Establish and convene the Community Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisory Committee ensuring meaningful representation from community members with disability.	Ensure Council initiatives reflect the advice and priorities identified by the Advisory Committee, demonstrating tangible improvements in inclusion and accessibility across the community.	• Community Development • Community Wellbeing
	Develop educational initiatives to increase community awareness of issues affecting people with disability, including the purpose of Braille trails, the impact of obstructed pathways, the correct usage of accessible parking, and the importance of recognising and reporting abuse.	People with disability experience safer, more accessible public spaces supported by a community that is informed, proactive and committed to inclusive practices.	• Strategic Communications & Engagement • Community Wellbeing
	Investigate the creation and implementation of an annual community award to mark the International Day of People with Disability, recognising individuals, groups or initiatives that promote inclusion and accessibility.	If deemed feasible, develop a framework for an annual award is enhances visibility, inclusion and community recognition of people with disability.	• Governance • Community Wellbeing

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
1 Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours	Co-design a campaign with people with disability to share positive stories of their lived experience in Cumberland Local Government Area, celebrating inclusion, resilience and community pride.	Positive stories from people with disability are widely promoted, helping to challenge stereotypes and foster a culture of accessibility, inclusion and belonging across the LGA.	• Strategic Communications & Engagement • Community Wellbeing
	Identify and share opportunities for small businesses to access training on disability awareness, access and inclusion, supporting them to create more inclusive services and environments.	Small businesses in the area have increased access to high quality access and inclusion training, leading to stronger inclusive practices across the local business community.	• Place and Economy
	Provide and promote tools and resources that support small businesses to adopt inclusive practices, helping them create welcoming, accessible and equitable environments for all community members.	Small businesses have access to practical tools and resources that strengthen their capacity to adopt inclusive practices, leading to more welcoming, accessible and customer-centred services.	• Place and Economy
	Expand International Day of People with Disability celebrations by involving additional Council departments, fostering a whole-of-Council approach to access, inclusion and community engagement.	Council achieves a more coordinated and organisation wide commitment to inclusion by increasing participation from multiple departments in International Day of People with Disability celebrations.	• Community Wellbeing • Education & Care • Customer Experience & Technology

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
1 Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours	Deliver an annual professional development program for Education & Care frontline staff to strengthen their capacity to support children and families with disability, promoting inclusive, responsive and high-quality service delivery.	Education & Care frontline staff strengthen their skills and confidence in supporting children and families with disability, resulting in more inclusive and responsive service delivery.	• Education & Care
2 Creating liveable communities	Utilise the audit of accessible public toilets across Cumberland to improve the accessibility of each facility, including entry, amenities and overall usability.	Improved accessibility and usability of public toilet facilities across Cumberland, ensuring safer, easier and more inclusive access through upgrades informed by the audit findings.	• Environment & Planning
	Conduct an audit of accessible parking across Cumberland and develop a prioritised plan to expand and better distribute accessible parking spaces, supported by an online accessible parking map for community use.	A more equitable and accessible distribution of compliant accessible parking across Cumberland, supported by a user friendly online map that improves community awareness and access to available spaces.	• Engineering & Building
	Monitor the existing planning controls for access to Class 2-9 buildings under the Development Control Plan (DCP) against the Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2010 and the latest trends.	Planning controls that remain aligned with the Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2010 and contemporary best practice trends, ensuring Class 2–9 buildings in Cumberland support consistent, compliant and accessible design outcomes.	• City Planning & Development

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
2 Creating liveable communities	Deliver the actions outlined in the Cumberland Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP), ensuring all new Council road and transport infrastructure complies with current legislation and provides accessible travel routes between key facilities and services.	A connected and accessible pedestrian network across Cumberland, with new road and transport infrastructure consistently meeting legislative requirements and providing safe, inclusive travel routes between key facilities and services.	• Engineering & Building
	Use the findings of the bus stop accessibility audit undertaken to meet Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) requirements to develop and implement an action plan, with annual reporting on the number of bus stops brought into compliance.	Audit findings are translated into a staged improvement program, driving progressive annual growth in the number of bus stops that comply with the DDA.	• Engineering & Building
	Develop and implement a Sensory Storytime program in libraries to provide an inclusive, engaging and accessible literacy experience for children with disability and their families.	Libraries deliver accessible, sensory-friendly storytime sessions, increasing participation and creating positive experiences for children with disability.	• Community Wellbeing
	Develop and implement annual campaigns to promote awareness and uptake of Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) and Companion Cards, supporting greater access and participation for people with disability.	Council demonstrates a proactive approach to accessibility by regularly informing the community about MLAK keys and Companion Cards, resulting in greater uptake and more equitable access to facilities and services.	• Community Wellbeing

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
2 Creating liveable communities	Review policies and procedures for leasing and purchasing Council premises, ensuring they reference and align with relevant standards and legislation, including the Building Code of Australia and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.	Updated policies and procedures guide Council in creating environments that are compliant, accessible, and welcoming for people with disability.	• Property Transactions
	Deliver a bi-annual Active Inclusion Sports Day to build capacity of local sporting groups to attract participants with disability, fostering more inclusive and accessible community sport.	Local sporting groups build their capacity and confidence to attract and include participants with disability, resulting in more inclusive and diverse sporting opportunities within the community.	• Community Wellbeing
	Apply the Everyone Can Play design principles in the development of new and upgraded playgrounds, and provide annual reporting to the community on progress and outcomes.	New and upgraded playgrounds are designed inclusively using Everyone Can Play principles, providing accessible and engaging play opportunities for children of all abilities.	• Environment & Planning
	Investigate funding opportunities through the Commonwealth Accessible Australia Initiative to support the delivery of Fixed Changing Places facilities and Inclusive Play Spaces cross Cumberland.	Council leverages Commonwealth funding opportunities to deliver inclusive and accessible spaces, enhancing community participation for people with disability.	• Environment & Planning

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
2 Creating liveable communities	Support participation in the creative arts for producers, makers and audiences with disability, fostering inclusive opportunities for creative expression, collaboration and cultural engagement.	Council-supported initiatives enhance the skills, confidence, and visibility of artists with disability, promoting equity and inclusion in the arts sector.	• Community Wellbeing
	Provide high-quality, specialised programs and services that align with the diverse needs and requirements of people with disability, supporting meaningful participation, inclusion and wellbeing.	Council's programs and services are responsive to the diverse requirements of people with disability, enhancing equitable access and fostering meaningful engagement.	• Community Wellbeing • Customer Experience & Technology
	Undertake a refurbishment of Council's Merrylands Aquatic Centre, incorporating access and inclusion provisions to ensure full compliance with contemporary accessibility standards and improved usability for all community members.	A refurbished Merrylands Aquatic Centre meets contemporary accessibility standards, providing inclusive access for all community members, improving safety and usability of facilities, and enhancing overall visitor experiences through upgraded, compliant, and universally accessible infrastructure.	• Aquatics & Leisure City Services
3 Supporting access to meaningful employment	Maintain and renew Disability Confident Recruiter status through Australian Disability Network (AusDN), ensuring ongoing commitment to accessible, inclusive and equitable recruitment practices.	Renewal and maintenance of the accreditation status ensures continuous improvement in accessible hiring practices, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive workforce.	• Human Resources

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
3 Supporting access to meaningful employment	Enhance staff awareness of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative by providing ongoing training for frontline teams and ensuring Hidden Disability Sunflower items are consistently available across the organisation.	Council strengthens its culture of inclusion by embedding the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative into frontline operations, improving accessibility and engagement for people with hidden disabilities both internally and externally.	• Community Wellbeing
	Strengthen Council's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and support a more equitable and inclusive workplace for staff.	Employee engagement in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives drives measurable improvements in workplace culture, policies, and initiatives that promote equality and inclusion.	• Human Resources
	Investigate the feasibility of implementing a 'Connecting Capability' Business Breakfast initiative to educate local businesses on the benefits of employing people with disability and to address common myths and stereotypes.	Investigation identifies actionable strategies to engage local businesses in educating them about the benefits of employing people with disability and in challenging common myths and stereotypes.	• Place and Economy

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
3 Supporting access to meaningful employment	Enhance opportunities and retention of people with disability in Council's volunteer program by: • Providing targeted training and support • Reviewing position descriptions to ensure they are accessible and inclusive • Reviewing and improving the application process • Promoting volunteer opportunities through disability networks • Celebrating diverse volunteer contributions by sharing stories with the community (with permission).	People with disability have increased access to Council volunteer opportunities, supported by tailored measures that promote participation and retention.	• Community Wellbeing
	Collaborate with community organisations and agencies to deliver an inclusive Disability Employment Expo in Cumberland, creating opportunities for jobseekers with disability to connect with supportive employers and access tailored employment information.	Collaboration with community organisations and agencies results in a well-attended, accessible expo that promotes workforce participation for people with disability.	• Community Wellbeing

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
4 Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes	Ensure Council's website complies with current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), meeting minimum accessibility standards and supporting equitable access requirements (vision and hearing impaired).	Online content is fully accessible, embedding all community members, including those with disability, to navigate and engage with Council's website independently.	• Strategic Communications & Engagement
	Review and install signage across Council's community centres including hearing loop indicators, braille and tactile signage, and Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK) access information, to support inclusive and independent use of facilities.	Council's community centres feature clear, accessible signage, improving navigation and enabling independent access for people with disability.	• Customer Experience & Technology
	Publish key Council strategies, plans and reports in Easy Read format to support accessible communication and ensure information is understandable for people with diverse literacy and cognitive needs.	Key Council strategies, plans and reports are available in Easy Read format, enabling people with disability to access, understand, and engage with Council plans and initiatives.	• Strategic Communications & Engagement • Community Wellbeing • Strategy & Improvement
	Create an easy-to-use system for community members to report access requests or concerns in the Cumberland local government area and promote this reporting pathway widely to ensure community awareness and engagement.	Community members can easily report access requests or concerns, enabling more timely and effective responses to accessibility issues across the Cumberland LGA.	• Strategic Communications & Engagement • Community Wellbeing

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
4 Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes	Review Council's external complaints and feedback processes and implement improvements to enhance accessibility for people with disability, ensuring equitable, user-friendly and inclusive avenues for providing feedback.	Council's external complaint and feedback processes are accessible and user-friendly, enabling people with disability to provide input and raise concerns effectively.	• Customer Experience & Technology
	Review Council's Community Engagement Strategy 2025-2029 to embed and strengthen inclusive practices, ensuring meaningful participation from people with diverse backgrounds, abilities and community needs.	People with disability experience improved access to Council consultations and decision-making processes, strengthening representation and inclusion.	• Strategic Communications & Engagement
	Expand and embed disability inclusive practices across Education and Care Services, ensuring centre philosophies, staff resources and program delivery consistently reflect and uphold inclusive values.	Education and Care Services consistently integrate disability-inclusive practices, ensuring centre philosophies, staff resources, and programming reflect inclusive values.	• Education & Care
	Assess and refine Council's internal online DIAP reporting system to enhance the quality, clarity and accessibility of information reported back to the community.	Refinements to the reporting system improve accuracy, accessibility, and usability of data, supporting informed decision-making, accountability and transparent communication of progress to the community.	• Community Wellbeing

Focus Area	New Action	Outcome	Responsibility
4 Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes	Review Council's Emergency Management and Disaster Planning to ensure it adequately incorporates and responds to the needs of people with disability, supporting safe, inclusive and effective emergency preparedness and response.	Council's Emergency Management and Disaster Planning incorporates the needs of people with disability, ensuring accessible, safe, and inclusive emergency responses.	• Audit, Safety & Risk



Monitoring & Evaluation

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) is formally endorsed by Council and integrated into Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan. This ensures that responsibilities, resources and timeframes for implementation are clearly defined.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan will be overseen by internal steering committee comprising of relevant Council teams responsible for delivering actions. Oversight will also be provided by the Community Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisory Committee, which includes community representatives and key stakeholders.

Progress on the DIAP will be reported through Council's standard reporting processes, including Cumberland Council's Annual Report. In accordance with legislative requirements, a summary of achievements will also be provided to the Disability Council NSW in an annual progress report.

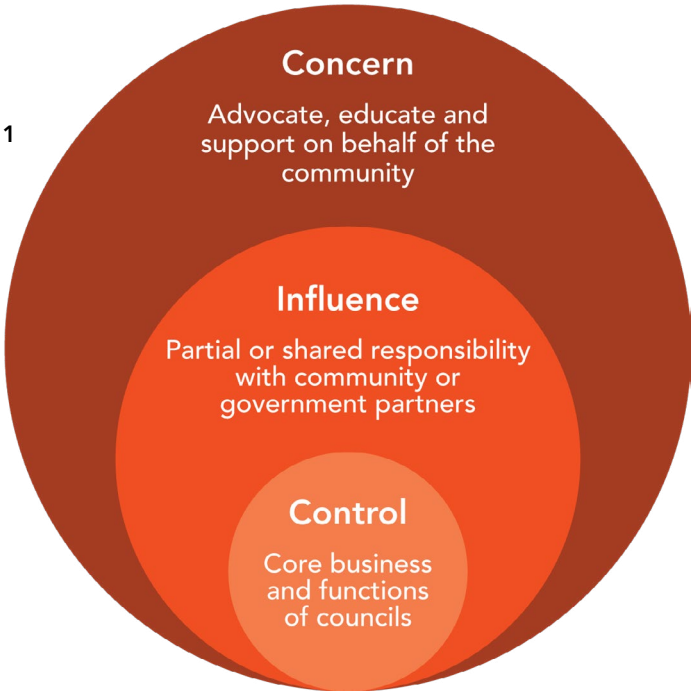
A comprehensive review and evaluation of the DIAP will be undertaken at the conclusion of the four-year term (2026 - 2030). Findings will be reported to Council, the NSW Disability Council and shared with the Cumberland community.

Performance Indicators

Indicators are a critical tool for assessing progress in implementing the DIAP and for maintaining Council's commitment to disability inclusion. They provide measurable benchmarks that help track outcomes and ensure accountability.

Council acknowledges that some issues may significantly impact people with disability yet fall outside its direct control. Despite these limitations, Council will monitor progress against the identified indicators to evaluate overall wellbeing and inclusion of people with disability in the community.

Spheres of Council Influence[11]



11. NSW Department of Family and Community Services and Local Government NSW (2015) NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines: Local Government

Focus Area	Indicators	Data Source	Council Influence
Positive Attitudes and Behaviours	Agreement that Cumberland is a harmonious, respectful and tolerant community.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Influence
	Level of satisfaction among community members with opportunities provided to participate in Council's decision-making process.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Control
	Number of Council departments that deliver programs and events to celebrate the International Day of People with Disability.	Council data	Control
	Satisfaction reported by people with disability regarding the outcomes of their participation in Council processes and initiatives.	DIAP panel	Influence
Liveable Communities	Level of agreement among residents that Cumberland is a good place to live.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Influence
	Level of satisfaction among people with disability regarding access to arts and cultural activities within the Cumberland community.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Control
	Level of satisfaction among people with disability regarding access to sporting and recreation activities within the Cumberland community.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Control
	Level of agreement among people with disability that transport in the Cumberland area is accessible.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Control
	Number of bus stops within Cumberland that comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) requirements.	Council data	Control
	Number of new or upgraded accessible parks in Cumberland that meet accessibility standards.	Council data	Control
	Level of satisfaction among people with disability regarding aged care services and support programs.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Influence

Focus Area	Indicators	Data Source	Council Influence
Employment	Successful renewal of Cumberland Council's Disability Confident Recruiter status through the Australian Disability Network (AusDN).	Council data	Control
	Number of new volunteer placements filled by people with disability within Cumberland Council programs and services.	Council data	Influence
	Successful delivery of an inclusive Disability Employment Expo within Cumberland local government area.	Council data	Influence
System and Processes	Level of satisfaction among people with disability regarding the accessibility and availability of with transport options for Council events.	Council data	Control
	Level of satisfaction among people with disability regarding the accessibility, clarity and timeliness of Council information to the community.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Control
	Level of satisfaction among people with disability regarding the accessibility to Council facilities, services and programs.	Community Satisfaction Survey	Control
	Proportion of Council publications provided in accessible formats.	Council data	Control
System and Processes	Number of Council operated community centres with signage to promote accessibility features (e.g. hearing loop, braille tactile signs, Master Locksmiths Access key (MLAK) key access).	Council data	Control

CUMBERLAND
CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030

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