



Disability Inclusion  
Action Plan  
2017 – 2021

Singleton Council would like to pay its respect to Elders past and present and acknowledge their custodianship of the land.

Singleton Council would like to thank all those people who committed their time to provide input and feedback during the development of this Disability Inclusion Access Plan.

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# Message from our Leaders

Singleton Council is committed to creating an accessible, liveable community for everyone. We are dedicated to ensuring we streamline our services, facilities and communication to meet the needs of our community.

The development of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan is our commitment to people with disability for improving access and inclusion within our community over the next four years.

Council staff consulted with the community to identify and better understand the needs of our community. This consultation formed the vision and actions in the Plan.

Singleton Council has facilitated the Disability Advisory Committee since 2001. We value the input of the Disability Advisory Committee and will continue to consult with the committee on Council's strategic direction.

We look forward to implementing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and achieving our vision of an inclusive community.



Jason Linnane  
General  
Manager



Cllr. Sue Moore  
Mayor

# Introduction

Singleton Council recognises the rights of everyone to have equal dignified access to services and facilities and is committed to working with the community to make Singleton an inclusive community for all. Council is committed to addressing identified barriers to delivery of services and facilities. This Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 provides actions and deliverables that will assist Singleton Council to work towards its vision of being 'Vibrant, Progressive, Connected, Sustainable, Resilient' and making Singleton truly accessible for all.

This plan has been developed in line with relevant legislation and community consultation. Actions have been developed to meet the four key areas of improvement:

1. Developing Positive Community attitudes and behaviours
2. Liveable Communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

This Plan outlines the actions that Singleton Council will complete in delivering against its commitments to the community. These actions are aligned to the objectives, strategies and deliverables as recorded in the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Community Development Management Plan. All action indicators will be measured and reported with visibility provided through Council's reporting system to ensure the community can understand progress towards meeting its goals.

# Background

*The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* requires NSW Government agencies and local councils to develop a coordinated and unified Disability Inclusion Action Plan by 1 July 2017. This approach will lead to better inclusion and community participation for people with a disability.

In 2009, Singleton Council adopted a Disability Access Action Plan, which was revised in March 2014 to the Singleton Disability Access Plan 2020. The development and subsequent review of Singleton Council's Disability Inclusion Access Plan is evidence of the commitment of Singleton Council to people with a disability in the Singleton community. Singleton Council also recognises that improvements to physical access not only assists people with a disability but also the broader community, particularly older people and young families.

# Our Vision

Our community's vision for Singleton is to be:

*Vibrant, Progressive, Connected, Sustainable, Resilient.*

Our Objective for Our People is that:

*Singleton is a creative, vibrant, inclusive, safe and healthy community.*

*Singleton community is resilient, informed, connected and engaged.*

Singleton Council's Purpose in enacting this Vision for Community Development is to:

*Link, connect and facilitate contact between the community, Council and external stakeholders in a way that enhances outcomes for all community members.*

This Disability Inclusion Access Plan has been designed to focus the efforts of Council, staff and the community towards achieving a truly accessible environment for all, with the aim of improving the liveability of the community for all residents and visitors.

The following is the vision for the four focus areas of this Plan:

## 1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

The perception of people with a disability and the behaviours of the community towards them has been identified as the single biggest barrier to inclusion. Therefore, changing the attitudes and behaviours of the Singleton community and the organisation will be a major focus for Council.

## 2. Liveable Communities

A liveable community is one that allows for all members of the community to fully participate in every aspect of community life. Singleton Council has focused on physical access works to ensure that all members of the community can access key recreational areas, Council facilities and utilise footpaths. With a comprehensive access audit completed on all Council facilities in 2014, Council is committed to continuing physical infrastructure upgrades annually. Although Council has made some significant improvements in the area of 'Liveable Communities', the needs of the community are always changing and Council is committed to continuous improvement to liveability in Singleton.

## 3. Supporting access to meaningful employment

Employment is an important part of everyday life, granting financial freedom and the opportunity to make personal choices. Access to meaningful employment is a significant barrier for people with a disability, which therefore places them at a financial and social disadvantage. Singleton Council is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer, meaning that people are hired on the basis of merit, rather than any socio-cultural, physical or health related matters that may place them at a disadvantage. Singleton Council recognise that they cannot address this issue alone as such they will work with the business community to educate and encourage Equal Employment Opportunities.

## 4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

Many people within our community experience difficulty in communicating with others. It is important that we recognise the need to be flexible in providing people with a disability a range of services and communication options to ensure they have the ability to access information and mainstream services. The internal processes and systems used by Council, staff and the community need to be assessed to ensure that they meet the needs of our diverse community.



# Developing the Plan

To ensure that this Plan is reflective of our community's needs, Singleton Council undertook the following steps in the planning and development of this Plan:

Singleton Council committed to developing a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Background research and review of existing Disability Access Plan undertaken.

Workshop held with Council staff to raise awareness of the need to develop this Plan and improve inclusion across all areas of Council.

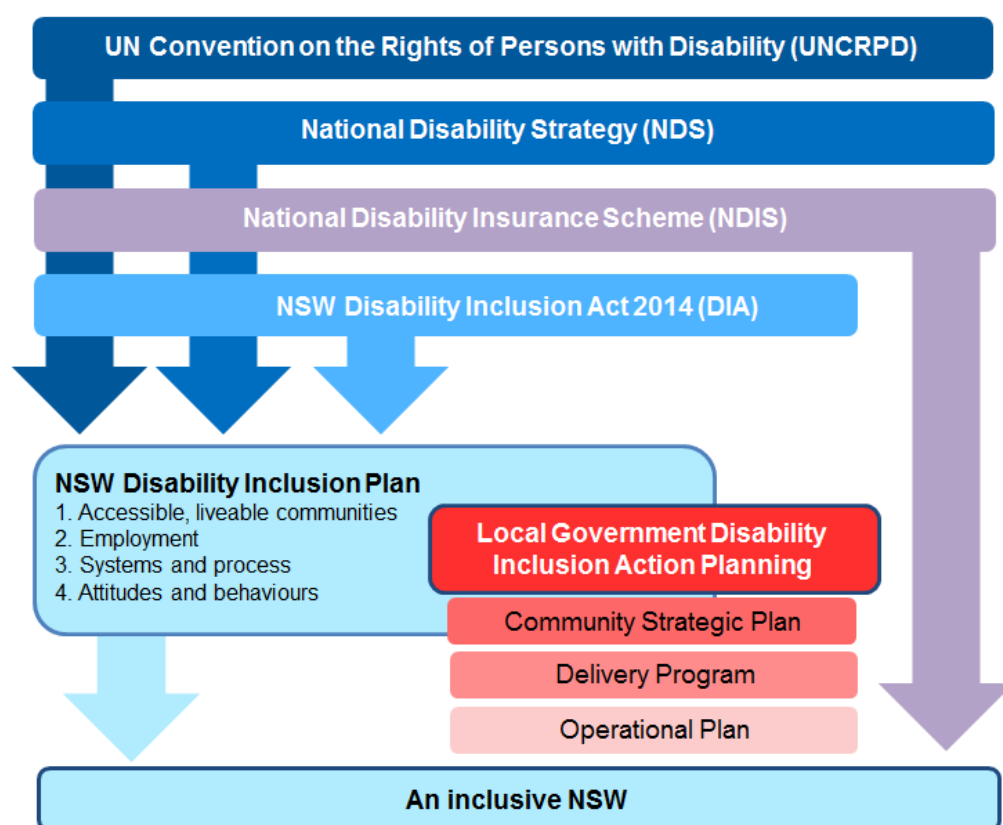
Consultation conducted with the community.

Development of key actions to be included in the Plan were undertaken following extensive consultation with the community and Council staff.

The draft Plan was presented to Council, and then placed on public exhibition, to allow for further community contribution, before final adoption by Council.

# Legislation and Policy

To ensure we are working towards our vision for a truly accessible environment for all, this Plan has been developed within the context of the relevant policy and legislative instruments. Figure 1 demonstrates the commitment to changing the lives of those with a disability from a global, national, state and local level. A requirement of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan for local Councils is that it meets the objectives of the State Government. The figure below will provide an understanding of the relationships between each of these policy frameworks and how they will work together to improve inclusion for people with a disability.



**Figure 1: The relationships between the relevant policy and legislative instruments.**

**Source: Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines Local Government.**

Singleton Council's Community Strategic Plan is a cornerstone document that outlines the community's vision for its future and Council's commitment to deliver against it. Council's Community Development Management Plan articulates how Singleton Council will deliver against its commitments in the Community Strategic Plan in the medium term. It provides more detail to support the high level actions included in the Singleton Council Delivery Program 2017 – 2021 and is inclusive of the actions included in the Singleton Council Operation Plan 2017 - 2018.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will sit under the Community Development Management Plan. Actions in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan are not repeated in the Management Plan but are consistent with and deliver against the required outcomes as dictated by the Community Strategic Plan.

# Singleton – A SNAPSHOT

Singleton is a vibrant and diverse regional town, located at the centre of the Hunter Valley, 200km North West of Sydney and 75km from Newcastle via the Hunter Expressway. With a population of approximately 24,061 (ABS 2016 estimated residential population), and an area of 4,892km<sup>2</sup>, Singleton is a progressive town with a range of community assets making it a wonderful lifestyle choice.

## Population

In 2011, the population of Singleton was 22,694. The estimated population in 2016 was 24,061.

3.6%  
of the  
population of  
Singleton need  
assistance

## Disability - Needing Assistance

832 people who resided in Singleton needed assistance with core activities.

6.5% of the population needing assistance are employed either full-time or part-time.

623 people who identified as needing assistance received a personal income of less than \$600 per week.

Source: 2011 ABS Census

Of the people  
needing  
assistance:

**401** are male

**431** are female

## Disability – Mild to Moderate

1,954 people aged 18 years and over had moderate or mild disability in the Singleton LGA in 2010.

Source: Public Health Information Development Unit 2015

8.6%  
of the population  
of Singleton have  
a mild to  
moderate  
disability

Source: 2011 ABS Census.

### Employment - People needing assistance

- 79% were not in the labour force
- 8% were employed (being 68 people), the majority part-time

Source: 2011 ABS Census

### Index of Disadvantage

#### Singleton 419/564

Ranks 419 out of 564 local government areas with Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA).

Scores in Australia, this means:

- There are 145 local government areas which are less disadvantaged, and
- There are 418 local government areas that are more disadvantaged.

#### Hunter Region

Cessnock 124/564

Maitland 352/564

Muswellbrook 245/564

Singleton  
419 / 564

Singleton –  
highest rank  
in the Hunter  
Region

# Community Consultation

Consultation commenced in March 2016, and has included facilitated group sessions with community members (including young people and adults with a disability, and their carers), service providers, members of the Disability Advisory Committee, local students and Council staff. A regional consultation for the Employment pillar was conducted with representatives from the Department of Social Services, Training Services NSW, the National Disability Coordination Officer Programme, Disability Employment Service providers, Supported Employment providers, and social/community planners and HR officers from four Hunter Councils.

## What the community told us

This Plan was informed by extensive consultation with people with disability, their carers and families, service providers, the community and Council staff. Consultation on the Plan was also undertaken as part of the Community Strategic Plan.

## Consultation Results

### Council is performing well in the following areas

- Access to events.
- Improved access to Council facilities – Senior Citizens Centre, Singleton Gym and Swim, footpaths.
- Rose Point Park - All ability playground.



### Priority areas for Council to make improvements

- Lobbying for improvement in transport.
- Continue improving footpaths.
- Accessible information in a variety of formats.



## Consultation Snapshot

The community told us what would make a difference to their ability to participate.

### Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

- Support inclusiveness in everyday life - create quiet and safe places to meet with services or socialise.
- More education for the community, businesses and Council.
- Ensure all Council events are accessible.
- Provide opportunities for the community to engage with people with disability - people with disability sharing their stories and experiences.

### Liveable Communities

- Lobby for better community transport and transport connections.
- Support and encourage inclusive programs.
- Accessible parks, toilets, sporting grounds for everyone – not segregated.
- Ensure accessible toilets for any new developments.

### Supporting access to meaningful employment

- Encourage mentoring, support programs.
- More education for employers and staff.
- Provide transitional support from school to work.
- Promote and encourage flexible work arrangements.

### Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

- Continue improving infrastructure for accessible streets.
- More information in a range of accessible formats.
- Ensure Council's website is accessible.
- Greater awareness among developers, planners and architects of disability access requirements.

# Strategies and Actions

A key strategy within our Community Strategic Plan is *'to facilitate and support programs and activities which promote inclusion and celebrate diversity'*. All actions identified within this Plan fall under this strategy and will assist in achieving our vision.

## 1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Number	Action	Desired End State	Timing	Responsibility	Lead Indicator	Lag Indicator
1.1	Conduct ongoing consultation to allow people with a disability and their family and carers to contribute to the strategic direction of Singleton Council and to ensure development consent is consistent with the objectives of this Plan	Hold bi-monthly Disability Advisory Committee Meetings	Bi-monthly	Communications, Community and Economy	Actions taken	SEIFA



1.2	Ensure events organised by Singleton Council are accessible to all members of the community	Develop an accessibility checklist included in Council's event management guidelines	2017/2018	Communications, Community and Economy	Actions taken	Community satisfaction
1.3	Investigate the procurement of an all abilities sensory tent for events with purchase subject to funding availability	Implementation of a sensory tent at all Council events	2017/2018	Communications, Community and Economy	Participation	Community satisfaction
1.4	Support local International Day of People with a Disability initiatives	Support the International Day of People with a Disability committee where required	Annually	Communications, Community and Economy	Attendance	Community satisfaction
1.5	Develop 'Singleton Stories' to showcase the inspiring people within our community	Feature people with a disability throughout the 'Singleton Stories' series	2017/2018	Communications, Community and Economy	Delivery of program	Community satisfaction

## 2. Liveable Communities

Number	Action	Desired End State	Timing	Responsibility	Lead Indicator	Lag Indicator
2.1	Improve the accessibility of the built environment	<p>Conduct Access Audits of all Council premises, infrastructure and parks</p> <p>Complete yearly access spot checks on Council Community facilities</p> <p>Implement priority kerb and footpath works</p> <p>Complete access audits on Councils owned sporting facilities</p> <p>Complete access audits on Council owned playgrounds</p>	Ongoing	<p>Infrastructure Delivery</p> <p>Infrastructure Strategy and Planning</p>	Actions taken	Community satisfaction

2.2	Address access issues with the Town Centre Revitalisation	Address access issues and incorporate into future planning for the Town Centre Revitalisation	Ongoing	Infrastructure Strategy and Planning  Development and Environment	Actions taken	Community satisfaction
2.3	Implement future stages of the Rose Point All Abilities Playground, subject to funding availability	Promote inclusion and provide accessible facilities for all ages and people with disability	Ongoing	Infrastructure Delivery  Infrastructure Strategy and Planning	% complete	Community satisfaction
2.4	Enhance social and recreational opportunities for people with a disability	Support programs that encourage people with a disability to engage in arts and culture, leisure and skill development activities	Ongoing	Communications, Community and Economy  Corporate and Community Services	Participation rates	Community satisfaction
2.5	Enhance social and recreational opportunities for people with a disability	Development of recreational park masterplans to incorporate whole of community inclusion	Ongoing	Infrastructure Strategy and Planning	Participation rates	Community satisfaction

### 3. Supporting access to meaningful employment

Number	Action	Desired End State	Timing	Responsibility	Lead Indicator	Lag Indicator
3.1	Services are provided by the right people, in the right jobs, with the right skills and attitudes at the right time	Develop and implement a three year Equal Employment Opportunity Plan	Ongoing	Organisational Development	% plan in place	Employee satisfaction
3.2	Establish Singleton Council as a disability friendly employer	Adaptable work spaces and technology	Ongoing	Organisational Development	Usage rates	Employee satisfaction
3.3	Assist with the transition of people with disability into the workforce	Support and promote programs, such as the Career Pathways Program, that facilitate all abilities employment	Ongoing	Communications, Community and Economy	Delivery of program	Employee satisfaction

## 4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

Number	Action	Desired End State	Timing	Responsibility	Lead Indicator	Lag Indicator
4.1	Provide information in formats to meet the varying requirements of people in the community	Ensure Singleton Council's website is accessible for people with vision impairments	Annually	Communications, Community and Economy	Usage rates	Community satisfaction
4.2	Enhance staff understanding of disability access	Conduct staff training, attend team meetings and get involved in the development of plans across Councils as appropriate	Every six months	Organisational Development	% training completed	Community satisfaction
4.3	Improve the connectivity between the community, stakeholders and Council to create an informed community	Provide a single source of information online through a quality website for Council	Ongoing	Communications, Community and Economy	Usage rates	Community satisfaction
4.4	Support regular networks that support people with a disability and their carers	More awareness about access and inclusion issues within the community	Ongoing	Communications, Community and Economy	Actions taken	SEIFA

4.5	Ensure the vision and objectives of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan are linked to Council's Asset Management Plan	More accessible assets within the Council portfolio	Ongoing	Infrastructure Strategy and Planning	%plan in place	Community satisfaction
4.6	Council's service delivery is aligned with our community's needs and delivered the best way possible	Innovation in the provision of quality customer service through implementation of the Customer Service Strategy	Ongoing	Corporate and Community Services	% strategy in place	Customer satisfaction

# Monitoring and Evaluation

This Plan is adopted by Singleton Council every four years. It will be reviewed annually for adequacy and effectiveness. Where changes in the community warrant changes to this Plan an amended Plan will be presented to Council for adoption.

Reporting against the commitments of this plan will be undertaken through Singleton Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting process as captured in Interplan. This reporting will be made available to the public on a quarterly basis.