



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

2022 – 2026



CONTENTS

Message from the Mayor + General Manager	04
Introduction	06
Background	08
Our Vision	08
Developing Plan	09
Legislation + Policy	10
Community Profile	12
Australia Disability Profile	14
Consultation	16
Focus Areas	22
Action Plan	24
Monitoring + review	34
References	36

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Singleton Council acknowledges the Wanaruah, Wonnarua people and their custodianship of the land in the Singleton Local Government Area. We also acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who live within the Singleton Local Government Area and pay our respect to elders past, present and future.



MESSAGE FROM

THE MAYOR + GENERAL MANAGER



We take great pride in the Singleton local government area being a welcoming and inclusive place for all, and in all actions taken by Singleton Council to support the fundamental rights for people of all abilities with equal and dignified access to everyone in our community.

Our dedication to inclusion of people with disability, and to building a strong and equitable community is underpinned by our achievements in making Singleton a better place to live, work and play – creating community for all.

But nothing happens by accident, and we have been guided by the robustness of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 to consider the needs of everyone, of all ages and experiences, in everything we do.

That includes practical projects such as the completion of the all abilities playground in Rose Point Park, installation of new as well as upgrades to footpaths and kerb ramps, an increase in the number of designated accessible parking bays, upgrades to John Street, and access improvement works at buildings and facilities such as the Mechanics Institute, our Waste Management Facility, Alroy Oval, The Heights Sport Centre and the new Rural Fire Service sheds.

It also covers initiatives to make it easier for everyone to consider the needs of people of all abilities in any given circumstances. For example, we completed a Disability Access Audit on 14 Council-owned facilities, and developed and implemented an

accessible checklist for each event held by Singleton Council, which has also been made available to event organisers within the LGA.

This new Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 is our commitment to everyone in our community that we will continue to improve physical access to all of our facilities, as well as work towards breaking down barriers from unconscious bias through attitudes and behaviors.

We acknowledge this is a difficult task, because as well as looking closely at our own unintentional bias, we cannot do this alone. By enlisting everyone in our community to work together to consider any barriers or impediments to others – conscious or otherwise – we can improve the lives of everyone and Singleton will be the welcoming and inclusive community we can all be proud to be part of.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the development of this plan. We especially acknowledge all those with lived experience who generously shared their personal insights and expertise: with your involvement and support, we can ensure the development and implementation of this plan best addresses the needs of everyone.

Sue Moore
Mayor of Singleton

Jason Linnane
General Manager



INTRODUCTION

Singleton Council recognises the rights of everyone to have equal dignified access to services and facilities and will work with the community to make Singleton an inclusive community for all. Council is committed to addressing identified barriers to delivery of services and facilities. Through community consultation and community feedback Council has been able to put together actions and deliverables in this plan that will be implemented over the next four years. Along with consultation this plan has been developed in line with relevant legislation.

Actions have been developed to meet the four key areas of improvement:



Developing Positive Community attitudes and behaviours



Livable Communities



Supporting access to meaningful employment



Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

The Disability Inclusion Action 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.



Disability is defined as long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual, or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

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 30 June 2022. 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 and again in 2017 to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021. The development and subsequent review and most importantly implementation of Singleton Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan is evidence of the commitment of Singleton Council to people with a disability in the Singleton community.

OUR VISION

The Vision of this plan is to work towards a Singleton that is accessible and inclusive for all. Council and the community will focus on individuals’ strengths and abilities and be prepared to look at unconscious bias and remove unintentional barriers ensuring Singleton continues to be a welcoming community for all.

This plan will help Council to reach its overarching visions to be:



Vibrant



Progressive



Connected



Sustainable



Resilient

DEVELOPING PLAN

This plan was developed with expert guidance from the Disability Inclusion Action Plan working group made up of members from the Disability Advisory Committee including people with lived experience. This committee organised consultation and worked with the community to reach as many people with lived experience as possible. Input was given by Council staff, with departments actively looking for actions they could contribute to the plan.

Actions developed were taken back to people with lived experience who were interested in the project for their feedback before being adopted by Council.
The Disability Advisory Committee will monitor the implementation of the plan.



LEGISLATION + POLICY

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) is the legislative foundation for Local Government disability inclusion and access planning. The Disability Inclusion Act ensures all local governments develop and implement a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

While the Singleton Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 is focused on access in Singleton, it is important to make sure the plan is in line with relevant State, Federal, International Plans, Legislation and Policies.

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.

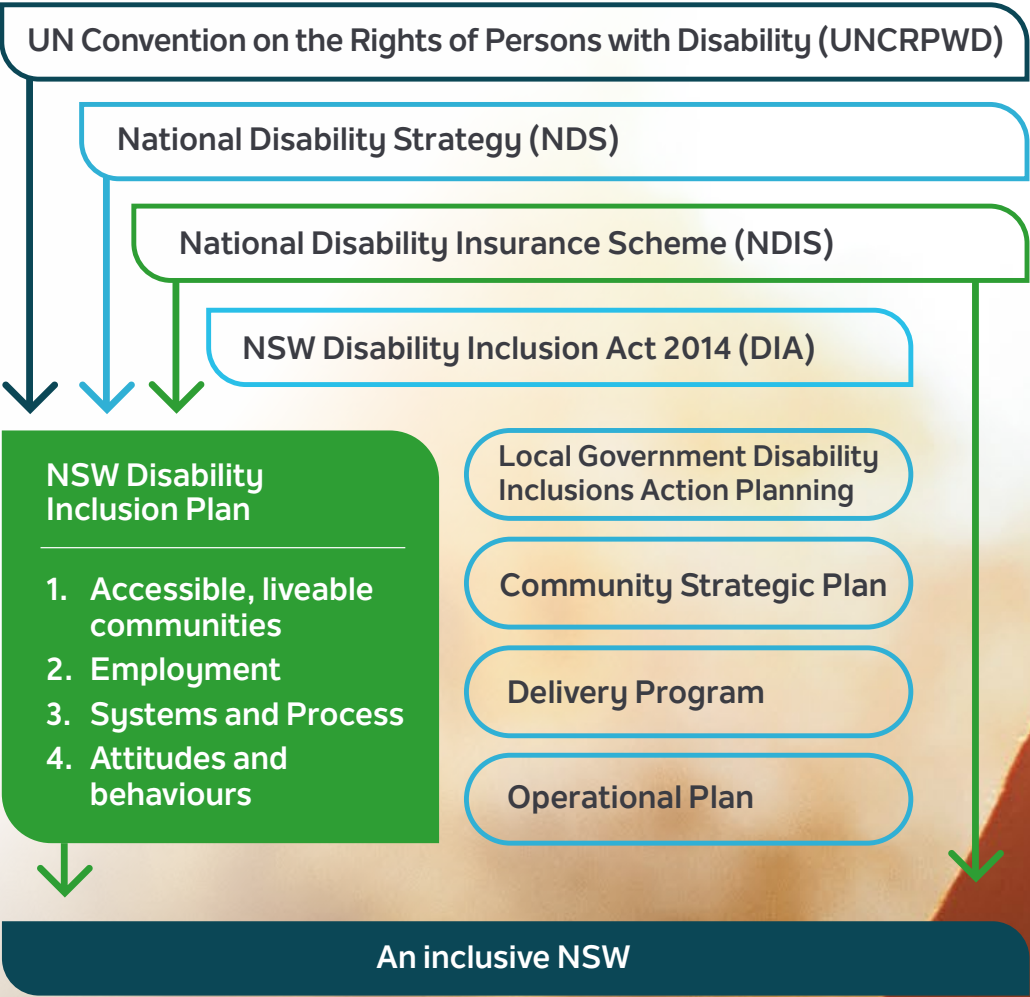


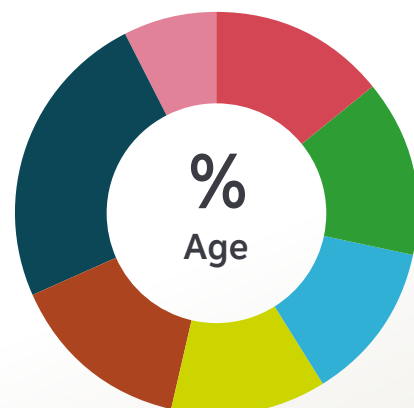
Image: The relationships between the relevant policy and legislative instruments.
Source: Department of Communities and Justice – Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines



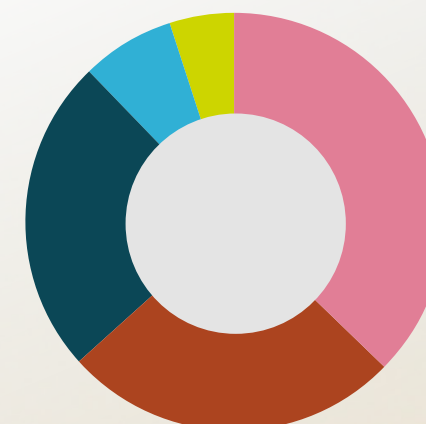
COMMUNITY PROFILE



23,380
Population



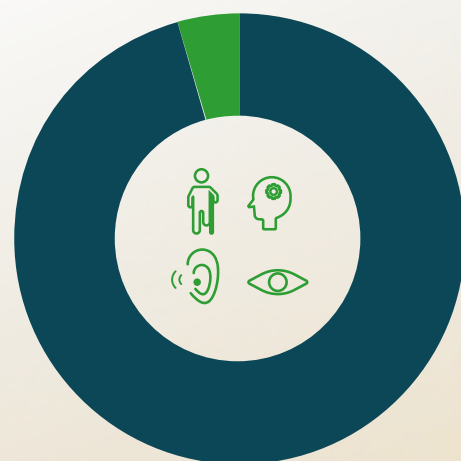
14.20%	0-9
14.40%	10-19
12.70%	20-29
12.40%	30-39
14.80%	40-49
24.20%	50 – 69
7.30%	70+



Living location

Living Location of People needing assistance with core activities*

- 391 Singleton Downtown
- 272 Singleton Heights
- 254 Rural Arera's
- 76 Huntermview
- 50 East Braxton / Dalwood



Living with a disability



Of those 1025, 541 aged between 0-64*

Of those 1025, 409 aged over 65*



4134 have some form of disability in Singleton LGA**

4.5% (1025) have a profound or severe disability in Singleton LGA*

*Census 2016

**Based on Australian estimate of 18% of population with some form of disability

***NDIS data from NDIS Market Monitoring

NDIS support



497 active participants with a NDIS plan in Singleton LGA***

201 NDIA active providers in Singleton LGA***



\$14.32 million in NDIS plan budgets for Singleton LGA ***



Carers

2055 people provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability in Singleton LGA 2016*



9.5% Employed of people needing assistance with core activities are employed*

AUSTRALIA DISABILITY PROFILE

Living with a disability



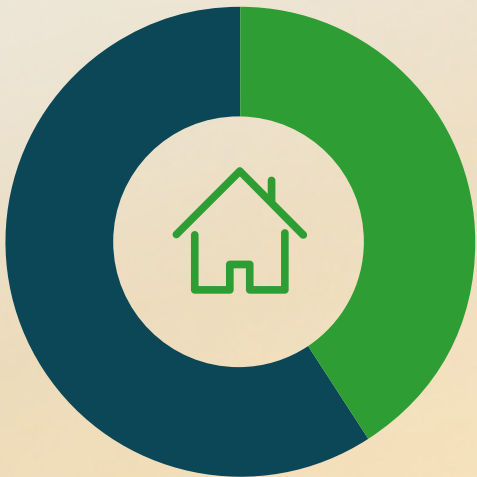
1 in 6 people in Australia are estimated to have a disability



The prevalence of disability increases with age. Around 1 in 8 people aged under 65 have some level of disability, rising to 1 in 2 for those aged 65 and over

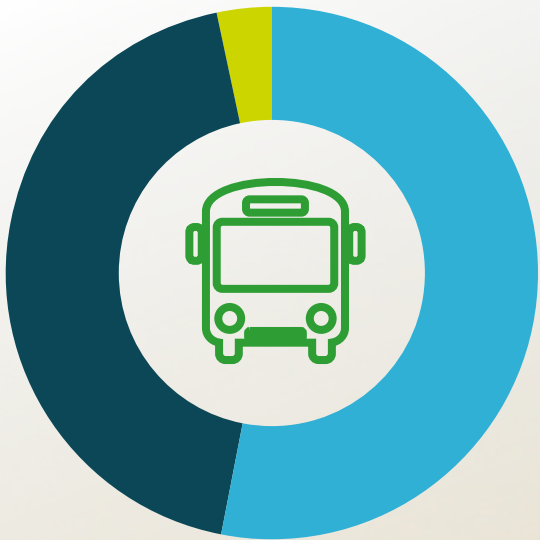
Employment

People with disability have a lower employment rate 48% compared to 80% for those without disability



Social housing

41% of social housing households include at least 1 person with disability

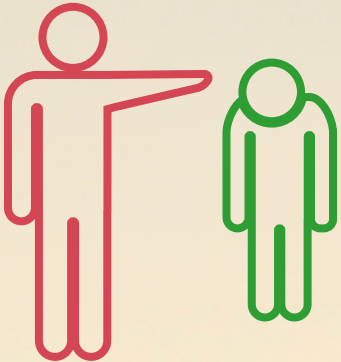


Transport

17% had difficulty using public transport, 14% are unable to use public transport at all and 0.9% do not leave home

Discrimination

1 in 10 experienced disability discrimination



Social Situations

1 in 3 avoided situations because of their disability



Access

1 in 3 of those who had challenges with mobility or communication had difficulty accessing buildings or facilities



CONSULTATION

Consultation was held in various formats including one on one via email and phone conversation, online meetings, and surveys. **128 people have contributed** to the development of this plan of those **21 people identified as having a disability**.



What we were told:

The top 3 things people enjoy doing for recreation are:

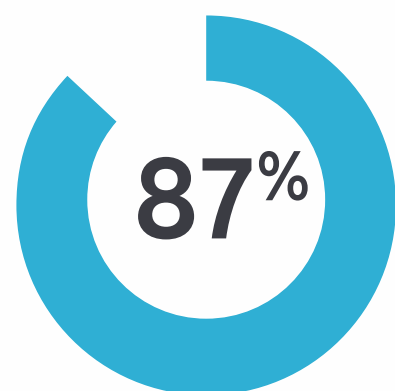
- Meeting up with friends
- Going to a café or restaurant
- Shopping

Overall, the top 3 areas for Council to focus on are:

- Advocate for employment opportunities
- Education and awareness of disability access to shops, cafes and restaurants
- More footpaths

For people who identified as having a disability the top 3 areas for Council to focus on are:

- More footpaths
- Advocating for employment opportunities
- Improved access at Council owned facilities



think Council is doing between
an ok job and great job of providing
access



feel welcome in
Singleton LGA



Overall:

85% can easily use the Singleton Library

76% can easily use the Youth Centre

73% can easily use the Gym and Swim

40% said they can attend events easily while

51% said they can attend events but not easily

For people with a disability the top 3 Council services
they found they could attend but not easily were:



Events (10 people)



Library (6 people)



Gym + Swim (5 people)



Consistent opinion:

- Volunteering and work placement are important opportunities to invest in
- Accessible shops are important to equality and inclusion
- Scooters are in greater use; safe wide footpaths and kerb ramps are going to continue to be essential infrastructure
- Access to inclusive recreation is essential and more opportunities needed
- Disability is not just physical, and all aspects of disability inclusion needs to be addressed
- Breaking down stereotypes and unconscious bias is the best way to improve inclusion
- Kerb ramps need to meet Australian Standards to be useable

”

“I currently access the venues in Singleton that I would like to access because I have valued family support. However, it is worth noting that without this family support I would be unable to independently continue the activities”

”

“People with disability need to feel empowered and resourced to be self-directive in how they live their lives.”

”

“I believe that businesses and employers need to understand the benefits of having an accessible business. If more people are able to access your goods and services, then that is good for your business.”

FOCUS AREAS

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. Often these attitudes and behaviours are unconscious and not intentional to prevent inclusion, nevertheless the impact of these attitudes/behaviours prevent all members of our community feeling included and accepted. Therefore, influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the community will be a key focus for Council.

Livable Communities

A livable community is one that allows for all members of the community to fully participate in every aspect of community life. Singleton Council has been steadfast in improving access to physical infrastructure for many years and continues to implement physical infrastructure upgrades annually. Through this commitment Council has made some significant improvements under 'Liveable Communities', however, the job is not yet done. Further work has been identified in a completed Access Audit on 14 Council facilities and council has listened to the community to expand access for varied recreational needs as our next step moving forward.

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. Unconscious bias often plays a role in preventing employment as does physical access. Singleton Council is committed to breaking down these barriers and improving access. Singleton Council recognises that they cannot address this issue alone as such they will work with the business community to educate and encourage Equal Employment Opportunities.

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

A common issue for people with a disability is the difficulty in navigating systems to access services and support as well as events and recreation activities. It is important that Council reviews its internal systems and process to ensure they meet the needs of our diverse community. Systems and process around available services, access to information, ability to give feedback, make enquiries or payments will be looked at as part of council commitment to accessibility.

SINGLETON COUNCIL

ACTION PLAN





Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Action	Measure	Commencement of Action	Stakeholders	Responsible Position
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	Disability Advisory Committee are consulted on key strategic plans and documents	Ongoing	Community	Director Organisation and Community Capacity
	Disability Advisory Committee meetings held bi-monthly	Ongoing	Disability Advisory Committee members	
	Expression of interest for people to join the Disability Advisory Committee advertised broadly.	As required		
Events organised by Singleton Council are accessible to all members of the community	Accessibility check list completed for all Council events	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Event planners 	Coordinator Community Participation
Celebrate International Day of People with a Disability	International Day People with a Disability promoted through Singleton LGA	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Disability Advisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Socio-Economic Planner- Community Community Development Officer
Enhance social and recreational opportunities for people with a disability	Arts and Cultural Centre has accessible programs and exhibitions	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Singleton Arts and Culture Advisory Group 	Coordinator Arts and Culture
	Council supports accessible sport and recreation opportunities	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Young People Sporting Clubs Recreation Services Disability Service Providers Infrastructure and Planning Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Socio-Economic Planner- Community Community Development Officer
Promote inclusion for people with a disability in organised groups and committees	Opportunities to get involved in organised groups or committees promoted to community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Council Infrastructure and Planning Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Socio-Economic Planner- Community Community Development Officer
Develop Disability and Inclusion training for staff	Staff educated on Disability and Inclusion	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Staff Community 	Senior Socio-Economic Planner – Community

**Ongoing refers to the action being undertaken for the lifetime of this plan*



Action	Measure	Commencement of Action	Stakeholders	Responsible Position
Consider accessibility elements when undertaking playground improvements across the LGA	Accessibility elements included in playground upgrades	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families Contractors 	Coordinator Recreation and Facilities
Install new, and upgrade identified footpaths and kerb ramps	Length of new and upgraded footpaths	Ongoing	Community	Coordinator Assets
Identify access improvement options from John Street to key elements on Queen Street and surrounds	Audit undertaken of John Street with identified community members	2022	Community	Senior Socio-Economic Planner - Community
Review and consider design for accessibility improvements to the Dog Park.	Investigate and design scope of works for inclusion in future capital works program	2023	Community	Coordinator Recreation and Facilities
Accessible tourism is considered as part of the development of the Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan	Hunter Valley Destination Management Plan developed	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Tourism operators Business Singleton 	Senior Socio-Economic Planner – Economic Development
Improve the accessibility of Council owned facilities	Lake St Clair accessibility improvements (pending funding)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Tourists Councillors Council staff 	Coordinator Recreation and Facilities
	Sensory Garden rejuvenation Townhead park	2022		Coordinator Recreation and Facilities
	Accessible toilets installed in admin building	2023 - Design		Coordinator Assets
	Townhead Park Toilets Replacement	2022		Coordinator Recreation and Facilities
	Customer Service Area	2023 - Design		Coordinator Assets
	Burdekin Park toilet upgrades	2022		Coordinator Recreation and Facilities
	Projects identified from Access Audit	Ongoing		Coordinator Assets

**Ongoing refers to the action being undertaken for the lifetime of this plan*



Supporting access to meaningful employment

Action	Measure	Commencement of Action	Stakeholders	Responsible Position
Job advertisements written to encourage people with a disability to apply (removing barriers to employment)	Number of advertisements encouraging diversity	Ongoing	Council Staff (current + future)	Manager People and Culture
Modify Position Descriptions when up for review to remove any barriers or unnecessary essential requirements to be more accessible	Number of Position Descriptions reviewed	Ongoing	Council Staff (current + future)	People and Culture
Include accessibility elements in the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan review	Accessibility is an identified part in the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Culture Council Staff (current + future) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manager People and Culture
Undertake Disability Employment Review	Employment Review completed	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People and Culture Council Staff (current + future) 	Manager People and Culture
Undertake relevant employment training for business unit managers as required	Training undertaken	Ongoing	Council Staff (current + future)	Manager People and Culture
Work with Business Singleton to improve accessibility	Offer training to Business Singleton members on accessibility	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Business owners 	Senior Socio-Economic Planner- Community and Economic Development
Work with local high schools to provide work experience for students with a disability at Singleton Council who show an interest in working in relevant local government services	Meetings held with Council and schools to identify opportunities for work experience	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local High Schools Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Senior Socio-Economic Planner - Community Manager People and Culture Relevant Council departments
Actively promote volunteering at Council for people with a disability	Volunteering policy and procedures reviewed	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Council Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Socio-Economic Planner – Community Manager People and Culture Manager Community Services Delivery
Economic Development Strategy to incorporate meaningful employment opportunities for people with a disability across the LGA.	Economic Development Strategy to address Employment for People with a Disability	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Business Singleton Industry Council 	Senior Socio-Economic Planner – Economic Development

*Ongoing refers to the action being undertaken for the lifetime of this plan



Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

Action	Measure	Commencement of Action	Stakeholders	Responsible Position
Incorporating one on one or small group consultation into councils' consultation plan to reach people unable to do surveys	Number of smaller or one on one consultations offered	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Council 	Coordinator Communication and Engagement
Key Council Staff complete training in the development of accessible publications	All required Council staff completed accessible publication training.	2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Council Staff 	Coordinator Communication and Engagement
Review Council owned grant applications to remove potential barriers and to encourage diversity in applications.	Grant application reviewed	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Socio-Economic Planner- Community Business Development and Grants Specialist
Review Councils public documents for accessibility to enhance readability and compatibility with relevant technologies.	Review completed and recommendations actioned	2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Council 	Coordinator Communication and Engagement
Incorporating specific accessibility elements into Customer Experience Review of service	Integration of accessibility checklist into customer experience playbook	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Council Staff 	Customer Experience Manager
	Implementation of checklist	Ongoing		

**Ongoing refers to the action being undertaken for the lifetime of this plan*

MONITORING + REVIEW

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be forwarded to the Disability Council NSW. An annual report of progress will be provided for information to the Disability Advisory Committee and to Council. Actions identified in this plan will also form part of Singleton Councils Operational Plan and reported on via the integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and Annual Report.

In accordance with the *Disability Inclusion Act (DIA)*, an annual report on the outcomes against the actions of the plan will be submitted to the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services. The Disability Council NSW assists the Minister to review the plans and provides advice on their success. The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be reviewed and updated in 2026.



REFERENCES

International	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing People with disability in Australia 2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employ My Ability, Disability Employment Strategy 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Disability Strategy (NDS)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• THE NDIS Market Detailed Dashboard - LGA level dashboards and Previous market data
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Government Act 1993
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
Other legislation and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government Sector Employment Act 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Standard (AS 1428) Design for Access and Mobility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002







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