

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLANNING 2017-21 - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary on the work of Council with regards to disability inclusion action planning. The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014)* requires councils to undertake Disability Inclusion Action Planning (DIAP), with strategies and actions in place from 1 July 2017.

Consultation with people with disability, their families and other stakeholder groups, is an essential stage of the planning process. This report summarises the scope and methodology of Council's community consultations as well as the discussion themes and key outcomes.

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines for Local Government* recommend four focus areas: attitudes and behaviours, liveable communities, employment, and systems and processes. These have been adopted in this summary.

Attitudes and behaviours: themes arising from consultations include the need for greater community awareness and positive attitudes towards disability, with suggestions to utilise International Day of People with Disability as an awareness raising event, and to target particular populations for education about disability (culturally and linguistically diverse populations, schools and children, and business owners and employers).

Liveable communities: the need for more "changing places" (accessible toilet facilities with adult change table and hoist), accessible parking, fenced accessible playgrounds, transport options, and continuous obstacle free footpaths were some of the many issues raised within this focus area.

Employment: many people within the consultation groups spoke of the lack of employment options for people with disability, and the stigma and barriers that people with disability experience in attempting to gain paid work. Education, awareness raising, and partnerships with employers and business owners was discussed, as was the need for more social enterprises.

Systems and processes: ease of access to information and digital services, as well as training for Council staff about disability was raised in this focus area. Additionally, ensuring that Council does not have "disability" as a separate conversation, but incorporates it into discussions in all services was suggested under this focus area.

Allan (7 July): "I'm about to move to Penrith, partly because it's a lot easier to get around than the Mountains... There are footpaths here, and places to walk around..."

CONSULTATION – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Engagement and consultation on disability inclusion shows respect for the lived experience of people with disability. While Council already has a sound understanding of Penrith and surrounding communities, this consultation process had several aims:

Ian (7 July): "I find Penrith pretty good – good to get around"

- to understand from residents with a variety of lived experiences of disability how they feel about Penrith City
- to gain insight into the challenges residents with disability experience in accessing their community, local venues, events, and programs
- to assist Council in creating a city that is liveable for all
- to understand how we can improve and take further action on access and inclusion
- to generate suggestions about ways to facilitate the inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of community life
- to promote wider understanding of the role of Council in facilitating access and inclusion, and
- to promote the "voice" of people with disability in the broader community.



Parent (25 May): "Playgrounds need to be fenced – having a fence means you can just be alert rather than hypervigilant"

Child playing, at Lifestart consultation in St Marys, 19 July 2016

SCOPE OF THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

We engaged with a broad range of stakeholder groups:

- residents of Penrith LGA, and/or people that frequently access services within the LGA (eg. attend a disability day program, or work for a disability service based in Penrith).
- people with disability of all ages including ageing people, and parents of children with disability.
- a diversity of disability experience including people with intellectual and/or psychiatric disability, autism spectrum disorder, neurological disabilities, people with sensory and/or physical disabilities.

- family members and carers of people with disability.
- people of cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background who live with disability, and their family members.



HELP US MAKE OUR CITY MORE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

We encourage residents and community partners – particularly people with disability, families and carers as well as advocates, disability organisations and service providers - to help us find ways to make our City a better place for all.

We're holding community forums to hear your experiences and ideas. Light refreshments will be served.

WHEN AND WHERE?

PENRITH Wednesday 13 July

10am - 12noon & 6 - 8pm.

Penrith City Council

Nepean Room, level 2 Penrith Civic Centre, 601 High Street (next to Westfield).

ST MARYS Wednesday 20 July

10am - 12noon & 6 - 8pm.

St Marys Memorial Hall

Meeting room 1, St Marys Corner Community and Cultural Precinct (corner of Great Western Highway and Mamre Road)
- entry via Swanston Street, St Marys.

RSVP

Celia Bishop on 47327838
or Celia.Bishop@penrith.city

NEED TRANSPORT OR OTHER ASSISTANCE?

We may be able to arrange transport and support for people with disability and their carers wanting to attend forums.

.....
For more information phone our Disability Inclusion Officer on 4732 8081, or email Claire.Galvin@penrith.city

.....
yoursaypenrith.com.au/DIAP2017-2021

PENRITH CITY COUNCIL penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

Back and front of the fliers distributed to promote Council's DIAP process

CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY – WHAT WE DID

A project plan was prepared to detail how the Disability Inclusion Action Planning process will proceed. The project plan outlined the ways we intended to engage with community members including:

- Open community forums for any interested community members to attend. Participants included people with a disability, their families, and carers, staff from local disability services, funding bodies, peak organisations, and community organisations and disability sector forums.
- Advertising (in local press, Council website and social media, disability sector newsletters and distribution lists, fliers at community venues and disability services) about community forums also included links to the Council website where there was

a “Have Your Say” page for people to complete a survey and leave comments. The page also stated that people could contact Council's Disability Inclusion Officer to make an alternative format submission (written or verbal).

- Small focus groups were arranged (targeting people with a disability who may have difficulty access a larger open forum, such as: people with intellectual disability, people living with mental health issues, people with a disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people on the Autism Spectrum).
- Meetings were arranged with service providers where it proved difficult to engage with a particular stakeholder group.
- Consultation meetings and forums had separate conveners and minute-takers, in order for sessions to be facilitated appropriately, and recorded with adequate detail.
- Open community forums included a brief introduction as a larger group, before being broken into small groups and work completed as per focus group.
- Group sessions utilised “facilitated conversation” methodology, whereby group facilitator starts with broad questions, and focuses questions down for each participant, allowing the conversation to flow back and forth between general and specific issues, while ensuring conversation remained on topic.



Members of Penrith Disability Action Forum, consultation 7 July 2016

DISCUSSION THEMES

Throughout the community consultation process, Council officers strove to ensure that the conversations with community members about disability inclusion were characterised by their respect for each person's experience. Every community member, regardless of ability, was afforded an opportunity to share their experience in whatever way they are able, with issues raised being explored with curiosity, active listening and creativity. The work of Council officers was to fully understand and appreciate the access and inclusion issues and barriers people encounter.

Three main conversation topics were raised by Council officers within consultation discussions. Each of these conversation topics was expanded and explored, and questions were modified and adapted as per the needs of the members of the group. At any stage

during questions, if it was appropriate, more specific targeted questions about Council issues were asked.

1. WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY IN PENRITH LGA?

This question gave opportunity for a general introduction from each person in the group. In addition to acting as an “ice-breaker”, this also gave people an initial chance to share about their work in the disability sector, places they go, what they do there, and how that experience is for them. This led to conversations about transport, travel, opportunities for engagement with activities, community facilities, and more.

*Parent (25 May):
“Werrington Lakes is
excellent after its makeover”*

2. WHAT DO YOU FIND ARE BARRIERS TO INCLUSION?

It’s obvious that if a building has only stairs at the entrance, then a person using a wheelchair can’t access that building. However, even if there is “access”, a person may experience difficulty in being included in general community things at that building - this is in part what this second round of small group conversation explored.

*Staff member of a disability
service (13 July): “For people
with high physical support
needs, including incontinence,
there is a real need for [adult]
change facilities”*

Where specific access matters that can be responded to by Council within existing resources were raised by individuals at the consultations, these are being referred to the relevant Council service manager for further consideration and action and have not been identified in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan reporting.

3. WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS?

During this discussion, consultation participants were invited to share their ideas and suggestions about how greater inclusion could be fostered. This may be an idea for a specific solution to a particular barrier they identified, or sometimes suggestions were things that they had seen or heard about in other jurisdictions which they had thought could be a possibility to do in Penrith. Priority themes and actions were then sorted into one of four focus areas outlined in the *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning guidelines*.

*Service provider (21 April): “It
would be great if there could
be a sensory garden
somewhere in the area – with
plants that can be smelt,
touched, felt”*



*Resident (15th July):
“The exercise
equipment at Glenmore
Park is brilliant...”*

Consultation held at Thorndale Industries, Werrington on 29 March 2016

FOCUS AREAS

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines for Local Government* identify four key focus areas as being of primary importance in creating an inclusive community as nominated by people with disability:

- Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- Creating liveable communities
- Supporting access meaningful employment
- Improving access to service through better systems and processes

In consolidating barriers to inclusion that have been raised, and possible actions and strategies for our plan, we have grouped these into the focus areas above.

OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION PROCESS

In order to seek a wide view of community opinions about disability access and inclusion within Penrith LGA, a variety of consultation approaches were utilised, as outlined below:

- Open community forums
- Focus groups
- Meetings with disability services
- “Have Your Say” Council website
- Alternative format submissions

*Parent [who has a disability]
(29 June): “It’s really important
that there are seats in places
where people go”*

Each consultation process is outlined below, along with the outcomes from that process.

OPEN COMMUNITY FORUMS

For transparency and due process, open community meetings called “community forums” were organised, at both St Marys and Penrith. Sessions were arranged for both morning (10am- 12noon) and evening (6pm – 8pm) to accommodate people’s work schedules and commitments. These forums were advertised in local press, Council’s website, sector email distribution lists and newsletters, and fliers dropped off to disability services, libraries, and community facilities. In order to provide adequate catering and to ensure support needs were accommodated, people were asked to register/ RSVP to attend the forum.

The meetings in Penrith were to be in the Nepean Room of the Civic Centre, and at St Marys Memorial Hall. Due to lack of registrations for the night sessions, these did not commence as planned.

For the two community forums that did occur, please note the following table outlining participation, and the inclusion themes and priority areas raised during the session:

Date	Penrith – 13 July 2016	St Marys – 20 July
Attendance	18 community members (plus Council staff)	14 community members (plus Council staff)
Representation	<p>Of the community members attending, 7 people identified themselves as having a disability. Other people present included staff working locally, from the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept of Human Services – Centrelink • Flintwood Disability Services • Guide Dogs Australia • National Disability Co-ordination Office • Penrith Disability Resource Centre • Uniting – NDIS Local Area Coordination team • Uniting – Ability Links team • Zest Care 	<p>Of the community members present, 3 people identified as having a disability or family member with disability, and others present were staff working locally from the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept of Family and Community Services • Leep • Lifestyle Directions • NADO • National Disability Insurance Agency • Nova Employment • Northcott • Settlement Services International – Ability Links • Sunnyfield

Date	Penrith – 13 July 2016	St Marys – 20 July
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorndale
Attitudes and behaviours	Community awareness / attitudes towards disability (training for business owners, and general community)	<p>Community awareness, particularly for CALD communities – decreasing stigma of disability for this population, and for schools</p> <p>International Day for People With Disability – utilise as a whole of community event, raising awareness etc., rather than as a social occasion for existing groups of people with disability</p>
Liveable communities	<p>More accessible parking needed</p> <p>Change facilities with hoist / adult change table</p> <p>Transport options – more, and accessible</p> <p>Safe street crossings and ramps / enough time at traffic signals</p> <p>Continuous paths of travel (footpaths) that are monitored to ensure they are obstacle free (trolleys, sandwich boards, and overhanging branches)</p>	<p>Accessible toilets - MLAK key inhibits access</p> <p>Community transport – more needed, and increased flexibility</p> <p>More accessible parking needed</p> <p>Need for more community activities in general</p> <p>Sensory park / garden</p>
Employment	<p>Education and awareness raising with employers and business owners</p> <p>Social enterprises needed (such as Blacktown’s “Hub” café)</p> <p>Council partner with organisations to offer more traineeships</p>	<p>An employment symposium – bringing employers and disability employment providers and creating action (not just talk)</p> <p>More employment options (in the area) for people with disability are needed</p>

Date	Penrith – 13 July 2016	St Marys – 20 July
	Leverage relationships with CBD corporation and Chamber of Commerce to encourage more employment opportunities for people with disabilities	
Systems and processes	Ease of access to information and digital services Suggestion for an affirmative action policy Training for Council staff (and Council to be a community leader and offer to all business, etc.) about customer service to people with disability / disability awareness for community	Ensuring that Council does not have “disability” as a separate conversation, but incorporates it into discussions in all departments Ensuring website and Council information is accessible to all people

In planning open community forums about DIAP, Council recognised that it may be difficult, for a variety of reasons, for people to attend an open forum; this could be due to practicalities of child-care arrangement, prior engagements, social anxiety, or multiple other reasons. To ensure a greater representation of people with disability into our DIAP process, several focus groups were conducted.

Michael (20 July): “[The] libraries are fantastic to access on wet weather days [for day program participants at his disability service]”

Resident (13 July): “Access into Jamison Park is excellent: the path goes right around the park...”

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are small groups of facilitated discussion, used to explore public opinion. They usually involve a selected group of individuals, and are best utilised to identify attitudes in depth at the start of a project, to provide an opportunity for input from otherwise underrepresented individuals, and as a supplement to other community engagement methods.

The focus groups catered to people with specific needs, for example due to age or stage of life, or disability type and support needs.

The table that follows outlines the date, target population / attendees, and the inclusion themes and priority areas raised during the group discussion:

Date - 2016	Group Name	Description	Attendees	Consultation themes raised
29 March	Thorndale Industry	Thorndale Industries runs a business enterprise whereby adults with intellectual disability are employed in supported manufacture and packaging roles	7 adults with lived experience of intellectual disability	Prejudice/ stigma about disability / community attitude awareness Transport access
28 April	Partners In Recovery	PIR is a consortium of organisations that provide support to people recovering from mental illness. The “consumer reference group” is an established group of long-term PIR service recipients who feedback to PIR about the services they have received	7 adults with lived experience of psychiatric disability	Lack of employment options/ need for more social enterprises Community attitudes/ stigma/ prejudice (causes above)
25 May	Luke Priddis Foundation	LPF provides support to children and families of children with ASD. We met with groups of parents and children at LPF playgroup and support groups for school-age children	6 parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder	Parks/ playgrounds need to be fenced Community attitudes/ stigma (kids seen as “naughty”)
29 June	Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation	SRAC provides a range of services to adults with disability that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The people we met	6 people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and have	Shortage of accessible parking spaces

Date - 2016	Group Name	Description	Attendees	Consultation themes raised
		with utilise SRACs case management, referral, and one-to-one support programs	impairments that limit their access or mobility	Timing of traffic lights – difficult to cross in time Lack of seats and shelters in parks, outside clubs, bus-stops, etc.
7 July	Penrith Disability Action Forum – Penrith Disability Resource Centre	PDRC provides advocacy, information, and referral for all people with disability and their carers in the Penrith LGA and surrounding areas. PDAF runs from PDRC and is a local action group of people with physical, intellectual and/or sensory disability, working together to raise issues and concerns which affect people with disabilities in the area	13 community minded people, many of whom have vision impairments, some of whom use wheelchairs, some of whom are carers, partners, or parents of people with disability, and some of whom work in the disability sector	Accessible parking Timing of traffic lights – difficult to cross in time Lack of transport “Changing place” Continuous paths of travel – obstacle free (trolleys, sandwich boards, overhanging branches)
15 July	NADO (formerly NILC) members	Nepean Independent Living Community (N.I.L.C. Inc.) was a non-profit organisation established for the purpose of supporting people with disabilities and their families in the Penrith LGA. NILC recently merged with NADO, a local area service provider. We met with the group of former NILC members that meet monthly for dinner	16 adults with disability (mainly intellectual disability) living in supported accommodation – individual conversations	Community attitudes/ disability awareness Transport options More seating in public areas Accessible playgrounds
19 July	Lifestart	Lifestart supports children and young people living with disability or delay. We met	4 parents of toddlers and pre-school age children	Fences around playgrounds

Date - 2016	Group Name	Description	Attendees	Consultation themes raised
		with parents of pre-school age children with development delay or intellectual disability	with developmental delay, or disability	
25 July	No Boundaries art group	A Council supported arts group of people with diverse abilities	3 adults with various disabilities – individual conversations	Accessible parking
17 August	Kurrambee School	A school for specific purpose, Kurrambee School specialises in supporting students with disability	3 pre-teen school students, 4 parents of school students, and 2 school teachers	More accessible / inclusive events for teens Need for greater community awareness / positive attitude to disability

For some populations with specific needs we had difficulty arranging a focus group (for example, people did not want to be involved, or were unable to due to various reasons). In such instances, a meeting was arranged with staff from a relevant disability organisation to discuss the inclusion support needs of the particular group.

Eddie (7 July): "St Marys library is really great.. [and] the disability toilet there is brilliant"

Dom (27 July): "You guys are proactive – way ahead of other councils. Penrith City Council is doing a really good job [with issues about disability access]"

MEETINGS WITH DISABILITY SERVICES

Table below outlines services met with and the population they represent, as well as issues raised.

Date - 2016	Group Name	Description	Attendees	Consultation themes raised
21 April	See Foundation	See Foundation provides day activities for people with complex physical and multiple disabilities. Many of the people attending SF programs have significant support requirements and limited communication	2 staff members	No adult change facilities/ "changing place" Lack of sensory garden Transport options MLAK toilets are a barrier (not accessible)
17 May	TAFE	The disability teacher consultants at TAFE support (mostly young adult) students with disability as they embark on their post-school and pre-vocational studies	3 staff members	Social issues/ community attitudes Need for "changing place"
14 June	Cerebral Palsy Alliance	CPA supports people with Cerebral Palsy across their lifespan. Most of the people supported by CPA have physical support needs, and the CPA staff that Council officers met with in particular support children with physical disabilities	2 staff members	"Ripples" needs more accessible change facilities More accessible playgrounds Continuous paths of travel – footpaths from carpark to footpath/ destination
27 July	Settlement Services International – Ability Links	SSI works with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and the Ability Links program aims at linking CALD people with a disability in to local community services	2 staff members	Reducing stigma of disability in CALD communities – disability awareness raising, and community attitudes

The meeting with SSI-Ability Links had been planned as a focus group, however the participants and their family members did not attend.

“HAVE YOUR SAY” COUNCIL WEBSITE

The “Have Your Say” website for this Council project went live on Monday 20 June and gave people information about the open community forums to be held in July, answered frequently asked questions about disability inclusion, and gave people the option to complete a survey and leave comments (for example, if they did not want to give their views via attendance at the community forums).

After the community forums, the website was altered to reflect that they had already occurred, but that people could still have their say via this website. The website will remain active until Friday 26 August, at which time community consultations for this disability inclusion action planning cycle (2017-2021) will be complete.

So far, the website has had 66 visitors, with 6 people (all of whom identified as Penrith LGA residents, 4 of whom identified as having a disability) choosing to complete the survey and leave comments.

The following table outlines the main issues raised, and which priority area it relates to:

NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning guidelines	Themes raised by community members on website comments and survey
Attitudes and behaviours	Community education and awareness about disability
Liveable communities	Physical access – well maintained footpaths and continuous paths of travel Accessible parking Transport options Adult change facilities Accessible playgrounds

ALTERNATIVE FORMAT SUBMISSIONS TO DIAP

As part of good practice in meeting individual needs of people, the option was open for people to make submissions to Council about disability inclusion, in whatever form best suited their needs. In response to this offer the following submissions were made:

- 2 emails (both from service providers unable to attend the open community forums). Issues raised:
 - Access to information for people with disability
 - People living with disability that are homeless
 - Justice system in local area does not give adequate transition for people living with disability
 - Service provider had approached Council for support for events; would like more support in future
- 1 phone conversation from someone unable to attend a forum (spouse of person who is a wheelchair user). Sole issue raised and purpose of call:
 - Lack of accessible parking in CBD

Service provider (21 April): "MLAK key toilets can sometimes be a barrier, as people don't always have a key on them..."