# Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022–2026

[newcastle.nsw.gov.au](https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

## Acknowledgment

City of Newcastle acknowledges that we operate on the grounds of the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship   
with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years   
of dispossession.

City of Newcastle reiterates its commitment to address disadvantages and attain   
justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

## Enquiries

For information about this document contact:

City of Newcastle

PO Box 489, Newcastle NSW 2300

Phone: 4974 2000

[newcastle.nsw.gov.au](https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au)

© 2022 City of Newcastle

## Contents

[A message from our Lord Mayor 4](#_Toc88746033)

[Statement of Commitment 5](#_Toc88746034)

[Integrating with International, National and State Policy 6](#_Toc88746035)

[Our city 9](#_Toc88746036)

[Community Strategic Plan 9](#_Toc88746037)

[Our Global Commitment – The Sustainable Development Goals 10](#_Toc88746038)

[Newcastle at a glance 11](#_Toc88746039)

[Demographics and Disability 12](#_Toc88746040)

[Our strategic approach 22](#_Toc88746041)

[Our Progress 23](#_Toc88746042)

[Our Role 2021–2025 24](#_Toc88746043)

[Monitoring and evaluation 25](#_Toc88746044)

[Our collaboration 27](#_Toc88746045)

[Attitudes and behaviours 31](#_Toc88746046)

[Liveable communities 33](#_Toc88746047)

[Employment 35](#_Toc88746048)

[Systems and processes 38](#_Toc88746049)

[References and Key Documents 41](#_Toc88746050)

[Action Plan 42](#_Toc88746051)

## A message from our Lord Mayor

Newcastle continues to be the regional heart of the Hunter, drawing in people from a wide catchment for employment, education, tourism, recreation, social and cultural   
events, services and business. We all know it is a great place to live, work and play, and the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) outlines how we can further enhance   
access and inclusion for the benefit of people with disabilities and our entire community.

More than one in six residents of Newcastle has a disability. Based upon 2021   
population estimates, this means that 30,835 Novocastrians are living with disability, whether it be mild, moderate, or severe. In presenting the Disability Inclusion Action   
Plan 2021–2025, I confirm that Council is committed to ensuring Newcastle is an   
inclusive community for all people.

Newcastle has benefitted from significant development over the life of the previous DIAP and will continue to do so for the life of this new plan. I am proud that we have   
been able to deliver more accessible infrastructure for everyday activities: installing   
adult lift and change facilities at Nobbys Beach and the Newcastle Museum, creating   
more inclusive play spaces in parks, and improving Local Centres across Newcastle   
with easier access to local services.

I am pleased that we have been adapting the way we deliver programs, activities   
and services, as well as the way we communicate with our community. We are not   
only thinking about accessible infrastructure, but about how people live and interact   
every day, and how we can deliver our services in a more inclusive way.

Through consultation with the community, we identified that there is more to do,   
and that inclusion is everyone’s business.

Thank you to those who contributed through the consultation stage to form this plan,   
and to our Access Inclusion Advisory Committee for their advice and input towards   
implementing our previous Plan and in the development of this Plan. I look forward to   
the Committee once again assisting in the monitoring and implementation of the new   
plan over the next four years.

**Councillor Nuatali Nelmes**

Lord Mayor of Newcastle

## Statement of Commitment

**Through this Disability Inclusion Action Plan and other actions, City of Newcastle (CN) commits to:**

* Advocate for the equal rights of all
* Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our city and community
* Collaborate with business, government and community groups to make Newcastle a more disability-confident city
* Improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities
* Provide services, programs, events and facilities that are respectful   
  and inclusive of people with disabilities, their families, carers and   
  significant others.

**Acknowledgement of language.**

CN chooses to utilize person first language such as "people with disabilities"

acknowledging that we put the person first. This is consistent with the language

used within the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

CN acknowledges that there is diversity within disability and that some people

prefer what is known as "identity first" language for example

using the term "Autistic person" instead of "person with Autism.

CN acknowledges and respects that individuals may prefer one use of language

over the other.

## Integrating with International, National and State Policy

CN's second DIAP is aligned with the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS) 2021-2031 and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2022-2026.

The Federal and State Governments released their new Disability Plans in December 2021 and November 2021 respectively. Themes of each plan have remained consistent with the former plans, however the Federal plan,

ADS 2021-2031 also aims to deliver Targeted Action Plans on specific focus areas, this may present more opportunities to deliver more closely aligned actions into the future.

Federal, State, and Local Disability Plans all recognise that people with disabilities should be treated equally to any other members of the community. The UN Convention, the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act* *1992* and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* state that people with disabilities are entitled to enjoy all

human rights, and to have these rights protected by law.

Section 4 of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* sets out legal protection for people with disabilities to have

the right to:

* Respect for their worth and dignity as individuals
* Participate in, and contribute to, social and economic life and be supported to   
  develop and enhance their skills and experience
* Realise their physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and   
  intellectual capacities
* Make decisions, as other members of the community do, that affect their lives   
  (including decisions involving risk) to the full extent of their capacity to do so,   
  and to be supported in making those decisions if they want or require support
* Respect for their cultural and linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs
* Have their privacy and confidentiality respected
* Live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation
* Access information in a way that is appropriate for their disability and cultural background, and enables them to make informed choices
* Pursue complaints, as other members of the community do
* Have acknowledgement of, and respect for, the crucial role of families,   
  carers and other significant persons in the lives of people with disabilities,   
  and the importance of preserving relationships with families and carers and   
  other significant persons
* Respect for the needs of children with disability as they mature, and for their   
  rights as equal members of the community
* Respect for the changing abilities, strengths, goals and needs of people with   
  disabilities as they age.

What does NSW legislation require a Disability Plan to include?

Section 12 (3) of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires each public   
authority to prepare a Disability Action Plan, which must:

* Explain how the council regards disability principles
* Detail strategies for providing access to public buildings, events and facilities
* Provide details about how to access information
* Explain how employment opportunities for people with disabilities are   
  to be supported
* Demonstrate opportunities for people with disabilities to access the full range   
  of services and activities available in the community
* Include details of consultation about the plan with people with disabilities
* Explain how the plan supports the goals of the State Disability Inclusion Plan.

Through this DIAP, CN aligns its strategies and actions with the principles defined by   
Section 4 of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, which are also consistent with the   
national and international frameworks.

What are the focus areas of the DIAP?

The DIAP’s four focus areas (consistent with the NSWDIP) aim to create long-term   
change to enhance inclusion, both within CN’s delivery and across the community.   
These are:

* Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
* Creating liveable communities
* Supporting access to meaningful employment
* Improving access to mainstream services through better   
  systems and processes.

What is classified as a disability?

The UN Convention and the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014describe ‘disability’ 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.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a large reform piece   
implemented by the Federal Government. It has resulted in significant changes   
to the disability services sector and to the way some people with disabilities access   
services. Many people with disabilities are not eligible for the services provided   
under the NDIS, and it is not a vehicle to achieve overall disability inclusion   
across our community.

The NDIS and other reform actions highlight that inclusion is everyone’s business.   
CN and the community can all make a difference. Implementing the strategies and   
actions of this DIAP will demonstrate that our city is an inclusive place to live,   
work and play.

## Our city

### Community Strategic Plan

**In 2030, Newcastle will be a smart, liveable and sustainable global city**

We will celebrate our cultural heritage and history, protect our natural   
environment and support our people to thrive and prosper. As an inclusive   
community, we will strive for equal rights and access for all. We will face   
challenges with integrity, innovation and creativity. Support business growth,   
education and employment opportunities. We will be a leading lifestyle city   
with vibrant public places and spaces, connected transport networks   
and unique urbanism. This will be achieved within a framework of open and collaborative leadership.

#### Vision Definitions

**Smart** – is a city that puts its community at its centre; enjoys smart and digitally   
connected public and urban infrastructure; and works to develop a thriving   
ecosystem to drive innovation and creativity.

**Liveable** – are the factors that influence our quality of life, including the built and   
natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational   
opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities.

**Sustainable** – are both environmental and financial sustainability. Sustainability is   
about meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability   
of future generations to meet their needs.

**Inclusive** – is used to reflect the community’s desire to not just be welcoming and   
open, but to actively recognise and embrace differences.

**Community** – refers to everyone; residents, workers, businesses, visitors and   
stakeholders.

**Newcastle Urbanism** – (refer to CN’s Local Planning Strategy) is the built   
environment that addresses public spaces, is scaled for pedestrians, and   
respects culture, heritage and place. It includes urban form that encourages safe   
and activated places, promotes active and healthy communities and provides   
opportunities for social interaction.

### Our Global Commitment – The Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015, Australia was one of 193 countries to commit to the UN’s   
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since this commitment, CN has been   
proactive in the strategic implementation of the SDGs and has included them in core   
strategic documents.

CN has an essential role in educating and leading the achievement of the SDGs for   
the region. Their core alignment and implementation has been outlined as follows.

| **SDG and targets** | **How it is addressed in the DIAP** |
| --- | --- |
| **SDG 4**: Quality Education – Ensure inclusive and equitable  high-quality education and promote lifelong learning  opportunities for all. | Education has a strong link to employment outcomes.  CN will partner with stakeholders to enhance opportunities  for learning, especially lifelong learning. |
| **SDG 8**: Decent Work and Economic Growth – Promote  sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth,  full and productive employment and decent work for all. | Employment is a key theme of the DIAP. People with disabilities  have a lower average income than others. CN will increase  employment opportunities for people with disabilities internally  and across the community, enhancing individual prosperity  and community/economic benefit. |
| **SDG 10**: Reduced Inequalities – Reduce inequality within and  among countries. | The DIAP’s actions aim to reduce inequality by providing  equal or equivalent access to employment, services, facilities,  infrastructure and programs. |
| **SDG 17**: Partnerships for the Goals – Strengthen the means of  implementation and revitalise the global partnership for  sustainable development. | The DIAP is centred around a collaborative approach to  implementation. Our actions will be achieved through  partnerships, including co-design by people with disabilities. |

### Newcastle at a glance

#### Our population

Newcastle population 2016: **160,700**

Population by 2041: **199,700**

Greater Newcastle population 2016: **569,900**

Population by 2041: **699,200**

Source: [planning.nsw.gov.au](https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/)

#### Our people

Median age **37**

**31%** residents aged under 24

**13.9%** residents born overseas

**3.5%** of our population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Source: Remplan, Id profile

#### Our work

Regional employment hub

**102,800** jobs

**54,376** workers live in another local government area

**19.7%** jobs in healthcare and social assistance

Source: Remplan

#### Our economy

Median property price **$~600,000**

Largest industry

**Manufacturing $4.86 billion** in economic output

**$17.62 billion** gross regional product

**5 million** annual visitors

Source: Id profile, Remplan

### Demographics and Disability

People with disabilities are diverse and disability can be very different from person to   
person. Disability affects many people, directly and indirectly, in large and small   
ways. It can be physical, intellectual, sensory and/or psychosocial (i.e. arising from a   
person’s mental health experience). It can be temporary or permanent and can occur   
from birth or during a person’s lifetime. Some disabilities are visible, such as people   
using a mobility aid to get around, whereas others are invisible, such as a person   
with a hearing impairment or a form of mental illness. Disability encompasses   
people across all socioeconomic and demographic groups.

Knowing how many people in an area are living with disabilities, as well as their   
characteristics, can improve our understanding of their varying experiences.   
This information helps to foster inclusivity for all by informing planning and provision   
of the supports, services and communities that enable people with disabilities to   
participate fully in everyday life.

In 2018, the diversity of people with disabilities in Australia (4.4 million people)   
included:

* 76.8% who had a physical condition (including arthritis, stroke, acquired brain   
  injury, hearing impairment, vision impairment)
* 29.6% of which had a musculoskeletal condition
* 23.2% who had a mental or behavioural condition
* 7.5% of which had psychoses and mood affective conditions (including   
  stress-related conditions, depression, dementia)
* 6.5% of which had an intellectual and/or developmental condition   
  (including autism spectrum conditions).

Disability prevalence was similar for males (17.6%) and females (17.8%).   
The likelihood of living with disability increases with age, meaning the longer people   
live, the more likely they are to experience some form of disability. In 2018:

* 7.6% of children aged 0–14 years had a disability
* 9.3% of people aged 15–24 years had a disability
* 13% of people aged 15–64 years had a disability
* 50% of people aged 65 years and over a had a disability. (ABS 2019b)

#### Numbers of people living with disability

In Australia, the number of people living with disability is increasing. In 2015,   
4.3 million Australians had a disability. Based on 18% of Australians having a   
disability, that number is estimated to have risen to 4.6 million in 2021 – almost one   
in every six people. While there has been a slight decrease in the disability  
prevalence rate across Australia from 18.5% in 2009, the prevalence rate continues   
to remain relatively stable.

For the Newcastle local government area (LGA), the actual number of Novocastrians   
living with disability is not available through the ABS Census or other sources with currency. However, extrapolating the 18% of the Australian population living   
with disability to the Newcastle LGA suggests an estimated 30,835 Novocastrians   
are living with disability (based on the Newcastle LGA population being 171,307   
in 2021).

#### Level of core activity limitation

Of the 4.6 million Australians who live with disability, 88.5% or nearly 4.1 million   
people have a limitation on the core activities of communication, mobility or self-care,   
and/or a schooling or employment restriction. Of the total Australian population, it is   
estimated that:

* 5.8% have a ‘profound or severe core activity limitation’
* 8.5% have a ‘moderate or mild core activity limitation’
* 1.4% have a ‘schooling or employment restriction’.

In the Newcastle LGA, available data from 2016 estimates 9,100 people had ‘profound or severe core activity limitation’ (5.9% of 155,411 LGA residents –   
this rate is slightly higher than the Australian rate of 5.8% and the NSW rate   
of 5.4%). Of these Novocastrians, 4,174 were male (45%) and 5,024 were   
female (55%). For these figures, core activity limitation is defined as ‘needing help or   
assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and   
communication, because of a long-term health condition (lasting six months or   
more), a disability (lasting six months or more), or ‘old age’. (Note: this definition is   
narrower than the earlier listed definition.)

In addition, just over 8,500 people (5.5%) in the Newcastle LGA in 2016 did not   
state whether or not they had a ‘profound or severe core activity limitation   
(needing assistance with core activities)’, so it is possible that the actual number   
and proportion of people with disabilities who have profound or severe core activity   
limitation is higher than stated above. Since numbers of those living with disability   
who have ‘moderate or mild core activity limitation’ are not available at the local   
level, it is possible those numbers could be equal to or greater than those with   
profound or severe core activity limitation in the Newcastle LGA.

#### Carers and support needs

* Of the Australian population (aged 15 years and older), 2.7 million people are   
  carers providing informal or unpaid assistance to family members or others   
  because of a disability, long-term health condition or problems related to old   
  age. Of this 2.7 million people, 15,600 live in the Newcastle LGA (2016).   
  For Newcastle, this represents 12% of the population over 15 years of age,   
  compared to the Australian rate of 11.6% and the NSW rate of 12%.
* In the Newcastle LGA in 2016, just over 10,000 people (aged 15 years and   
  over; 8%) did not state whether or not they ‘provided unpaid assistance’,   
  so the actual number and proportion of carers in the LGA could be higher   
  than that recorded. Also, there is limited information capturing figures for   
  young carers (under the age of 15 years) across the LGA.
* Of the people who ‘provide unpaid assistance’ in the Newcastle LGA over   
  the age of 15 years, females are more likely to be carers (59%) than males   
  (41%).
* In Australia (2018), 37.4% of primary carers to someone with a disability   
  have a disability themselves, compared to 15.3% of non-carers who   
  have a disability.
* Approximately 60% of people with disabilities need assistance with at least   
  one activity in daily life.
* As of 2020, 400,000 Australians are supported by the NDIS.
* Approximately 230,000 people under the age of 65 receive services under   
  the National Disability Agreement.

#### Employment of people with disabilities

* 53% of people with disabilities participate in the workforce, compared with 83% of people with no reported disability (AIH&W 2020).
* The weekly median income of people with disabilities is $465 – less than half that of people with no reported disability.
* Graduates with disabilities take 61.5% longer to gain full-time employment than other graduates.
* Almost one in five (18.9%) people with disabilities aged 15–24 years experienced discrimination. In almost half of those instances, the source of discrimination is an employer.
* 34% of people with disabilities are managers and professionals.
* The unemployment rate for people with disabilities in NSW increased from   
  8.2% in 2015 to 10.2% in 2018. In contrast, the unemployment rate for people   
  without disabilities decreased from 4.8% in 2015 to 4.2% in 2018.

#### Disability inclusivity

A 2017 Australian Human Rights Commission report identified that:

* 36% of people with disabilities are often treated less favourably than   
  customers without a disability
* 28% of people with disabilities experienced discrimination by one or more of the organisations they had recently interacted with
* One in three people with disabilities report that their customer needs   
  are often unmet
* 31% of people with disabilities have avoided situations because of   
  their disabilities.

#### A snapshot of people with lived experience of disability in Newcastle

**Estimates of the number of people living with disability**

People with profound or severe disability in Newcastle LGA in 2016[[1]](#footnote-1):

* 9,197 people (or 5.9% of the population) had a ‘profound or severe disability,   
  defined as people “needing help or assistance in one or more of the three   
  core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a   
  disability, long term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age”   
  (NSW = 5.4%)
* An additional 8,549 (5.5% of population) did not state whether or not they   
  had a need for assistance
* Had increased 2.1% since 2011.

A disability is any condition that restricts a person’s mental, sensory or mobility   
functions. Almost 90% of disabilities are not visible.

The likelihood of living with disability increases with age.

* 31% of 55-64-year olds are living with disability.
* Almost 9 in 10 people aged 90 and over (88%) have a disability

**17%** of the NSW population had a ‘reported disability’ in 2018[[2]](#footnote-2), as opposed to 5.4% being recorded as ‘requiring assistance’ in the 2016 Census – suggesting that the number of people with disability in Newcastle may be higher.

In June 2020[[3]](#footnote-3), there were **7,542 people** receiving the Disability Support pension in the Newcastle LGA, being 6.8% of people aged 16 to 64 years (NSW=6.4%). This has decreased since June 2017, when there were 8,385 or 7.8% (NSW=5.3%)

In Australia in 2018[[4]](#footnote-4) of people living with disability:

* **77%** reported a physical disorder as their main condition, the most common being a musculoskeletal disorder **(30%)**
* **23%** reported a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition.

#### Where do people with disability live?

In Newcastle LGA in 2016[[5]](#footnote-5):

* Stockton – Fullerton Cove SA2 had the highest proportion of people   
  ‘needing assistance’ (16%) followed by Wallsend – Elermore Vale (8.3%)   
  and Beresfield – Hexham (7.8%). In total, these 3 areas accounted for   
  2,687 people.

#### Age

In Newcastle LGA in 2016[[6]](#footnote-6):

* 74% of people who required assistance were aged 45 years and over   
  (NSW=77%)
* 35% were 75 years and over (NSW=39%)
* The largest age bracket was for 85 years and over (19%)
* Only 12% were under 20 years of age.

Although there was a 5% increase in the number of people needing assistance   
from 2011 to 2016 (compared to 4.6% growth in the general population), there were marked differences in changes in various age groups:

* younger people between 5 and 34 years = 31 to 38% increase
* older people = decreases of up to 19% (75-84 years).

#### Income

In the Newcastle LGA in 2016[[7]](#footnote-7):

* Only 21% of people ‘requiring assistance’ had a weekly personal income of $650 or more, compared to 60% of people not requiring assistance
* The most represented income brackets for people ‘requiring ‘assistance’ were between $300-$500 per week – at 44%, compared to 18% of people not requiring assistance
* The proportion of people requiring assistance who did not state their income was 15%, compared with only 2% of people not requiring assistance.

#### Employment and labour force participation

In the Newcastle LGA in 2016, of people over 15 years who needed assistance with core activities[[8]](#footnote-8):

* 88% were not in the labour force   
  (31% for people who have no need for assistance)
* 9.6% were employed (713 people)   
  (63.6% for people who had no need for assistance)
* Unemployment rate was 17.7% (7.3% for people who had no need for   
  assistance) – 60 were looking for full-time work and 93 for part-time work

#### Education level

In the Newcastle LGA in 2016, of people who needed assistance with   
core activities[[9]](#footnote-9):

* 25.7% had a secondary education of Year 9 or below   
  (7.8% for people who did not require assistance)
* 4.9% had a Bachelor degree   
  (18.2% for people who did not require assistance)
* 1.2% had a Postgraduate degree   
  (5.6% for people who did not require assistance)
* 23% did not state or adequately describe their educational level   
  (6.5% of people who did not require assistance)

A summary sheet of ‘Demographic analysis to inform Newcastle City Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan prepared by   
Jan Fallding, May 2021

NB:

* SA = Statistical area (geographical area used in Population Census)
* All references unless specified are: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census: data for Newcastle LGA

#### Economic benefit of universally accessible businesses and employing people with disabilities

Cities are enhanced when everyone can actively participate in social and   
economic life. Improving accessibility and inclusion of a city can attract domestic   
and international tourism. The ageing population of Australia also indicates that   
there will be a higher demand for accessible tourism, as the prevalence of disability   
increases with age.

Economic analysis by Monash University indicates that retail environments   
with universal accessibility can have a 20–25% higher turnover when compared to   
non- accessible environments. In 2019, PwC Australia identified that the annual disposable income of people living with disability is $40 billion, and that there   
is potential for a $4 billion increase in retail revenue by designing better   
products and services.

Regarding employment, research has shown that 89% of organisations that employ   
people with disabilities identify positive benefits, 61% report increased workplace   
morale, 49% indicate an increased ability to fill skill gaps and 42% report   
increased productivity.

Of employees with disabilities, 90% record productivity rates equal to or greater than   
other workers and 86% have average or superior attendance records.

‘Australia’s future prosperity depends on our ability to include people who bring difference in all its many dimensions to our national endeavours.’

**Professor Ian Harper, Dean of Melbourne Business School**

## Our strategic approach

With the introduction of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, it became a   
mandatory requirement for local government authorities to have a DIAP.   
CN was the first council in NSW to adopt its mandatory DIAP, developing our   
plan a year earlier than required. Our first DIAP defined how we would undertake   
specific actions to reduce potential barriers faced by people with disabilities when   
living in, working in and visiting our LGA.

CN’s initial DIAP was aligned with the NSW Government’s Disability Inclusion Plan   
2016. Its aim was to remove barriers within systems and attitudes to give people   
with disabilities a better opportunity to live a meaningful life and enjoy the full   
benefits of membership in the community. This is achieved not only by actions   
within our organisation, but also by actions and collaboration focussed on the   
broader community.  
The four key focus areas of our previous DIAP and this Draft DIAP are aligned with the NSWDIP:

* Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
* Creating liveable communities
* Supporting access to meaningful employment
* Improving access to mainstream services through better   
  systems and processes.

The initial DIAP (2016–2019) had 18 strategies with 57 actions. Over the life of the   
plan, we learnt that it was broad and ambitious, and could be improved be being:

* More specific on internal delivery responsibilities and drivers
* More effectively implemented through broader
* Better measured, monitored and reported on.

### Our Progress

The initial DIAP achieved significant progress in multiple areas across the   
organisation. In total, 55 of the 57 actions have been completed or progressed   
towards completion, while two have been reconsidered and will be achieved by   
means other than the DIAP.

Some highlights of the initial DIAP include:

* Establishing the Access Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC),   
  whose members include people with lived experience of disabilities, carers,   
  disability services sector employees and other disability advocates.
* The Count Us In Newcastle program, a month-long program of events and activities focussed on disability inclusion and increased engagement with the broader community
* Installation of accessible adult lift and change facilities at Nobbys Beach and   
  Newcastle Museum, and an audit of other potential locations for these   
  higher-level facilities
* Inclusion of people with lived experience of disabilities in co-design of   
  specific projects and programs, e.g. Stevenson Park, Foreshore Park,   
  Newcastle Ocean Baths
* Incorporating inclusive design and consultation in our Local Centres Upgrade Program, to achieve accessibility improvements
* Inclusion of accessible activities in events e.g. implementation of sensory zones at New Year’s Eve celebrations
* Training of external event organisers on how to run inclusive events, and encouragement to plan accessible activities and provide access information
* Staff training on disability awareness and creating more accessible content, programs and built environments
* Delivery of new and improved infrastructure in the public domain, including accessible and inclusive playground features
* Facilities improvements, e.g. the introduction of wedge mats for better   
  seating options at Civic Theatre for wheelchair users; improved access to   
  City Hall via automatic doors
* Improvement in program planning and inclusive customer service delivery   
  at CN facilities including Newcastle Art Gallery, Libraries, Newcastle Museum   
  and Civic Theatre
* Data sharing to assist with better orientation and mobility across the city
* Publishing of online mapping of accessible parking and other features
* Development of an Inclusive Sports and Cultural Activities Guide
* Increase in accessible-format CN documents available in hard copy   
  and online.

### Our Role 2022–2026

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by local councils as part of the NSW Integrated Planning   
and Reporting Framework. It identifies the main priorities and aspirations of our   
community and provides a clear set of strategic directions to achieve the   
community’s vision with a 10-year horizon. CN is currently reviewing our Newcastle 2030 CSP and working towards developing our next CSP, Newcastle 2040.

A guiding principle of the Newcastle 2030 CSP is ‘consider social justice principles of   
equity, access, participation and rights’. The development of the DIAP 2022–2026   
demonstrates how we are aiming to deliver on the above social justice principles as   
they relate to disability inclusion within our community.

Many of the ways we deliver on social outcomes are outlined via our CSP.   
However, the DIAP specifically outlines our various roles in creating a more disability-friendly community. Our DIAP actions are focussed on how we will act   
as an organisation internally over the next four years, and on what we hope to   
achieve in the wider community.

CN will undertake a range of roles in delivering positive outcomes for the community, including the following:

We will **collaborate** with State and Federal Governments, community-based organisations and the business community, ensuring our collective efforts are aligned and targeted to achieve the greatest outcomes. We will aim to add value   
to each other’s programs and projects for the benefit of our community.

We will **advocate**, where necessary and appropriate, to improve access to   
services and achieve positive social outcomes related to disability service   
provision and inclusion.

We will **provide** facilities, grants, services and programs that enhance and maintain the social, cultural, health and recreational needs of our community.

We will **lead** on key community issues, mobilise allies as needed, bring together   
partners, and facilitate and negotiate for our community. We will enable our   
community to deliver equity for all its members through communication,   
planning, research and strategy.

We will be a **capacity builder**, facilitating local responses to identified needs.   
We will build capacity within the community for people to connect and support each   
other, reducing isolation and enhancing a sense of belonging.

We will **demonstrate** co-design principles, support evidence-based approaches, mentor and encourage innovation, and offer grants and/or support to   
community responses.

We will **build** more liveable places and spaces, accessible buildings, amenities and other infrastructure that caters to an ageing and diverse population.

We acknowledge the diversity within disability and **engage** with people with lived experience to inform our services and the development of solutions. For example, regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, we will listen to community, our Access Inclusion Advisory Committee, Guraki Aboriginal Advisory Committee and others to better deliver outcomes.

### Monitoring and evaluation

CN reports to the community on the progress of implementing the DIAP via   
our Annual Report. NSW Government legislation also requires local governments   
to submit an annual update on the progress of their DIAPs to the NSW   
Disability Council.

The AIAC was established as part of our inaugural DIAP. Through regular meetings,   
the AIAC shapes and advises on the development, implementation and monitoring   
of the DIAP. The AIAC’s members include people with lived experience of disability,   
carers, disability service providers, disability advocates and councillor   
representatives. The committee provides CN staff with the unique opportunity   
to enhance delivery through insight from highly relevant stakeholders.

The actions identified in this DIAP should not be seen as the only actions CN   
is undertaking, or will undertake, to promote a more inclusive community between   
2022–2026. However, the plan indicates identified priorities and actions formulated in response to research as well as internal and community consultation.

## Our collaboration

In developing this DIAP, CN has undertaken the following research, consultation and engagement activities:

* Engaged a demographer to research the profile of disability across the city,   
  including consideration of intersectional factors
* Reviewed the previous DIAP and implementation reports
* Reviewed other relevant literature, including the Sax Institute review of the   
  NSWDIP 2018
* Conducted internal stakeholder engagement with all directorates of CN
* Conducted external stakeholder engagement and activities as  
   indicated below:

Online Survey & Have Your Say

Initial consultation was undertaken in late 2019, including an online survey where 106 people participated. The highest three postcode responses were from 2300,   
2303 and 2304.

A simplified form was also available on the CN Have Your Say website to broaden opportunity for comment.

In-Person Sessions

In November and December 2019, three community workshops were facilitated by CN and an external engagement specialist, with 29 people attending.

Drop-in Sessions were also hosted at Wallsend Library and Newcastle Library on four separate occasions in November and December 2019 to encourage community members to drop in and make comments.

Theme Consolidation Session

Initially delayed by COVID-19, this session was held in December 2020 at Newcastle Museum with a focus group of 12 people.

Engagement Promotion

Opportunity to be involved with the development of the DIAP was promoted   
across print media advertising, printed materials, radio advertising, email, online newsletters, social media advertising, and social media posts on Facebook,   
Twitter and LinkedIn.

Co Design with AIAC of engagement activities

The AIAC were consulted on the design of engagement activities throughout the   
consultation journey and were often in attendance as participants of face to face   
and virtual sessions.

**Public Exhibition Feedback**

The draft DIAP was on public exhibition between 24 November 2021 and 10 January 2022. Multiple formats of the draft were produced including accessible pdf, word only and easy read. Key communications activities included a dedicated Have Your Say page, flyers and displays, paid social media posts, newsletter articles,

a memo for councillors, and coverage in local media outlets.

Twenty people provided feedback during the public exhibition period. Whilst there was general support of the plan improvements suggested included, clearer and more tangible outputs, improved infrastructure and access (parking, pathways, signage), proposed budget and timing improvements, ongoing collaboration with

people with disabilities, including first nations peoples, disability awareness training enhancements, alignment of efforts with other stakeholders, and delivering greater employment outcomes.

Review of the suggestions indicated that the majority are within the 35 actions already identified in the Plan, however there is a desire to see them delivered earlier or more specifically identified.

Key Messages from Engagement: What you told us

**The key message across engagement is that we have made progress as a community, but there is still more to be done.**

This is some of what you told us:

* CN could more broadly promote accessibility improvements to communicate the value of universal access for the whole community.
* Tailored communication towards people with disabilities could build community confidence and improve the understanding of progress being made on disability inclusion.
* Many people with disabilities experience a level of inequality in areas such as recognition, treatment with dignity and respect, appreciation of diversity, and access to economic opportunities, information, resources and employment.
* Public domain planning needs to routinely include engagement with and consideration of the diversity of disabilities and the realisation of public spaces and infrastructure which accommodate all people, including accessible parking and toilets.
* Access to information could be improved – such as accessible print formats and use of Australian Sign Language (Auslan).
* Planning of engagement activities, events and programming should routinely include consideration of accessibility and inclusion.
* A higher profile of the AIAC should be supported.
* CN should aim to be a leader, advocate, capacity builder, business leader and employer of choice for people with disabilities, as well as a provider of inclusive volunteer opportunities.
* Access to social, recreational and cultural opportunities could be improved.
* Transport and access could be improved.
* Opportunity to work with industry to develop and promote inclusive   
  tourism product.
* More diversity of disabilities should be represented in CN publications.
* People with disabilities should be supported to be business   
  owners/entrepreneurs.
* People with disabilities should be considered during natural disasters   
  and emergencies.
* There should be more accountability for delivery and improvement of   
  accessibility and inclusion.

Our Focus Areas

### Attitudes and behaviours

In 2020, the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health released a   
report based on a national survey of community attitudes towards people with   
disabilities in Australia. This report confirms why addressing attitudes and   
behaviours is so important in creating a more inclusive community.

‘Attitudes can have a significant impact on the lives of people with disability. Attitudes are related to disability-based discrimination and social exclusion, which in turn impact the health and wellbeing of people with disability.’

In preparing the DIAP, CN collected comments through local consultation.   
These comments identified that many people with disabilities in our community   
experience inequality in areas such as recognition, treatment with dignity and   
respect, customer experience, and access to information, resources, economic   
opportunities and employment.

The above factors reinforce why this DIAP includes actions aimed at addressing   
attitudes and behaviours across our organisation and the wider community.

In our 2020 DIAP Consultation Report, we asked, ‘What can we do to help build positive attitudes both within CN and the broader community?’

The top three responses to this question were:

* More inclusive and accessible events and spaces where all people can participate equitably
* Consult with people who have lived experience
* More public awareness and education.

#### Progress example

At the request of the AIAC, CN developed a three year ‘Count Us In Newcastle’ program as a way to demonstrate the contribution that people with disabilities   
make to the community. Instead of a one-day event on 3 December each year on the International Day of People with Disability, ‘Count Us In’ is a month-long program   
including disability awareness training, cultural and arts events, inclusive sports   
and games, and a range of other events to highlight inclusion.

Count Us In Newcastle was held in 2019 and 2021, with the 2020 program being   
impacted by COVID-19. In 2021, 43 events were hosted, with nearly 1,000 people   
attending a wide range of activities. This included CN supporting the NSW Sports   
Inclusion Day at Newcastle Basketball Stadium, where 300 children participated in   
10 different sports. The Count Us In Newcastle program was diverse, with everything   
from sessions on Guide Dog etiquette and improving customer service to events   
including a karaoke night, self-defence and art classes, accessible fishing at the   
wetlands, and salsa and Zumba dance lessons.

#### Learning example

As a result of asking the community for ideas for the Count Us In program   
through an expression-of-interest process, 17 partnerships were formed and   
a broader range of events was included in the program. Many of these events   
were delivered by people with disabilities.

#### Community outcome

Training and events are delivered by people with disabilities, enhancing   
understanding of their contribution to the community.

Staff are better equipped to deliver services in a disability-confident manner.

Opportunities for people without disabilities to engage with people with disabilities   
enhances understanding for all, builds networks and provides positive experiences.

### Liveable communities

The NSW Government defines ‘liveable communities’ as places where people   
have the opportunity to exercise their rights to live, learn, work and play, to feel safe,   
to belong, to raise a family and to grow old. People with disabilities can experience   
fewer opportunities to engage with their community as a result of various barriers –   
constructed barriers in the built environment, as well as barriers to accessing   
transport, housing or other local services and supports.

Creating liveable communities is about more than just increasing physical   
accessibility. It is about creating opportunities for social participation, improving the   
quality of personal and commercial interactions, and ensuring equivalent access to   
information in various formats and platforms.

Liveable communities:

* Enhance personal independence
* Enable people with disabilities to live in the community instead of an   
  institutional setting
* Provide opportunities for people of all ages, ability levels and backgrounds to   
  engage fully in civic, economic and social life.

In its 2019 report, The Benefit of Designing for Everyone, the Centre for Inclusive   
Design acknowledges that design that embraces diversity maximises widespread   
access and usability. Both individuals and organisations benefit from making   
inclusive design a standard practice. Inclusive design should be used at the   
beginning of the design process, as the cost to implement inclusive design   
increases the later it is introduced.

The challenge for CN is to make sure our public spaces, facilities, information and services are inclusive and accessible for all. This makes our city more attractive   
not only to residents but to visitors and tourists, improving our reputation as an   
inclusive community.

These factors reinforce why liveable communities are so vital to people with   
disabilities and the community as a whole. The actions below state how we aim   
to address these factors over the next four years.

#### Progress example

As CN upgrades various Local Centres, inclusive design and delivery has seen significant improvements for accessibility. Some of the features that improve liveability in these Local Centres include examples such as choice of pavement material, creation of continuous pathways of travel, increased pathway widths, street furniture that supports people across the life span, accessible water fountains, improved accessible parking, safer crossings, and improved entry levels to premises.

CN has been implementing more inclusive play features and designs into our parks and playgrounds. Opportunities to encourage play for all children are important. Instead of developing separate play areas, prioritising inclusive features and   
design promotes greater interaction between people with disabilities and people   
without disabilities.

Blackbutt Reserve, Brickworks Park and Stevenson Park are just a few examples.

#### Learning example

CN makes significant investment in Local Centres, playgrounds and parks.   
It is more difficult to retrofit these locations during upgrades, meaning that consideration of ways to ‘hub’ features together to increase connectivity is vital –   
good design leads to savings in the longer term. It is equally important to listen to   
people with lived experience of disabilities so that the principles of co-design can be   
put into practice. This was demonstrated in CN’s collaboration with Variety Australia,   
the Children’s Charity, on the design of Foreshore Park.

#### Community outcome

A current average of $7 million is being spent each year on Local Centres upgrades, which include significant access improvements.

Maximum benefit for the community is obtained by focussing on improving access in Local Centres, and by delivering improvements in multiple locations across the LGA where people meet and do their daily tasks.

Making local communities accessible promotes independence and dignity for all community members.

Providing inclusive play equipment and playgrounds allows for people of all abilities to play together and encourages intergenerational play.

### Employment

Access to meaningful employment for people with disabilities has a significant impact on health outcomes and socioeconomic circumstances. People with disabilities have lower personal incomes and are twice as likely to be unemployed as people without disabilities. With an ageing population, Newcastle and Australia can expect to have more people with disabilities within the workforce in the future.

Disability inclusiveness within employment has been shown to lead to:

* Increased levels of engagement and productivity
* Better workplace morale
* Diversity in problem-solving approaches
* Enhanced teamwork
* Reduced absenteeism
* Opportunities to learn about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities firsthand.

Employment opportunities contribute to a sense of self-empowerment and identity for people with disabilities. This can lead to positive health outcomes for the individual, as well as a potentially decreased reliance on social services, which has greater economic impacts.

In its 2019 review of the NSWDIP and sample DIAPs from across NSW,   
the Sax Institute identified that one effective measure to improve employment of people with disabilities within an organisation was the establishment of a Disability Employment Network (DEN). These networks are voluntary workplace groups comprised of employees with disability, employees with carer responsibilities and employees with an interest in disability inclusion.

Through local consultation, the following actions were suggested to address employment barriers (top three response themes):

* Awareness, support and education for employers (29%)
* Increase flexible working hours (16%)
* Hire more people with disabilities (16%).

Additional suggestions included more training programs for people with disabilities, as well as incentives for businesses to employ people with disabilities, advertise targeted positions, provide more accessible parking and implement supportive workplace policies.

#### Progress example

The inaugural DIAP identified that staff training on disability awareness could be enhanced. In 2016 and 2018, diverse programs of disability-related training were offered to staff, ranging from training in technical skills (such as conducting a building access audit) to creating accessible online content, delivering accessible events, improving access in libraries, museums and galleries, and implementing universal access in outdoor design. In total, 250 staff took part in these activities.

In 2019 and 2021, Count Us In Newcastle also offered and delivered opportunities for staff and some community members to take part in our training efforts, building on our desire to ensure Newcastle is an inclusive city to reside in, work in or visit.

Moving forward, CN will continue to develop our capacity to enhance diversity. We are currently developing an internal plan on diversity and inclusion, which will be led by our People and Culture directorate and will further build on our DIAP progress.

#### Learning example

Cultural change takes time, both in a community sense and within an organisation. Significant and ongoing effort is required to listen effectively to people with disabilities about how to improve employment and deliver more inclusive programs and services, but this process can yield benefits for the whole community. Every dollar spent on ensuring more people with disabilities are in employment returns great value to the community and the individual.

Our developing Diversity and Inclusion Plan will guide us internally on this journey to ensure we increase the employment percentage of people with disabilities at CN. Our DIAP actions will also support our efforts to promote employment of people with disabilities within the broader community.

#### Community outcome

Auslan training for staff in 2021/2022

Will help prepare our city for the National Deaf Games in April 2022 and promote the message that CN is a disability-friendly place to work.

Staff training via Guide Dogs NSW helps our customer-facing staff better understand how to provide services for people with low or no vision and helps create a more disability-friendly workforce.

Count Us In Newcastle provided employment opportunities for people with disabilities to show their job-readiness and skills.

CN’s support of various Community Disability Alliance Hunter programs and Challenge Community Services’ Start Up Program has promoted entrepreneurial opportunities and peer support employment projects.

CN’s support of the National Innovation Games in 2021 focussed on disability inclusion.

Amplify Access & Achieve Purposeful Profit, a NewSkills program for the business community, demonstrates CN’s commitment to business and employment opportunities.

### Systems and processes

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

CN will continuously act to improve our systems and processes, enabling easier access to information, services and activities. We will actively encourage people with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of citizenship by providing equitable access to mainstream services.

Community feedback has identified that progress is being made to improve access to CN facilities and services. The community acknowledged Libraries, the Civic Theatre and Newcastle Museum have become more inclusive in their understanding, design and delivery of services. Examples include the trial of an orientation app, improved access within buildings, floor wedges for the Civic Theatre, automatic doors in City Hall, specific tours and programs, enhancement of staff skills, removal of high counters, and a better understanding of both the diversity of disabilities and the customer journey for people with disabilities.

Another highlight from the last four years has been the implementation of the AIAC. Feedback from Committee members indicates the group provided opportunities for engagement and direct access to both elected Council, CN staff and organisational processes for people with disabilities.

DIAP consultation identified the following:

* Web content accessibility and document production is improving, however   
  the number of documents available in alternative formats could increase,   
  e.g., Easy Read, large print, Word only and accessible PDF
* Engagement activities and communication processes have improved; however the continued use of interpreters and captions is vital.
* Event planning and delivery has improved, resulting in more inclusive events.
* Programs like Count Us In highlight staff disability considerations in   
  service delivery.
* A commitment to increasing disability awareness training is evident.
* Co-design with stakeholders on key projects.
* Services like the Library Home Delivery service and the Bin Assistance program offered by Waste Services require increased promotion.
* A strong past focus has been on physical access considerations. A better understanding of the diversity of disabilities can make systems and processes more inclusive, supporting those with hidden disabilities.

CN will continue to actively engage with people with disabilities, their families, carers and significant others to enhance access to mainstream services. We will also work with peak bodies and advocates to better understand how we can improve.   
Our actions on page 42 outline next steps.

#### Progress example

Accessible Content/Website Accessibility

CN distributes a high volume of collateral every year, as well as documents   
and forms that assist us and the community in the delivery of services. Whether it is   
information about what’s on in Newcastle, community engagement that is underway,   
new building projects, or media releases, our communications are legally required   
to be provided in an inclusive way, available in alternative formats for people   
with disabilities.

CN audited our web content and determined that improvements can be made to comply with accessibility requirements. We implemented a monitoring tool to also assist with this task. We are committed to achieving Web Content Accessibility   
Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA compliance.

Over the last four years, CN has implemented staff training sessions about creating accessible content online and in hard copy. We continue to enhance the accessibility of our information for our community.

Being able to produce accessible content ensures that we encourage people with disabilities to come to events, visit our city, start their own business or undertake another economic activity, participate in the democratic process, or socialise in one of our venues.

#### Learning example

The creation of inclusive content cannot be localised to one team or service unit.   
CN has many touchpoints with the community, and at times via third parties through grants. This requires an understanding of the maxim: inclusion is everybody’s   
business. Content producers at CN will continue to enhance their skills and   
understanding of alternative formats, improve knowledge of mandatory   
requirements, and undergo training to facilitate improved delivery.  
 In addition, information about how and where to access alternative formats will be promoted more broadly to increase community engagement with local government processes. We need to talk more with the community about alternate formats.

#### Community outcome

The DIAP is produced in multiple formats including Easy Read, Word only and accessible PDF. Other strategic documents are also produced in multiple formats. CN utilises current and emerging platforms to reach our audience and will continue to enhance the provision of accessible information for our customers.

CN’s Customer Experience Service Unit works to continually improve the customer experience focus of the organisation through process improvement. This is delivered primarily via the Customer Service Centre and the Customer Experience Strategy,   
though all service units have a role in delivering inclusive content for our customers.

## References and Key Documents

Attitudes Matter: Findings from a national survey of community attitudes toward people with disability in Australia. Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health, The University of Melbourne. Bollier AM, Sutherland G, Krnjacki L, Kasidis V, Katsikis G, Ozge J & Kavanagh AM. (2021).

City of Newcastle Disability Demographic Analysis by Jan Fallding (2020)

Disability Statistics Australian Network on Disability, cited May 2021 https[://www](http://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html).[and.](http://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html)or[g.au/pages/disability-statistics.html](http://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html)

Disability support services: services provided under the National Disability Agreement 2018–19, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Bulletin 149 (2020)

Good Access is Good Business (2012) Monash University for City of Melbourne

.idcommunity Forecast.id (2021) <https://forecast.id.com.au/newcastle>

Missing out: The business case for customer diversity 2017, Deliotte for Australian Human Rights Commission National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 (2011)

Newcastle Local Housing Strategy (2020)

NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014)

People in Australia with Disability, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020)

Sax Institute Review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2018 – Final Report (2019)

Statement of Continued Commitment: National Disability Strategy (2020)

The Benefits of Designing for Everyone (May 2019) Prepared by PwC Australia for Centre for Inclusive Design

The economic benefits of improving social inclusion, Deloitte Access Economics (2019)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

## Action Plan

Focus Area 1: Attitudes and Behaviours

City of Newcastle (CN) demonstrates positive attitudes and behaviours regarding disability inclusion across all aspects of our   
organisation and acts to facilitate positive attitudes and behaviours throughout the community.

#### Objective 1: Demonstrate leadership in public programming.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Develop and deliver  programming that  promotes or enhances  attitudes and behaviours related to  disability inclusion  and reflects the  diversity of disabilities. | CN delivers and supports  programs that enhance positive  attitudes and behaviours and  are accessible and inclusive. | City Wide Services | Annually | Program  enhancements/additions  Numerical reach of  programs  People with disabilities delivering, creating,  co-designing, and  participating in programs  Programs include an  accessibility and inclusion statement/information. |

#### Objective 2: Improve CN’s visual representation of people with disabilities in content, promoting abilities and participation in all aspects of life, including employment at CN.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2. Use content that  includes people with  disabilities when  representing/depicting  the community. | Incorporation of people with  disability into photography  brief where possible  City wide stock-photography  shoot undertaken to include  people with disability  Positive images of people with  disabilities are regularly  represented in CN publications  and content  Increased awareness of  disabilities across content  producers and the community  Increased representation of  staff with disabilities  Improved stock of images  representing diversity. | Strategy and  Engagement | Year 3 to 4 | Images used include  people with disabilities  at a minimum of 5%  Year-on-year  improvement. |

#### Objective 3: Equip CN staff with knowledge and skills to demonstrate appropriate attitudes and behaviours regarding disability inclusion.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3. Enhance disability  awareness component within staff  induction process. | Via induction, all new staff  complete an introduction to  disability awareness and  understand CN’s legislated  responsibility and commitment  to disability inclusion. | People and Culture | Year 1 to 2 | Enhancement of  disability awareness  within staff  induction process. |
| 4. Deliver and promote  staff opportunities for  disability awareness  training and specialist  skills development  training related to  disability inclusion on  an annual basis. | All staff have the opportunity to  undertake disability awareness  training and specialist training  related to their role, and are  accessing this training  Knowledge and skills are  enhanced, improving  customer experience  Staff are trained on accessible  content development (including  online content) and differentiated  accessible formats of publications. | People and Culture | Annually | Number and percentage of staff undertaking  disability awareness  and specialist training  by directorate  per annum  Range of training provided  Percentage of training provided by people with lived experience of disabilities. |
| 5. Facilitate Access  Inclusion Advisory  Committee (AIAC). | Members of the AIAC, CN staff  and councillors meet regularly to discuss implementation of the  DIAP and other disability  inclusion-related matters  People with disabilities, carers and  significant others, and disability  advocates and service providers, including people from CALD and ATSI communities are engaged with local government and enhance service provision. | Strategy and  Engagement | Annually | AIAC meets a minimum  of 4 times a year  Attendance at meetings  by members including  councillors and senior  management  Range of projects  brought to AIAC for  consultation and advice. |

#### Objective 4: Improve promotion of CN programs and services to better inform internal and external stakeholders about continuous improvement in access and inclusion.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 6. Promote and inform the community and CN staff about access and inclusion improvements, utilising internal and external communication channels. | Staff and community have better information about inclusion deliverables from CN. Universal access benefits are appreciated  for the whole community  Knowledge of improvements enhances community confidence  in access and inclusion  A dedicated communications strategy is developed and implemented, with the primary focus being improvement and achievement in the access and inclusion space. | Strategy and  Engagement | Year 1 to 2 | 10 pieces of content delivered annually,  e.g. NovoNews,  e-newsletters,  media releases,  social media articles. |

Focus Area 2: Liveable Communities

City of Newcastle (CN) acts to create and enhance spaces, infrastructure, experiences, facilities, events, programs, services,   
opportunities, and neighbourhoods, improving liveability for the whole community. CN does this by listening to the community and   
seeking to co-design solutions that enhance health, wellbeing, housing, transport, socialisation, recreation, employment, business   
and other outcomes.

#### Objective 5: Create and contribute to liveable and accessible public places.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7. Continue to improve the accessibility of  the public domain via  renewal programs,  Local Centres  upgrades and new  capital projects. | Public domain spaces and  improvements enhance the  liveability and accessibility of  the city  Increase of accessible shared  pathways; creation of accessible  connectivity hubs; creation of  accessible thresholds and kerb  ramps; improved materiality;  installation of accessible viewing  platforms, Tactile Ground Surface  Indicators (TGSIs),  shade structures, accessible  signage and inclusive  furniture/fittings/play equipment;  improved wayfinding  Exploration and/or creation of innovative inclusion features in public domain such as designated quiet spaces, sensory areas or smart technology  Public domain and recreation infrastructure is accessible;  its design, maintenance and management enables people with disabilities to move through the  city with dignity and independence. | Infrastructure and  Property  City Wide Services | Annually | Access and inclusion  deliverables considered  at concept development  and preliminary design  People with disabilities  and specialist consultants engaged in  co-design/planning of  identified projects  Delivery of improved  access and inclusion in  public spaces. |

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 8. Upgrade accessible parking information resource linked to geospatial data and seek relevant tech solutions to enhance experience for people seeking accessible parking in Newcastle LGA. | Audit/data management system  developed and enacted  Improved accessible  parking information. | Governance  Strategy and  Engagement | Year 1 to 2 | Accessible parking information updated  on web and other  applications  Tech solutions explored to improve access  to accessible parking;  upgraded Easy Park app/other. |
| 9. Deliver accessible  transport-related  infrastructure. | Transport-related infrastructure  is enhanced and maintained,  providing better access. | Governance  Infrastructure and  Property | Annually | Number of  transport-related  upgrades delivered. |
| 10. Identify and deliver  improvements to the  pedestrian network to  facilitate continuous accessible pathways  of travel (CAPT). | People can better access  streetscapes and shared pathways,  and move more safely around  the community. | Governance  Infrastructure and Property  Strategy and  Engagement  Infrastructure and  Property | Annually | Pedestrian network and  walking plan delivered  CAPT improvements  delivered. |

#### Objective 6: Enhance CN assets and facilities to improve access and inclusion outcomes.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 11. Identify and  prioritise asset and  building upgrades  as part of asset management,  service-level planning  and strategic  social infrastructure  provision. | Principles of inclusion and  ageing are considered in  social infrastructure planning for  access purposes  Asset plans use access as a  criterion for service levels  Audits and upgrades are  delivered in a prioritised manner,  improving compliance  and usability. | Strategy and  Engagement  Infrastructure and  Property | Annually | Number of audits conducted  Building upgrades designed  and delivered based on  asset condition annual  inspection results. |
| 12. Explore  opportunities to  increase adult  accessible change  facilities across  the LGA. | More opportunity exists across  the LGA for use of adult lift and  change facilities. | Infrastructure and  Property | Year 3 to 4 | CN delivers two additional lift  and change facilities across  our portfolio. |
| 13. Plan and improve  access to aquatic  services and the  coastal environment  for swimming etc. | People with disabilities and  others have more opportunity  to utilise aquatic and coastal  swimming locations. | City Wide  Services  Infrastructure and  Property | Year 3 to 4 | Number of  enhancements/improvements  in beach and pool  environments made available. |
| 14. Explore and enhance provision of hearing augmentation systems in community facilities and venues owned by CN. | Hearing augmentation systems are increased and promoted in more CN locations, or equivalent access provided  New and emerging technologies are considered. | City Wide Services  Infrastructure and Property | Year 1 to 2 | Number of improvements  delivered. |

#### Objective 7: Advocate for improved access and inclusion outcomes in ‘whole of government’ policy settings.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 15. Prepare submissions;  participate in reviews,  planning and inquiry  opportunities; and  collaborate with  stakeholders to achieve  improved outcomes for  people with disabilities  regarding Transport,  Housing, Health,  Lifelong Learning,  Technology, Social  Connectedness and  Recreational  Opportunities. | People with disabilities are  supported by CN advocacy actions. | Strategy and  Engagement | Annually | Examples of advocacy,  submissions made,  acknowledgement of  submissions,  collaborative stakeholder consultation and planning for submissions. |
| 16. Deliver actions related to accessible, affordable and adaptable housing identified within  the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Implementation Plan. | People with disabilities have better  access to appropriate housing. | Governance | Year 4 | LHS actions monitoring increase in composition of housing stock. |
| 17. Review relevance and currency of DCP controls for universal housing. | Local planning controls  support delivery of housing  stock options for seniors and  people with disabilities. | Governance | Year 2 | DCP Review undertaken |
| 18. Deliver an industry education program advocating for the benefits of adaptable design in all new dwellings. | Better information is obtained about standard of compliance  with Silver Level.  Community is more informed about benefits of adaptable  housing. | Governance  Strategy and Engagement | Year 2 | Education program delivered for  community and  industry stakeholders |

#### Objective 8: Contribute towards programs and services that aim to increase social inclusion and community connections.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 19. Assist Business Improvement Associations (BIAs)  and other stakeholders to identify and improve access to businesses and services. | Increase businesses’ knowledge and ability to deliver accessible and inclusive services and facilities. | Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Assistance provided  to BIAs and other  business leads  Improvements made  Funding/grants allocated  Forums/training delivered. |
| 20. Collaborate with community partners and peak bodies in  a community development model  to improve sport, culture and recreation  outcomes for people  with disabilities. | Newcastle is a city where  people with disabilities are  included in sport, culture and  recreation activities. | Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Activities/promotions  delivered in partnership with community partners  and peak bodies. |
| 21. Deliver and  facilitate more  accessible and  inclusive events. | Events in Newcastle are inclusive for people with disabilities  Event organisers have clear information about how to create inclusive events. | Strategy and  Engagement | Annually | New Annual festival provides lead on accessible event delivery  CN run and sponsored events demonstrate leadership and exemplify continuous improvement in inclusion  Event organisers are provided with information on how to deliver inclusive events. |
| 22. Continue to  include Social  Inclusion as a  grant stream within  Community Grant Funding Program. | Social inclusion is enhanced via grant access  Applications specifically  relating to inclusion of people  with disabilities are received,  with specific emphasis on  encouraging grant applications from disability-related organisations. | Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Number of grants approved  related to Social Inclusion via  acquittals of grants. |
| 23. Leverage new  technologies and  innovative models  to improve liveability for all.  Innovation and Internet of Things (IoT)-related  projects always consider disability  inclusion. | Innovation delivers improvements in access and participation of people with disabilities and does not exacerbate digital divide  Technological and other solutions that help people with disabilities navigate within the public domain  are supported. | Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Examples where innovation has enhanced inclusion  Inclusion-related projects supported/partnerships/collaboration. |

Focus Area 3: Employment

City of Newcastle (CN) values diversity and inclusion in the workplace and acts to promote career opportunities for people with   
disabilities and their carers, both within our organisation and across the community.

#### Objective 9: Lead by example and effectively attract, retain and support a diverse workforce that includes people with disabilities, their carers and their significant others.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 24. Review current recruitment, support  and retention policies and procedures related to inclusive employment  and create a Disability Employment Strategy. | Human Resources Diversity and Inclusion Policies and Procedures are best practice and deliver economic and other benefits to the organisation and community. | People and Culture | Year 1 to 2 | Review conducted  Implementation Plan adopted  Disability Employment Strategy adopted, including a Workplace Adjustment Policy  Managers equipped via training to effectively implement strategy. |

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 25. Implement employment targets and identified positions to enhance percentage of employees with disabilities across the organisation, including in leadership roles. | Number and percentage of people with disabilities employed at CN increases. | People and Culture | Year 1 to 2 | Target set and monitored annually  Identified positions created/filled  Annual percentage increase of employees who identify as having a disability  Recruitment/onboarding includes consideration of candidates’ accessibility and adjustment requirements. Percentage of staff with disabilities in leadership roles. |
| 26. Enhance data collection process of numbers of  staff with disabilities and  develop internal  support/resource/advisory network. | Staff with disabilities are retained and supported. | People and Culture | Year 1 to 2 | Target set and monitored annually  Identified positions created/filled  Annual percentage increase of employees who identify as having a disability  Recruitment/onboarding includes consideration  of candidates’  accessibility and  adjustment requirements. |
| 27. Promote flexible work  arrangements,  carer’s leave, workplace  adjustments, wellness  program/s and other  options to help staff  manage work/life balance. | Staff are well informed of employment flexibility and benefits, helping to retain staff. | People and Culture | Annually | Type and number  of promotions to staff related to disability inclusion. Monitoring  of level of uptake of initiatives/supports. |

#### Objective 10: Enhance employment opportunities across the community.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 28. Support and promote the employment of people with disabilities  across the community, including  entrepreneurial  opportunities. | A higher percentage of  people with disabilities are in employment. | People and Culture  Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Initiatives supported and promoted; partnerships formed; business training delivered  Measurement from inclusive aspects of Economic Development Strategy  Collaboration with the Disability Employment Network, Disability Employment Advisory Group and other external stakeholders. |
| 29. Utilise procurement of goods and services as a way to support enterprises that prioritise employment for people with disabilities. | Staff awareness increased  Data-capture mechanism identified and deployed  Procurement utilised for social and local benefit. | Governance | Annually | Estimate/measurement of annual spend  Examples where CN has supported this action via procurement  Consideration of effectiveness as an action. |
| 30. Provide inclusive volunteering opportunities across the organisation to enhance skills and experience of people with disabilities. | People with disabilities are welcomed as volunteers within CN and contribute and gain employability benefits. | City Wide Services People and Culture | Annually | Measurement of number of volunteers who identify as having disabilities  Examples of reasonable adjustments made for volunteers. |

Focus Area 4: Systems and Processes

City of Newcastle (CN) will continuously act to improve our systems and processes, enabling easier access to information,   
services, and engagement activities and actively encouraging people with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of citizenship.

#### Objective 11: Ensure CN’s information is accessible to all.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 31. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems procured by  CN are considered in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities (staff and community). | People with disabilities have access to online information and services  Procurement and contract processes scope for vendors and products with appropriate skill and capacity  Guidelines specifying CN standards created and deployed with request for quotes (RFQ), tender brief etc. | Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Briefs for new  ICT systems  include accessibility  requirements. |
| 32. CN will towards WCAG 2.1AA. | Web accessibility is enhanced  Principal corporate website audited to monitor progress. | Strategy and Engagement | Year 1 to 2 (audit) | Auditing over time  Progress made towards AA compliance (year on year Improvement) |

#### Objective 12: Ensure Customer Experience (CX) and community engagement processes are accessible and inclusive for all.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 33. Ensure community engagement processes include access and inclusion considerations in planning and delivery. | People with disabilities are equitably represented in engagement activities. | Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Local demographics reflected in percentage of people who identify as having disabilities included in engagement activities |
| 34. Planning and design of CX Processes across the business are to embed access and inclusion considerations. | CX principles framework embeds access consideration where relevant  Staff consider access and inclusion for their area of business in the planning and design phase of new processes  People with disabilities have confidence in dealing with CN, as their needs are at the centre of our consideration. | Strategy and Engagement | Annually | Number of CX process designs completed |

#### Objective 13: Embed access and inclusion considerations in project management and procurement processes.

| **Action** | **Output/Outcome** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe–Target** | **Measure** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 35. Audit existing project management and procurement processes and seek improvements. | Relevant access and inclusion aspects are considered from inception and concept stage  Vendors and consultants have appropriate skills and capabilities  Budget planning adequately scopes for access in design and delivery  Improved project delivery and reduced access retrofitting. | Strategy and Engagement  Governance  Infrastructure and Property | Year 1 to 2 | Audits completed  Recommendations identified/implemented  Level of impact identified. |

[newcastle.nsw.gov.au](https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/home)

1. ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020. Cat No 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Public Health Information Development Unit, Feb 2021 and 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020. Cat No 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. ABS Population Census 2016 using Tablebuilder [↑](#footnote-ref-9)