

10.3.2 Public Exhibition of the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030, including Draft Easy Read Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030

Directorate: Community and Culture

Business Unit: Community and Creative Services

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement for the public exhibition of the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 (**Attachment 1**) and the Draft Easy Read Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 (**Attachment 2**).

Subject to Council endorsement, the draft documents will be publicly exhibited for a period of 28 days, in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Recommendation

That:

- 1. Council endorse to be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days the:**
 - a. Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 (Attachment 1)**
 - b. Draft Easy Read Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 (Attachment 2)**
- 2. If no submissions are received as a result of public exhibition that require further consideration, that Council adopt the above documents, as attached to this report.**

Background

Council is required to undertake disability inclusion action planning under the *NSW Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022 (Act)*.

Under the Act, NSW councils must:

- Have a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) in place by 1 July 2026
- Formally review the new plan by 30 June 2030

- Create the new plan and have it endorsed by Council by 30 June 2031
- Provide the DIAP in formats which are accessible to people with disability.

Council has a long history and commitment to access and inclusion for people with disability in the Shellharbour Local Government Area. At the last Census in 2021, 7.1% or 5,392 people living in Shellharbour reported needing assistance in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This is higher than the state rate of 5.8% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Shellharbour's rate had increased from 6.7% in 2016.

Definition of Disability

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* defines disability as the “long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which, in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

Key focus areas

The Draft DIAP is consistent with the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines for Local Government and encompasses the following four key focus areas:

1. Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability
2. Creating liveable and safer communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence
4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

The Draft DIAP provides a whole of Council approach to effectively plan for and deliver on the diverse needs of people with disability in our community.

These four key focus areas are aimed at creating long-term change and require consistent efforts from government and the wider community.

Community Engagement

To develop this plan, Council organised and coordinated a range of community engagement activities. Each engagement was designed to understand the community's and service providers' thoughts and ideas on the four focus areas of the Plan. The engagement involved a combination of pop-up community engagement sessions across Shellharbour Local Government Area specific for service providers and general community, direct email to key stakeholders, an online survey on Let's Chat and a hard copy survey available at key locations.

The pop-up engagements were open to all members of the community. In line with the NSW DIAP guidelines, Council also targeted groups for consultation

including people with disability, service providers for people with disability, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ communities.

In addition, consultation took place with Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee, Councillors and staff.

Easy Read Document

To allow the DIAP to be accessible and clearly understood by the broad cross section of the community, the Plan has been developed in an Easy Read document, in line with the relevant guidelines. This is a very simplified version that combines simple text and images to communicate the key messages.

The Implementation Plan

A draft internal Implementation Plan has been developed and lists the priorities for Council over the next four years.

Council Implications

FINANCIAL / RESOURCES

The DIAP will be primarily funded through operational and capital budgets. The DIAP recognises financial implications and timeframes will be subject to the annual Operational Plan and budget development process, in addition to external funding opportunities.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY (INCLUDING ADVOCACY, STRATEGIC AND OTHER PLANS)

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022* has made it a legislative requirement that NSW councils develop a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan by 1 July 2026.

Once adopted, a copy of the DIAP will be lodged with the Disability Council of NSW and the progress and implementation reported annually as part of Council's annual reporting requirements.

Council will also lodge the DIAP with the Australian Human Rights Commission. If the DIAP is adopted, this will become a policy position of Council.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The DIAP will support Shellharbour City Council to build a more inclusive, accessible and connected community by reducing barriers to participation for

people with disability, their families and carers.

Through improved access to Council facilities, public spaces, information, programs, events and services across the Shellharbour Local Government Area, the DIAP aims to enhance independence, wellbeing and community participation. Embedding inclusive practices within Council operations and decision-making will strengthen organisational culture, improve service delivery and ensure people with disability can meaningfully engage in civic and community life. These actions will deliver broader benefits for the whole community, supporting equity, social connection and long-term social sustainability in Shellharbour.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Shellharbour City Council is committed to the long-term sustainability of its DIAP by embedding disability inclusion into its integrated planning, service delivery and organisational culture.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Shellharbour City Council is required under the *Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022 (NSW)* to prepare and implement a DIAP that promotes the participation and inclusion of people with disability. The DIAP supports Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* to provide equitable services and facilities and assists in meeting requirements of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* by proactively identifying and addressing barriers to access and participation.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

- Business Risk - Without a strong DIAP, Shellharbour City Council faces business risks including non-compliance with NSW disability legislation and increased complaints or legal exposure.
- Corporate Risk - There is a reputational risk to Council if the DIAP is perceived as inadequately implemented or not delivering measurable outcomes, which may negatively impact community trust and confidence.
- WHS and Public Risk - Implementation of the DIAP presents low WHS and public risk, primarily related to changes in facilities, service delivery and community engagement activities. These risks are mitigated through safe work procedures, accessibility audits, staff training and ongoing consultation to ensure inclusive initiatives enhance safety, access and wellbeing for employees, residents and visitors.
- Delivery Program Risk - There is a risk that actions within the DIAP may not be fully delivered or embedded across Council due to competing priorities,

resource constraints, or limited organisational capability and awareness. This will be monitored and considered throughout the delivery of the Plan.

Link to Community Strategic Plan

This report supports the following objectives, strategies and actions of the Community Strategic Plan:

1.1 We have connected, creative communities embracing our rich cultural history

1.1.2 Plan and investigate opportunities that benefit and respond to our communities needs

1.1.2.01 Enhance liveability, sustainability and connectedness outcomes for our community through data driven and evidence-based planning services that inform and deliver appropriate outcomes for Shellharbour

Previous Council Resolutions

[5 September 2023](#)

Consultation

Internal

Creative Services Manager
Environment Manager
Infrastructure Officer – Programs
Infrastructure Officer – Strategy
Infrastructure Planning Manager
Marketing and Communications Manager
Procurement and Supply Manager
Risk and Internal Audit Manager
Strategic Planning Manager
Team Leader Learning and Development
Team Leader People and Culture Business Partnering
Team Leader Sustainability

External

Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee
KidsWish
Peterborough Public School
TAFE NSW
The Cram Foundation

Political Donations Disclosure

Not Applicable

Options

Option 1:

Council endorse the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 and Draft Easy Read Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 for the purposes of public exhibition.

Option 2:

Council seeks amendments to the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 and/or Draft Easy Read Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 prior to the documents going on public exhibition.

Conclusion

The Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 recognises the leadership role that Council has in the community. It provides a framework to improve access and inclusion across Council's services and facilities. It recognises that a whole of Council approach is required to achieve full inclusion and ensures adherence to the *NSW Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022*.

Attachments

1. Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030
2. Draft Easy Read Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030