

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

2017 - 2021



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

It is a pleasure to present to you Willoughby City Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021.

This plan is a long-term vision with a range of decisive actions that embrace and embody Council's commitment to ensuring a truly inclusive and welcoming Willoughby.

Willoughby is a City of Diversity, a place where we are proud to welcome all people regardless of their religious and spiritual practices, languages and abilities.

As part of this, Council has a longstanding commitment to improving the lives of people with disability, and does so through previous Disability Action Plans, our Access Advisory Committee, and through services and events provided for people with disability.

One in five people have some form of disability. This affects how we plan and design our City and environment, and also how we make our city more socially and economically inclusive.

The new plan highlights practical ways we will create a more inclusive city, and spans the work of all Council departments – from our built environment, to how we communicate and run public events, right down to how we recruit.

The plan will have far reaching benefits, and will see improved access and inclusion for not only people with disability, but also older people, parents with prams, and people with temporary injuries to name a few.

With this plan, Council will continue to recognise the rights of all people and create a better future for everyone.

Cr Gail Giles-Gidney

Mayor, Willoughby City Council

MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER

I am very proud to introduce Council's Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan builds on work already undertaken by Council to improve access and inclusion across the Willoughby Local Government Area.

In 2016 Council provided a number of community consultation activities to identify which Council services were most important to people with disability and how satisfied they were with them. The information received at these consultations has informed the actions of the plan.

Council is committed to improving inclusive practices. The actions in the plan will be embedded in the corporate culture to ensure inclusion is considered in all aspects of Council business. The actions will be reviewed and reported on to ensure the identified outcomes are achieved.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the development of the plan and look forward to hearing about the difference the delivery of the actions has made to people's lives.

Debra Just

General Manager, Willoughby City Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Willoughby Disability Inclusion Plan has been developed after a range of consultations with the community, service providers and Council staff. The plan has been directed by the NSW Disability Inclusion Act, 2014 and supports the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan.

A number of actions have been identified under the four focus areas:

- Liveable Communities,
- Employment,
- Systems and Processes, and
- Attitudes and Behaviours

to ensure a whole of Council approach to improve access and inclusion for people with varying levels of ability. The actions have identified aims, timeframes, responsibilities, evaluation methods and proposed outcomes.

Council commits to aligning the actions to monitoring and reporting systems to ensure they are directly linked to the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. The plan is considered a living document that will be updated with further inclusive actions as the community and staff identify the need.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan respects the general principles of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and is underpinned by the principles which support the United Nations Rights of People with Disabilities 2008.

People with disability have the right to:

- respect for their worth and dignity as individuals
- participate in and contribute to social and economic life and should be supported to develop and enhance their skills and experience
- realise their physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and intellectual capacities
- make decisions that affect their lives (including those involving risk) to the full extent of their capacity to do so and 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
- privacy and confidentiality, unless overriding legislation such as the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, are relevant
- live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- to pursue complaints
- have their changing needs, abilities, strengths and goals respected as they mature

The crucial role of families, carers and other significant persons and people with disability and the importance of preserving relationships with families, carers, and other significant persons, is to be acknowledged and respected.

BACKGROUND

Local government plays a key role in both protecting the rights of people with disability and in promoting the value of diversity and inclusion across the community.

Real diversity is realised when people with disability, including those with physical, intellectual, cognitive and sensory disabilities and those with mental ill health are provided with opportunities inherent in truly inclusive communities. cknowledged and respected.

WILLOUGHBY CITY STRATEGY 2013-2029

Council has a history of respecting, consulting and including people with disability when preparing plans, policies and in programs. The Willoughby City Strategy 2013-2029, is the primary planning framework for Willoughby City, guiding planning and decision-making processes in all areas of activity and service. The strategy was developed following extensive community engagement.

Council's adopted "vision" is a guiding statement that describes what we want Willoughby to be as a result of our efforts.

The Willoughby City Strategy 2013-2029 overarching principles are: Sustainability and Social Justice and the six key strategic directions are:

- Community and Cultural Life – Diversity and Spirit, Services and Facilities, Health and Wellbeing
- Natural Environment – Ecosystems and Environmental Health, Sustainable Practices
- Homes – Housing choice, quality and character
- Infrastructure – Efficient Asset Management, Transport and Mobility
- Economic Activity – Sustainable Business Activity
- Governance – Open Government, Community Engagement, Business Efficiency and Service Delivery

The Willoughby City Strategy 2013-2029 includes key strategic directions to achieve a "happy and healthy" community.

A number of the goals focus on inclusive practices:

- all people are involved in our community and supported with respect and integrity
- provide access and mobility for all new development and in the public domain
- support initiatives for older people and people with disability
- deliver, facilitate and advocate home and community care services to support older people and people with disability living in the most appropriate location for them
- accessible open space and recreational facilities for the community are provided
- universally accessible measures are included in all new housing design

The development of the Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan will contribute to the Willoughby City Strategy 2013-2029 and expand the overarching principles to include contemporary inclusive practices in strategic directions and goals.

NATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Australian and NSW Governments are undergoing significant reform processes in the disability sector to commit to a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. The approach provides the focus on the individual and not their disability.

The key policy and legislative instruments informing the reforms are:

- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified by Australia in 2008 and acknowledges that people with disability have the same human rights as those without disability. This commits participating governments to ensure these rights can be exercised and that barriers are removed.
- The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was developed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local Governments. It sets out a national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers to support the commitment made to the United Nations Convention of the Rights Persons with Disabilities.
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme will deliver a national system of disability support focused on the individual needs and choices of people with disability. Funding is allocated to each individual. The National Disability Insurance Scheme will be available across all of NSW by 2018 and was initiated in the Willoughby Local Government Area in July 2016.
- The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 provides the legal foundation for regulating supports, services and funding to people with disability until the full transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme is complete. The Disability Inclusion Act mandates the development of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and individual State Government agencies and Local Government disability inclusion action plans to support people with disability beyond the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to provide strategies and actions that Council will deliver in the next four years to work toward achieving a truly inclusive community. The Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan will inform the Integrated Planning & Reporting process to provide a whole of council approach that supports cross-departmental collaboration. On-going monitoring and evaluation will ensure actions are continually included in all Council planning and delivery frameworks. Progress towards achieving goals will be reported in Council's Annual Report. Implementation of the actions in the Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan will benefit many people in our community including older people, people with a temporary injury and parents with young children.

Council adopts a broad definition of disability that considers all people with access and inclusion considerations.

For the purpose of this plan, the definition of disability includes a long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others.

GOALS

The Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan will focus on four key goal areas. These are aligned with the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan goals, which were nominated by people with disability as being of primary importance in creating an inclusive community.

They are:

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

DISABILITY IN OUR CITY

There are approximately 76,354 people living in the Willoughby Local Government Area. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2015) and Census of Population and Housing (2011) has identified the following:

An estimated 13,972 people (18.3%) have a disability that limits, restricts or impairs everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months.

2,291 people (3%) reported needing help in their day to day lives due to disability and are requiring a high level of assistance.

6948 (9.1%) are people over 70 years and 1679 (2.2%) are over 85 years

Analysis of the population needing assistance in Willoughby City in 2011 shows that there was a lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (under 15) and a higher proportion of people in the older age groups (65+). Research shows there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and disability. In Willoughby, people reporting a need for assistance experience greater disadvantage in areas such as income, employment, education, internet connection, housing and transport than the general population.

EDUCATION

30.2% of people needing assistance (aged 15 years and older) held educational qualifications, compared to 61.7% of the population.

INCOME

28.5% of people needing assistance reside in low income households compared to 13.9% of the population. A low income household is one where the combined income is less than \$600 per week.

LABOUR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

6.5% of people who identified as needing assistance were unemployed compared to 4.2% of the general Willoughby population.

INTERNET ACCESS

31.9% of people reporting a need for assistance had no access to an internet connection while 9.8% of the Willoughby population had no internet connection.

SOCIAL HOUSING

9.1% of the people reporting a need for assistance were living in social housing compared to 1.9% of the total Willoughby population. However, 57.7% of people reporting a need for assistance reported fully owning their property, compared to 32.4% of the Willoughby population reporting to fully own their property. This anomaly can be attributed to the higher proportion of people requiring assistance over the age of 80 years.

Source: ABS Census 2011

PENSION MARCH 2016

In Willoughby 18,250 people are receiving a government pension or subsidy including:

- 779 people receiving the Disability Support Pension
- 700 the Carer Allowance
- 28 the Carer Allowance Child Healthcare Card only
- 190 the Carer Payment
- 10 receiving a Sickness Allowance and
- 52 receiving a Special Benefit

Source: Department of Social Services Payment Demographic Data, March 2016

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

A range of internal and external consultation and engagement processes were utilised to ensure a meaningful and realistic plan was achieved.

Initially Council's Executive Leadership Team was consulted to ensure a whole of Council approach, with a strategic emphasis. Directors nominated key personnel to form a Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan Reference Group which met to form actions after a period of community and staff consultations.

Three community consultations were provided on different days and times, to allow people with disability in permanent employment to attend. The consultations were well attended and represented by people with disability, carers, services providers and members of the Willoughby Access Advisory Committee. Participants were asked to inform Council if assistive technologies or supports were required. Participants included people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds as reflected in the demographics of the local area. No people identified as being from an Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander background. An online survey was available for people who were unable to attend the consultations.

At the conclusion of the consultation process, the Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan Reference Group, with 24 staff members from across all directorates of Council, met across a two month period. The Reference Group utilised the input from the community and staff to develop the action plan.

Presentations were provided to the Executive Leadership Team and Councillors prior to approval of the Draft Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Feedback was included in the updated document.

The Draft Willoughby Disability Inclusion Action Plan was placed on public exhibition for one month and all participants and local service providers were made aware of the exhibition process. Feedback was included in the final document prior to adoption by Council.

Consultation process information:

- 3 community consultations with a total of 55 participants, including people with disability, carers, support people and service providers
- 15 responses to an online survey
- 13 responses to face to face surveys at local disability events
- 2 cross Council staff workshops with 45 participants

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Willoughby Access Advisory Committee has been an active Committee of Council for over 20 years. The aim of this committee is to provide a barrier free environment and promote physical access and mobility to services and facilities in the Willoughby Local Government Area. The Access Advisory Committee meets monthly and is made up of 15 community members that bring a diverse range of expertise regarding access and inclusion.

The Committee provides advice and recommendations to Council on matters relating to physical access and attitudinal barriers for all people.

The Committee assisted to develop the Willoughby Disability Discrimination Action Plan in 1998 and have continued to contribute to the annual updates to assist Council to create sound business practise in the implementation of plans and strategies and to improve Council's performance in fulfilling responsibilities to people with disability, their families and carers.

The Access Committee assisted to develop Council's Access and Equity Policy which supports the Willoughby City Strategy 2013-2029 to ensure principles of social justice, sustainability and equal access for all people are included throughout the document.

SURVEY RESULTS

People responding to the online survey said these things were most important to them:

1. Group outings
2. Extra funding
3. Housing
4. A safe environment
5. Acceptance from society
6. Accessible and inclusive social activities
7. More public/private transport options

28 people responded to the survey

55.6% of the respondents were female

27.8% of the respondents were male

16.6% provided no response

AGE OF RESPONDENTS TO SURVEY

- People with an intellectual disability were the most represented group responding to the survey.
- Overall the majority of the respondents rated the access and inclusivity of Council's buildings and facilities highly.
- Overall the majority of respondents rated access and inclusivity in Council operated programs, events and services highly.
- In both categories there were a small number of respondents that made comment regarding varying levels of access and inclusive practices at some of Council's facilities. The issues raised have been addressed in this plan.

IMPROVING ACCESS

Council has been working for many years to improve access and inclusivity across the Willoughby area. Some of our achievements are shown below.

AWARENESS RAISING PROJECTS

Missed Business booklet and animation - to encourage local business to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory practices to increase business

ACCESSIBILITY AWARD IN THE BETTER BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Making your business accessible to all your potential customers makes real business sense. This award is presented to the member business that has best demonstrated initiatives to improve the accessibility of their business for all customers.

EMPLOYMENT

Council has provided a Supported Wage position and work experience for people with disability in Blend:Coffee.Art.Food café.

PROMOTING INCLUSION

Annual theatre event “All the World’s a Stage” at The Concourse in Chatswood.

Eager participants of Dance to the Nines quarterly dance for everyone at the Dougherty Community Centre.

ACTION PLAN STRATEGIES

1. LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

1.1 Create an awareness of best practice in universal building design.

Actions:

1. Showcase local and international excellence in design using a range of options, such as: on Council website, social media, Council workshops and other channels.
2. Education for Council staff regarding Universal Design.
3. Lobby the Building Professionals Board to provide an education and awareness program for local certifiers regarding the implications of non-compliance with 'Access to Premises Standard'.

1.2 Advocate for improved access and inclusion outcomes in policy settings

Actions:

1. Continue to advocate for delivery of affordable key worker housing in the local government area.
2. Collaborate with Transport for NSW for improved transport equity, including Community Transport options, within the Willoughby LGA.

1.3 Council owned premises, paths and open space are barrier free and inclusive of people with disability where the site allows.

Actions:

1. Develop an Access Reference Group to: review relevant Council documents, develop access checklists and guidelines and conduct audits.
2. Develop a plan to install adult change tables and hoists in accessible toilets in identified appropriate locations across the Willoughby LGA at the time of refurbishment and improvements.
3. Review the Footpath Policy to identify assessment processes for upgrade works, footpath furniture guidelines to ensure consistent clear paths of travel, tactile indicator placement, pram ramp grade compliance and vegetation placement.
4. Ensure access features of parks are available on Council website.
5. Review audit of bus stops to identify access features and barriers in line with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.
6. Continue to conduct an awareness campaign for cyclists for safe use of shared pathways.

1.4 All community events, exhibitions, recreation, cultural and social programs are inclusive and accessible

Actions:

1. Include an access checklist to the events checklist to ensure inclusive principles are considered in early planning stages for events – accessible transport, venues, toilets, parking and clear paths of travel, marketing materials, assistive technology and systems, and relevant information included in marketing materials.

1.5 Facilitate access to local community transport services which enable people with a disability to participate in Willoughby community.

Actions:

1. Ensure that accessibility is a key criterion in Council's community transport services.
2. Promote and support other accessible and affordable transport providers for local people.

Measures:

- Access Reference Group Terms of Reference established and group members are recruited by February 2018
- Universal Design – increased housing options in Council's new housing stock using principles of Universal Design by June 2020
- Guidelines for audits for a range of building/facility types completed by June 2018
- Audit of Council facilities completed by June 2019
- Decrease in complaints regarding non-compliant buildings and facilities by June 2021
- Increased affordable housing stock by June 2019
- Event access checklist completed and incorporated into event planning process by June 2018
- Footpath policy completed by June 2018
- Facilitate increased accessible transport options available by December 2019

2. ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

2.1 Councillors and Executive Leadership Team champion commitment to access and inclusion

Actions:

1. Disability awareness and confidence training is provided to Councillors, Executive Leadership Team and all staff.

2.2 Council officers and volunteers display a positive attitude to people with disability

Actions:

1. Training and education in access and inclusion is included in Council officers and volunteers induction processes.
2. A mandatory training process is developed to be attained, once every two years, for Council officers and volunteers in a range of areas: communicating with people experiencing mental illness, with people with an intellectual disability and challenging behaviours, understanding access needs with a focus on inclusion.
3. Ensure training for Customer Service officers in using National Relay Service.
4. Provide additional training for children and youth services, vacation care and day care staff to build capacity to include children and youth with disability in programs and centres.

2.3 The community are better informed regarding inclusive practises, opportunities for engagement, increased business outcomes

Actions:

1. Council to provide increased visibility of people with disability in general Council publications and marketing materials.
2. Council to promote accessible business and tourism options in the Willoughby LGA.
3. Council to continue to educate the local business community regarding the value of increasing inclusive and accessible options to customers through the Better Business Partnership (BBP), Access Awards and the Missed Business Guide.

Measures:

- A Council wide disability awareness and training developed to be provided every two years starting in 2017 and is available on the corporate calendar and promoted through various internal communication channels by October 2017.
- The Council Induction process includes a reference to access and inclusion training by June 2018
- All documents available on the website are accessible from June 2018.
- Increased numbers of images of people with disability are included in Council materials by December 2018.
- Accessible tourism will be included as a component of a Tourism Plan. Planning complete by June 2018 and implemented in the 2018/19 year.
- The Better Business Program continues to advocate for inclusive business practices through training, an award process and the continuation of the provision of the Missed Business Booklet. An increase in the number of businesses nominated for the BBP Accessibility Award is achieved by 2018.

3. EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Employment opportunities are delivered in a way that actively demonstrates a culture that is inclusive and disability conscious

Actions:

1. A statement of Council's inclusive employment practices is developed and included in all recruitment processes and recruitment selection and training.
2. A checklist is developed to ensure access and inclusion are considered throughout the recruitment process. The checklist is to be included in Recruitment and Selection Training and associated guidelines.

3.2 A culture of inclusion and flexibility is created to allow people with disability to identify

Actions:

1. Expand the existing Workplace Adjustment Procedure to include new staff with adjustment requirements. Check health declarations for reference to special requirements. Discuss with staff as part of the one on one induction process.
2. Explore opportunities to provide traineeships, cadetships and work experience.
3. Check existing evacuation plans and expand opportunities for staff to complete a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

3.3 Council promotes inclusive employment as a role model and leader in the community

Actions:

1. Website and social media include stories of successful inclusive employment methods and ongoing support. These focus on achieving the required outcomes and the benefits of being an inclusive employer.
2. Provide information on the website to inform local business regarding connection with local Disability Employment Service providers
3. Better Business Partnership continues to include inclusive employment practices as a criterion for their accessibility award

Measures:

- A statement of Council's inclusive employment practices developed and included in all recruitment processes from March 2018.
- An Access Checklist is included as part of every recruitment process from June 2018.
- An increase in opportunities Council provides to assist people with disability to gain experience and skills is achieved by June 2019.
- An adequate PEEP information system, annual review and central repository for each building are created by June 2018 and are highlighted in Fire Warden training.
- A process to include regular updates regarding good news stories for the website and social media is developed by June 2018.
- Disability Employment Service providers are included on the Council

4. SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

4.1 Council officers are aware of the requirement to provide accessible formats and technology and have clear pathways to the provision of those services

Actions:

1. A guide to assistive technology and accessible format services, such as AUSLAN, Hearing Loop availability, captioning, audio description and Easy Read document providers is developed.
2. Training is provided regarding the Hearing Loop system at Customer Service. Evaluate the requirement for a portable - library system.

4.2 The intranet and Website are barrier free for people with disability (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 'AA' compliant)

Actions:

1. Audit website and intranet against the WCAG 2.0 guidelines to test for AA compliance.
2. Access information is provided as standard practice for any addition to the Council webpage.

4.3 Accessibility and inclusion is considered in the development of Council tender documents

Actions:

1. An access checklist is developed for tender processes.
2. All new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) procurement must conform to EN 301 549 V1.1.1 (2014-02) Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services.

4.4 Customer service, feedback, complaints and consultation mechanisms are accessible

Actions:

1. Develop a checklist to provide a variety of accessible methods for customers to communicate with Council and provide information regarding the methods on the website.

4.5 Information regarding disability services, sporting and recreation opportunities in the LGA is available

Actions:

1. Information regarding disability recreation, sporting and creative arts opportunities are provided under the relevant Council directories.
2. Continue to update and provide the Disability Services Directory on the Council website.

4.6 Access and inclusion is embedded into project planning and council reporting

Actions:

1. Access and inclusion is included in the development of project brief and design.
- 2.

Measures:

- The assistive and accessible service/technology guide is developed and available on the intranet and the Website by June 2018.
- Hearing Loop training provided to all relevant staff by June 2018
- The Website Audit against the WCAG 2.0 'AA' and EN 301 V1.1.1 guidelines is completed and a plan to reduce barriers is in place by June 2018.
- The checklist is developed and embedded in the tender process by June 2018.
- Disability Services Directory updated each year.
- Access and inclusion checklist embedded in the early stages of project brief and design processes by June 2018. Advice and guidance announcements regarding issues related to access and inclusion are made available to all staff.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

An internal document has been developed to:

- Identify the aim for each action
- Set timeframes
- Allocate responsibilities for actions to key positions across Council
- Identify the evaluation method and outcome for each action

The Mayor and Councillors review the six monthly Delivery Plan report to ensure all actions are on target and provide feedback to inform updates to actions throughout the life of the plan.