

Creating an inclusive city that enables people
with disability to participate in the life of the city



Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2016-2020
Engagement
Summary
March 2016

Engagement Summary

Purpose

We're developing Wollongong City Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan. As part of the development of the plan we consulted people with disability and their carers to learn more about the things that are most important to enable them to participate in community life.

Why do we need a plan?

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires all Councils to develop a plan. A plan will help Council to deliver improved services, facilities and programs to people with a disability and their carers. In Wollongong City there are around 11,200 people, or about 5.8% of the population, living with profound or severe disability (2011 ABS Census).

How was the community consulted?

We asked people with disability and their carers about their experience of using Council services, facilities and programs through:

A Community Survey

People rated the importance of and their satisfaction with 21 Council services and facilities. 163 people completed this survey.

Community Conversations






Two community conversations were held with 26 community members and 34 Council staff to talk about:

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







We also talked with 17 young people from a Transition to Work program and 7 local high school students about the things that are most important to them.

Community Survey Results

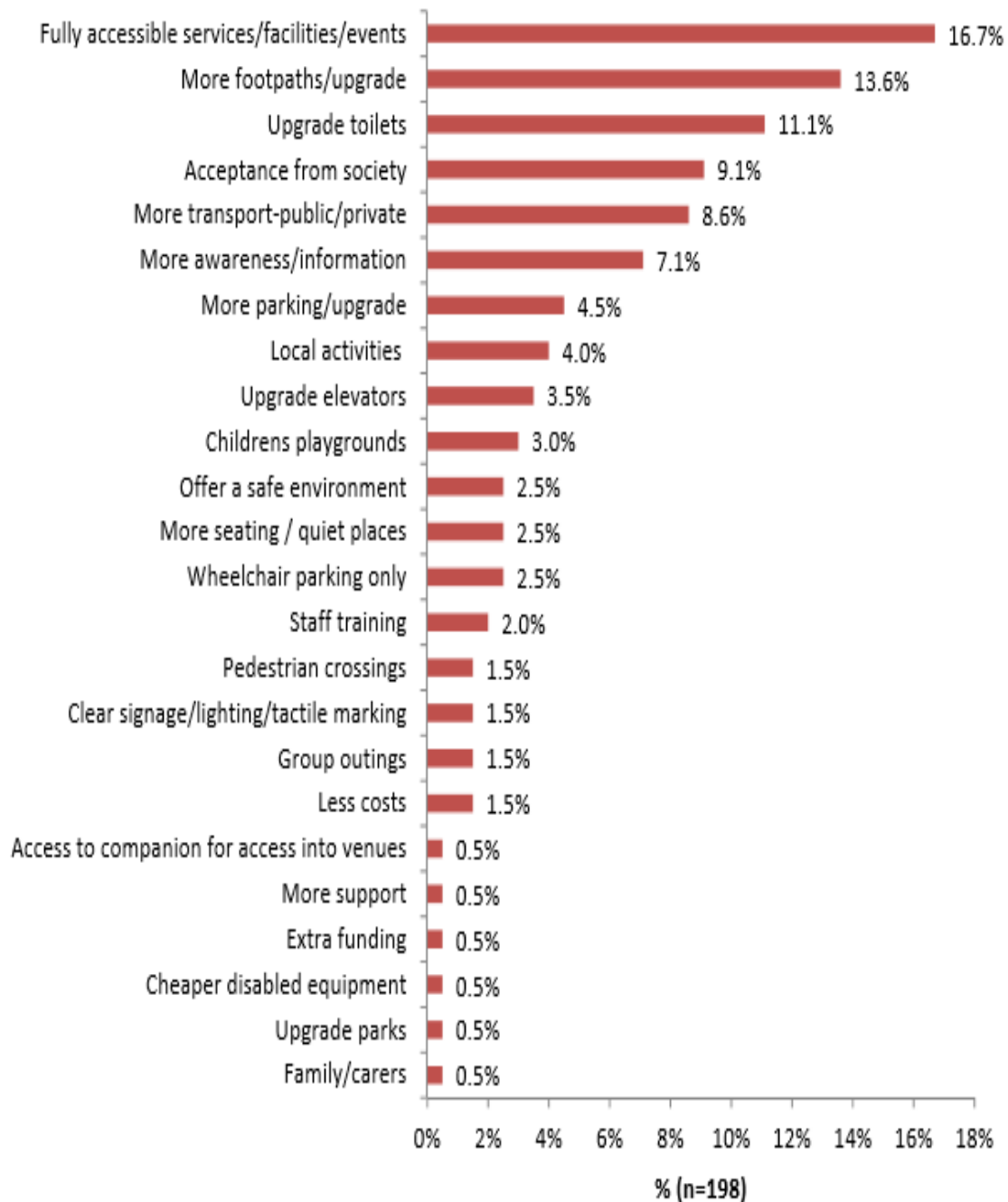
Council is performing well (high importance/high satisfaction) in the following service areas:

-  Heated pools.
-  Patrolled beaches.
-  Council's domestic, recycling & green waste collection service.
-  Public swimming pools (free entry).
-  Botanic Garden.

Priority service areas for Council to make improvements (high importance/low satisfaction):

-  Footpaths.
-  Public toilets.
-  Designated parking for people with disability.
-  Council run events, festivals and activities (Viva la Gong, Australia Day, New Year's Eve).
-  Cycle ways / shared pathways.
-  Council parks / open space / sports fields.

The following graph shows the feature most important to enabling people with disability to participate in community life.



Source: Wollongong City Council Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Management Report prepared by IRIS Research June 2015.

What could Council do better?

Footpaths and Paths of Travel

- Wide level footpaths free of hazards.
- Kerb ramps with no lip, at the correct grade and alignment.
- Accessible footpaths that connect to parking, bus stops, services and facilities.
- Safe pedestrian refuges.

“One of the most annoying things about kerb ramps is that they don’t always match up in terms of being exactly opposite each other. This causes a wheelchair user to need to weave around other people crossing the road and potentially getting closer to vehicles than necessary.”

Survey – Wollongong, Age 25-34 yrs.

Accessible Toilets

- More, clean, well-maintained, unlocked accessible toilets.
- Hoists and adult change tables.
- Information about the locations.
- Visible contact number to report issues with toilets.

“There is only ever one disabled toilet. How can we find a way to deter able bodied people using disabled toilets, when they have various other toilets available to them?”

Survey - Horsley, Age 45-54 yrs.

Designated Accessible Parking

- More parking and drop off points near services, venues and events.
- Greater enforcement of the Mobility Parking Scheme.

“Parking around Wollongong is often hard. The distance for my son to walk is sometimes too far.”

Survey - Barrack Heights, Age 35-44 yrs.

Council Events and Festivals

- Designated accessible parking and drop off points.
- Accessible pathways linking parking, toilets, seating, shade and activities.
- Promote access features in event information.
- Designated viewing areas and rest spaces.
- More accessible toilets.
- More bins.

“Rest areas to unload and toilet/feed and go again or sit and relax.”
Workshop participant.

Cycle Ways and Shared Pathways

- Lack of awareness by bike riders.
- Speeding bikes.
- Wider and better maintained paths.
- More seating and bins.

“Bike riders get upset if the disabled person does not respond quickly enough.”
Survey - Figtree, Age 25-34 yrs.

Council Parks, Open Space and Sports Fields

- More accessible parking.
- More public toilets.
- Accessible pathways.

Bus Shelters

- More bus shelters with seating and accessible connecting pathways.

Children's Playgrounds

- More disability friendly play equipment and better maintenance of current equipment.
- More public toilets and seating.
- Safety concerns with needles.
- Fencing.

“Fenced playgrounds are a safety issue for all kids but especially special needs. Some parents can’t take their children out in fear they will run.”

Survey - Wollongong, Age 35-44 yrs.

Public Swimming Pools (free entry) and Heated Pools

- More toilets including change tables and lockers.
- Ramp or lift access into pools including better heating of pools.
- Cost of entry into heated pools.
- Assistance with getting in/out of pool.
- More shade.

Patrolled Beaches

- Accessible mats and beach wheelchairs.
- Accessible parking and pathways along foreshore areas.
- More toilets.

Council Leisure Centres eg Beaton Park, Lakeside

- Better maintenance and cleaning.
- Better heating.
- More promotion.
- No assistance available.
- A separate non-chlorinated pool.

“I don't attempt to go there if I don't know if they have anything to offer me. I might get into exercise more if I knew what my options were.”

Survey - Wollongong, Age 25-34 yrs.

Botanic Garden

- More public toilets.
- More parking.
- Improve ramp access.
- Better maintained pathways.

Wollongong Art Gallery

- Accessible parking.
- Have a wheelchair available.
- Improve access via main entrance.
- Tactile displays for vision impaired.

“I would go there regularly if there were a few disability parking spots there, instead of maybe once or twice a year. I'm involved in the visual and performing arts, but lack of parking limits my participation.”

Survey - Fernhill, Age 55-64 yrs.

Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

- Insufficient parking.
- Limited 'disability' seating.
- Cramped seating.
- Not autism friendly.
- Too expensive.

Libraries and Community Centres

- More activities for people with disability information about activities.
- Disability awareness training for staff including Autism awareness training.
- More accessible parking at community centres and Central Library.

“Other than Unanderra, access is excellent, without libraries such as Warrawong and Dapto my life would be greatly diminished.”

Survey - Berkeley, Age 35-44 yrs.

Council Customer Service Centre

- More parking.

Council's Domestic, Recycling and Green Waste Collection Service

- A nappy disposal service.
- Assistance to move bins.

“Recycle regularly - taking bins out is sometimes hard but I use neighbours to help.”

Survey – Corrimal, Age 45-54 yrs.

How can Council improve its information and communication?

- More information in a range of accessible formats about Council services, facilities and activities.
- Use a variety of media channels to provide information.
- Include information about access in promotional material.
- Ensure information is kept simple.
- Ensure Council's website, print material and social media is accessible.
- Let the community know what Council can and cannot do in relation to access and the challenges faced.

“It would be helpful if when events are publicised it specifies whether or not suitable for disabilities.”

Survey – Wollongong, Age 25-34 yrs.

What did the community say about attitudes?

- More education for the community, businesses, and Council about the broad range of disabilities.
- Increase visibility of people with disability in Council publications and marketing material.
- Provide more opportunities for the community to engage with people with disability.
- Promote accessible businesses and tourism.
- Raise awareness among businesses of the value of the disability dollar.

“They think we're dumb because we have a disability - attitudes need to change.”

Workshop participant

What did the community say about access to meaningful employment?

- Council is recognised as employer of choice for people with disability.
- Ask us what we can do.
- Meaningful work not tokenistic.
- Support Social Enterprises.
- Accessible recruitment practices.
- Designated positions for people with disability.
- Accessible work places.

“Some employers are afraid to offer jobs to people with disability.
Breakdown barriers and educate employers.”
Workshop participant

What other things can the community do to support people with disability?

- Better access into and around shops.
- More accessible buses and taxis including driver awareness.
- Better lighting in shops and Council venues.
- Signage showing location of accessible toilets.
- Battery recharge stations for mobility scooters.
- More awareness by people inappropriately using disability parking and accessible toilet amenities.

“Training for cafes, libraries, shop owners about disability access and inclusiveness.”

Survey - Fairy Meadow, Age 25-34 yrs.

What did Council staff have to say?

- Need greater consistency across Council in our approach to disability access.
- More data about the needs of people with disability to support Council in decision making and provision of services and facilities.
- Raise awareness among planners, developers, contractors and architects of disability access requirements and Disability Discrimination Act 1992.
- More consultation to identify the barriers in accessing Council services and facilities.
- Let the community know what Council can and cannot do in relation to access and the challenges faced.

“A look at disability from a ‘users’ point of view will help contribute towards better planning and assessment for people with disabilities.”

Workshop, Council officer.

Where to from here?

The findings will be used to develop the strategies and actions for Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016 - 2020. The community will be asked for feedback on the draft Plan when it is available.

Acknowledgement

Council would like to thank everyone who participated in the consultation process and took the time to complete the Survey and participate in community conversations.