DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

2022 - 2026

ShireABILITY

Children enjoying the 2021 ShireABILITY Family Fun Day

2020 ShireABILITY Film Festival Winners

At Sutherland Shire Council we do more than serve our community - we are our community.

We understand that our natural landscapes - the bays, beaches and bush - and our love of outdoor living gives us a unique energy that sets us apart from anywhere else.

This translates into an active community - and a living energy - that propels us forward.

To align our culture to our community we are active, evolving, respectful and collaborative - this energy can be seen in everything we do. From having a can-do attitude, to embracing opportunity and change, being people-centred and working together as one.

That's why Sutherland Shire is a place for life - its vibrancy brings people to life and makes it a place they want to stay forever.

It's our role to enhance the spirit of our area and its people.

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Sutherland Shire Council acknowledges the Dharawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the land within Sutherland Shire.

We value and celebrate Dharawal culture and language, and acknowledge Dharawal people's continuing connection to the land, the sea and community.

We pay respect to the Elders and their families, past, present and emerging, and through them, to all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Sutherland Shire Council recognises that through acknowledging our shared past we lay the ground work for future collaboration with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people based on shared understanding, celebration of culture and mutual respect.

1.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

Sutherland Shire Council acknowledges the lived experience of people with disability and mental health conditions, their families and carers.

We value, respect and celebrate people of all abilities, and acknowledge that lived experience of disability provides unique and diverse experiences within Sutherland Shire community.

We welcomed the valued contributions and insights gathered while partnering with people with lived experience to create the 2022-26 Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and look forward to the opportunity collaborate throughout its implementation.

2. MAYORS MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that I present Sutherland Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026.

With this plan, we hope to improve the lives of people with disability by developing a framework which truly reflects the contributions of all residents and promotes a more connected and inclusive Sutherland Shire going forward.

At Sutherland Shire Council, we are incredibly thankful to those who have contributed in various ways to developing this plan. Whether you have firsthand experience of disability, live with, or support someone with disability – your feedback and experiences have helped us shape a plan of which our whole community can be proud.

Mayor Carmelo Pesce with lifeguards at beach wheelchair presentation 2020

By working collaboratively to establish Council's objectives and commitments of the plan, which are outlined in the following pages, we are confident this plan faithfully reflects the voices of our community.

It provides direction in ensuring Council's programs and resources are accessible for all and will help guide how our built environment is developed, to provide the right facilities and services to enable everyone the ability to participate in all areas of community life.

Here at Council, we are constantly looking for more ways to safeguard our community as a supportive and welcoming place for all, and we're proud of the significant ways we've worked with residents, groups and organisations over several years to deliver on this commitment.

Thank you again to all the people who have contributed to the development of this plan and those who will be working with us in future to implement it.

Together, we will continue to create an environment which empowers all members of our community.

Sutherland Shire Mayor
Councillor Carmelo Pesce

3. OUR VISION AND VALUES

Council's vision is to be: *a safe community that respects people and nature, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy.*

We want to:

1. Work together in Sutherland Shire as a community informed and engaged in its future.
2. Enhance and protect the beautiful and healthy natural environment of Sutherland Shire.
3. Sustain Sutherland Shire as a caring and supportive community.
4. Evolve Sutherland Shire's culturally rich and vibrant community.
5. Progress the Sutherland Shire as a prosperous community for all.
6. Sustain Sutherland Shire as a liveable place where we can all continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

Our **2022-26 Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)** and actions will be guided by this vision and by our core values of:

4. OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Council has an integrated approach. Council's Plans and Strategies work together to make Sutherland Shire a liveable place where all people can enjoy a high quality of life.

A number of intersecting and 'supporting documents' are connected and sit alongside the DIAP. These include:

- Community Development Strategy
- Cultural Strategy
- Open Space Strategy
- Play Strategy
- Sports Strategy
- Community Facilities Strategy
- Active and Public Transport Strategies
- Libraries Strategy
- Safer Communities Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Workforce Strategy
- Customer Service Strategy

5. INTRODUCTION

Sutherland Shire Council is committed to supporting the fundamental right of choice and control for people with disability. Almost one in five Australians live with disability, which is set to increase as the population ages. The community profile demonstrates that disability touches almost everyone's lives at some point in some way.

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* defines disability as "a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others"[1].

Building upon the achievements of the 2017-22 DIAP, Council's ongoing commitment to making Sutherland Shire accessible and inclusive is embodied in this DIAP. This plan includes practical actions designed to address barriers faced by people with disability, their families and carers. Working together with those with lived experience, Council aims to influence positive attitudes and behaviours, enhance liveability, create access to meaningful employment and provide more equitable access through better systems and processes.

Sylvanbeats drummers performing at ShireABILITY Film Festival

5.1 THE CASE FOR INCLUSION
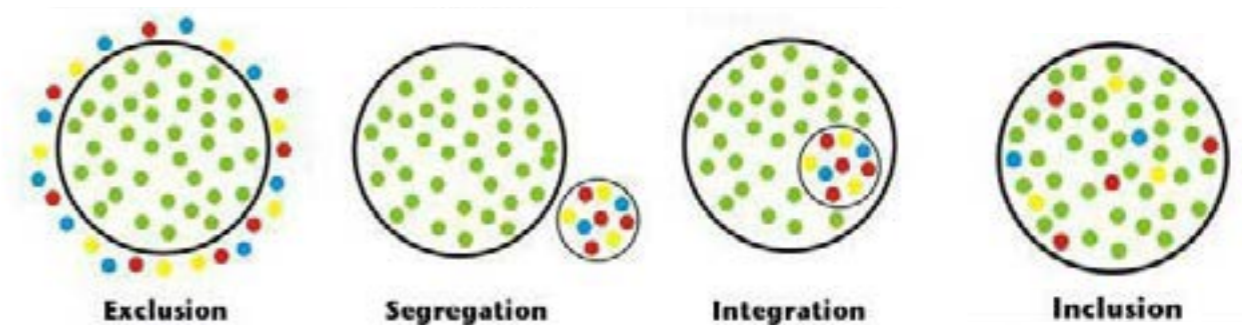
In Sutherland Shire, people with disability feel welcome and can meaningfully participate in the community – including people with a physical, intellectual, cognitive, sensory disability and mental health conditions.

We believe that inclusion benefits everyone – it celebrates diversity and community connection, and reduces disadvantage, isolation and discrimination. In an inclusive community you are included in work, events, and community life; and as a community we enjoy better health, wellbeing, resilience and cohesion.

There is also a strong economic imperative for increasing inclusion as people with disability are able to engage in meaningful employment leading to both individual and economic gains.

Accessibility for people with disability means more than physical access to buildings and facilities. It is being able to independently go anywhere and get around easily, to make informed choices by being able to easily access information on services, facilities, events and programs, and to enjoy the social and cultural life of Sutherland Shire. People with disability have a **'right'** to an accessible and inclusive Sutherland Shire.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26 is Council's commitment to remove barriers, increase equity, and provide for a liveable Sutherland Shire. Our focus is on increasing access and inclusion for people of all abilities and reducing barriers to participation, such as:

- **Physical:** inaccessible buildings and facilities, streetscapes, parks and gardens, playgrounds and open space.

- **Attitudinal:** assumptions made that people with disability cannot participate in certain activities or do certain jobs, including; bias, stereotypes and stigma.

- **Social:** lack of services or supports, problems accessing the community, or systems or processes that create barriers.

- **Communication:** lack of information in accessible formats for people who have disabilities that affect hearing, speaking, reading, writing, and or understanding.

- **Organisational:** strategies, plans, policies and procedures adhering to laws and regulations, and endeavouring to promote best practice.

- **Technology:** when a device or technological platform is not accessible to its intended audience and cannot be used with an assistive device2.

People with disability can have greater independence and opportunities to participate when Council and the community work together to recognise, acknowledge, and reduce these barriers. The measure of a liveable Sutherland Shire is when people with disability can live a quality life, learn, work, share, play, feel safe, have a sense of belonging, form connections to family, friends and their community and grow old within.

Council has a key role in supporting and valuing the rights of people with disability in Sutherland Shire. Through the visibility of people with disability through projects and programs, the engagement and partnerships in decision making, the services we provide, the infrastructure and public spaces we manage, the information that is provided, the employment opportunities on offer and the connections that are encouraged and facilitated.

The 2022-26 DIAP aspires to remove barriers, promote access and inclusion, and provide for a liveable Sutherland Shire.

5.2 DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLANS

The 2022-26 DIAP is a plan that outlines key actions to make sure our services, facilities, information and programs are accessible and inclusive. It supports the rights of people with disability, and in partnership, identifies and addresses issues important to people with disability, their families and carers.

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires Council to develop a DIAP to help remove barriers and enable people with disability to participate equally and meaningfully in the community. Independence, diversity and inclusion is possible when people with disability are empowered and supported to reach their potential.

This DIAP focuses on four key focus areas and how these factors impact the day-to-day lives of people living with disability:

1. Promoting positive attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving systems and processes

The DIAP will set the framework for continuous improvement in relation to access and inclusion and achieving outcomes to provide for an informed, engaged, caring, supportive and connected community for people with disability, their families and carers; and enhanced liveability and cultural vibrancy.
A collaborative approach and consultation with people with disability, their families and carers informed the development of the 2022-26 DIAP, with over 200 people who have informed this Plan. Council is committed to ongoing engagement will continue to monitor the implementation of this Plan via Council's Access and Inclusion Committee.

Melinda Paterson is the Manager of Engadine Community Services, and has lived in the Sutherland Shire for over 40 years.

"I'm pleased to say that the Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been a vital part of the successful work of the Council in making Sutherland Shire an appropriate place for me to live and work.

During the past 20 years, I have been actively involved in community consultations and have felt that that my input has been valued and affected change.

I hope to inspire other people with disability to raise their voices too".

~ Melinda Paterson

5.3 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2008

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 - 2031

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

(NSW) Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA)

NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan
1. Attitudes and behaviours
2. Liveable communities
3. Meaningful employment
4. Systems and processes

Sutherland Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030

Sutherland Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26

Delivery Program

Operational Plan

An accessible, inclusive and liveable Sutherland Shire

INTERNATIONAL

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008:** people with disability are not disabled by their impairment but the barriers in the community that prevent them gaining access to information, services, transport, housing, education, training, employment and social opportunities.
  In 2008, the Australian Government committed *"to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity"*[3].

COMMONWEALTH

- **Disability Discrimination Act 1992:** the Act makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful[4].
- **Disability (Access to Premises Standards - Buildings) Standards 2010:** ensure people with disability have equal access to public buildings[5].
- **Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002:** seek to remove discrimination in relation to public transport services and provide equality and independedance[6].
- **Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 - 2031:** outlines a vision for a more inclusive and accessible Australian society where all people with disability can fulfil their potential as equal members of the community[7].
- **National Disability Insurance Scheme:** provides funding to Australians with a permanent and significant disability, designed to help people get the support they need so their skills and independence improve over time[8].

NEW SOUTH WALES

- **Disability Inclusion Act 2014:** mandates the development of Council DIAP's and enshrines the principles of access and inclusion into legislation[9].
- **Carers (Recognition) Act 2010:** aims to increase recognition and awareness of the role carers play in providing daily care and support[10].
- **Anti-discrimination Act 1997:** makes discrimination unlawful and promotes equality of opportunity between all persons[11].
- **Mental Health Act 2007:** Gives health professional power to detain, access and treat people with mental disorders in the interests of their health and safety or for public safety[12].
- **NSW Disability Inclusion Plan:** strengthens NSW accessibility framework and outlines work underway to improve outcomes for people with disability[13].

SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

As a key informing strategy under Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, the DIAP is directly aligned with the Community Strategic Plan and actions are detailed in the 2022-26 DIAP Action Plan and will be integrated into Council's four-year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plans.

People enjoying the 2019 ShireABILITY Film Festival

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN - STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

OUR VISION A connected and safe community that respects people and nature, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy

STRONG CIVIC LEADERSHIP TRUSTED BY AN INFORMED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY

THEMES
- Collaboration and engagement with our community
- Strong strategic partnerships to advocate for our community
- Transparency, integrity and good governance

GOALS
1. Our community and leadership will collaborate to support the lifestyle and environment to which we aspire
2. Our leadership develops and maintains strong partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders to advocate effectively on behalf of the broader community
3. Sutherland Shire Council demonstrates good governance and is trusted by the community to make informed decisions that reflect community values and aspirations

A BEAUTIFUL, PROTECTED AND HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

THEMES
- Protecting the natural environment
- Promoting sustainability
- Addressing climate change

GOALS
1. Effectively manage and conserve our natural resources
2. Enhance and protect diverse natural habitats
3. Environment and climate risks and impacts are understood and managed

A CREATIVE, CARING AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY THAT CELEBRATES CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

THEMES
- Quality health services
- Community safety and wellbeing
- Community connections through culture and identity

GOALS
1. The community has access to quality services to support and enhance health and wellbeing
2. Develop and enhance programs that support and enable the safety and wellbeing of all in our community
3. Foster opportunities to strengthen community connections
4. Facilitate cultural activities and experiences
5. Recognise and respect our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage

A PROSPEROUS, WELL-EDUCATED COMMUNITY WITH A DIVERSE RANGE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

THEMES
- Building economic resilience
- Local businesses and jobs
- Education and training
- Library resources and spaces

GOALS
1. Collaborate with our business community to support thriving local business
2. Increase access to local employment and training opportunities
3. Improve access to quality education at all stages of life

AN ACTIVE COMMUNITY THAT ENJOYS SAFE, ACCESSIBLE AND DIVERSE OPEN PLACES AND SPACES

THEMES
- Promoting active lifestyles
- Public domain and community safety
- Enhancing green spaces

GOALS
1. Promote and enhance places where people can enjoy active lifestyles
2. Promote and ensure community safety in our places and spaces
3. Provide welcoming and accessible places and spaces

A HIGH-QUALITY URBAN ENVIRONMENT, SUPPORTING A GROWING AND LIVEABLE COMMUNITY

THEMES
- Housing
- Balanced development
- Efficient transport

GOALS
1. Facilitate a diverse housing mix that provides choice and meets the needs of all community members
2. Ensure quality, well planned and balanced development supports the growth of our Community
3. Plan and develop integrated transport networks to provide transport choices that allow people to get around in a safe, accessible and efficient manner

6. DISABILITY COMMUNITY PROFILE

The demographic profile of our community relating to people with disability should help guide DIAP actions; along with current and future needs, addressing community strengths and challenges, and mobilising community assets.

In 2016, 9,352 people in Sutherland Shire reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability, and 21,536 (12%) of residents provide unpaid assistance to persons with disability[13]. Additionally, each year 1 in 5 Australians experience a mental illness, with 45% experiencing a mental illness within their lifetime[14].

Population
226,450
+30,000
by **2036**

1 in 6 people with Disability in Australia
(4.4 million people)

Disability
9,352
People (4.3%) in Sutherland Shire

Ageing Population
Over **60**
67,701
2036 (25.5%)
2016 (22.8%)
49,723

90% have a **Hidden Disability**
e.g. mental health, autism, chronic pain

1 in 3 people have a **severe or profound disability**
(affecting mobility, self-care, or communication)

1 in 5 people will experience a **mental illness within their lifetime**

32% of people with a disability experience **psychological distress**

96% of people with disability **live in their own homes**

90% of school age children with disability **go to school**

People with disability are almost **twice as likely not to have a job** (10.3% compared to 4.6%)

1 in 10 people have experienced **disability discrimination in the past year**

29% of people with a disability are from a **Multicultural background**

24% of **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders** have a disability

Unpaid Carers
21,536 (12.2%) in Sutherland Shire

Volunteers
33,877 people (19.2%) in Sutherland Shire

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CO-DESIGN SUMMARY

Community consultation has been undertaken at all stages with people with disability, their families and carers in the co-design of recommendations and actions for consideration and inclusion within the 2022-26 DIAP. The outcomes of community consultation have been documented and key themes analysed to inform actions that are responsive to needs and issues, and can be achieved within the 4-year period to help provide for *"a connected and safe community that respects people and nature, enjoying active lives in a strong local economy"* – for people of all abilities.

Over 200 people with disability, their families and carers have participated in the community consultation for this draft DIAP, which included; workshops, a survey, focus groups, interviews and the DIAP Roundtable. Consultation highlighted that liveability, accessibility, social participation, acceptance and inclusion were highly valued. Improvements can be made to enhance physical accessibility and liveability, create positive community attitudes and behaviours, and provide opportunities to access meaningful employment.

"Sutherland Shire is a welcoming and inclusive place to live with a good range of activities, programs and services for people with disability."

7.1 INTERAGENCY WORKSHOP

In November 2020, a workshop was held with the Bayside, Georges River and Sutherland Shire Disability Interagency that explored strengths and challenges and discussed ideas for each of the DIAP Focus Areas. Disability service providers described the challenges experienced during COVID, such as loneliness and social isolation as well as the considerable impact on mental health and wellbeing of people with disability, their families and carers.

Greater visibility of people with disability to positively change attitudes and behaviours was identified as a priority and increasing access to meaningful employment opportunities, led by Councils. Maintaining connections and activities delivered via virtual platforms should be continued, though in person activities to support community connections and promote opportunities for participation are also important. The Interagency and collaborative partnerships were highlighted as a community asset, along with Council's community services and grant programs in supporting people with disability. Improving access to; NDIS and disability services, facilities and events, and communication and information; were seen as areas to focus actions within the 2022-26 DIAP.

7.2 ACCESS AND INCLUSION SURVEY

An online survey was open throughout July and August 2021 with 77 responses received from people with disability, their families, carers and service providers.

The survey found that 50% of respondents only sometimes felt welcome and included

in the community. While there was a general view that things were improving, there is still work to be done. Insufficient physical access was the key reason some respondents felt unwelcome and unable to utilise parks, playgrounds, facilities and fully participate at events. Accessible public toilets are fundamental to supporting greater participation of people with disability and improvements should be prioritised. Sutherland Shire libraries and Hazelhurst were identified as being highly accessible facilities and providing inclusive programs, along with the beach wheelchairs, and Shire*ABILITY* events.

Barriers to inclusion identified were insufficient mobility parking or physical access to facilities, and a lack of information about services, programs or events. Raising community awareness of 'hidden disabilities' and showcasing positive stories and images of people with disability to change community attitudes and behaviours were suggested actions.

The survey also found that respondents feel Council can provide greater employment opportunities itself as well as providing information, supporting local businesses and connecting different networks to increase access to meaningful employment. A combination of print and online communications channels should be used to engage with people with disability and actively promote opportunities for participation along with local disability service providers.

Focus group participants at CIVIC Disability Services

7.3 FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

Council conducted six specialised focus groups with people with disability, including a Multicultural focus group and a focus group for people with Intellectual Disability or Autism. Interviews were also conducted with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people with disability, their families and carers.

Discussions at these meetings revealed that most people with disability felt welcome and could access the facilities and services they needed. Barriers experienced included physical access and sensory inclusion. People from Multicultural or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds face additional barriers related to language, culture, stigma, shame and trauma and need easier access services that are more culturally responsive and the NDIS.

People with lived experience would like greater access to information in alternate formats, additional recreation opportunities, and more programs that are responsive to identified community needs and improve mental health and wellbeing. Discrimination and abuse were raised as issues, reinforcing the importance to support, respect and understand people with disability as well as creating greater visibility to challenge stigma and various stereotypes about living with disability and mental health.

A clear message throughout the engagement was that Council can play a leading role in changing attitudes and creating opportunities for local employment to provide the chance for people with disability to work and contribute. Opportunities for partnership, collaboration and co-design were highly valued and should be continued.

7.4 DIAP ROUNDTABLE

An online DIAP Roundtable was conducted in February 2022, bringing together 62 people, including Councillors and Council staff, people with disability, their families and carers. The aim of the Roundtable was to discuss and co-design actions for the 2022-26 DIAP under each of the four focus areas.

A key point of agreement was about supporting people with disability in being able to lead independent lives, which is vitally important to wellbeing, shows respect and values people within the community, and enables meaningful participation in the civic, social and community life of the Sutherland Shire.

The existing strengths identified included the strong volunteer network in Sutherland Shire, availability of online activities and engagement, access to information and increased workplace flexibility. Some of the existing challenges identified were the increased social isolation due to COVID-19, access to funding and navigating the NDIS, a lack of programs promoting health and wellbeing, visibility of mental health and 'invisible' disability, and reduced support for carers.

To create a more liveable community, participants suggested actions focused on greater access to Council facilities, public space improvements supporting increased equity and useability, and more accessible housing, transport, and events. It was also discussed that Council can help to combat attitudinal barriers to employment

through partnerships with local businesses to increase an understanding of disability and awareness about the benefits for both the business and individuals, help upskill and support people with disability, and connect businesses with potential employees and service providers. The creation of actions such as a Disability Directory, along with supporting networks and connections via the creation of an online 'Shire*ABILITY* community' will boost engagement, recognition and empowerment of people with lived experience of disability.

The Community Engagement Report provides a summary of the all engagement activities conducted to inform the development of the DIAP and summarises the key issues and themes that emerged from discussions and shared experiences of people with disability, their families and carers.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The final stage of consultation will present this draft DIAP to interagencies, committees and reference groups to gather further feedback for consideration.

Council is committed to the ongoing collaboration and engagement of people with disability to support the implementation of the 2022-26 DIAP. Partnership with Council's Access and Inclusion Committee is a starting point for the work and increased participation of people with disability in the development of Council's policies, programs and decision making.

"I am legally blind and help people with disabilities find meaningful jobs and create more supportive and inclusive workplaces. I participated in the 2022-26 DIAP consultations and feel honoured that I was given the opportunity to share my lived experience of vision loss and play a small role in making the Sutherland Shire more accessible for people with disabilities. I hope that the recommendations for the DIAP that were given by myself and other residents with disabilities will make a great community even better!"

~ Sarlie Drakos.

8. DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

There are several emerging trends, challenges and opportunities to consider as we plan for a more accessible, liveable and inclusive Sutherland Shire:

GREATER INDEPENDENCE, VISIBILITY AND UNDERSTANDING
The UN Convention on the *Rights of People* with Disability defines independence for persons with disabilities as having individual autonomy, the opportunity to be actively involved in decision-making processes and the opportunity to experience the physical, social, economic and cultural environment[16]. For a person with a disability, a sense of independence will help build their self-confidence and make them feel more empowered, positive and fulfilled in life.

DISCRIMINATION AND ATTITUDES CREATE BARRIERS AND INEQUALITY
One in ten people with disability have experienced disability discrimination in the past year[17]. Attitudes such as; assumptions that a person with disability cannot participate in certain activities or perform certain jobs, create barriers to inclusion. Experiencing discrimination makes participating in everyday life more difficult. Collaborative sharing of lived experience stories to challenge and change attitudes and behaviours will reduce discrimination and create greater acceptance and inclusion.

INCREASED COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS IMPROVES WELLBEING
One in four Australians is lonely[18] and loneliness has been proven to be as bad for your health as smoking[19]. Council can play a leading role in implementing strategies to create community connections and promote opportunities to participate in the community to enhance wellbeing.

ENHANCING LIVEABILITY IS GOOD FOR EVERYONE
In 2020, Sutherland Shire ranked second in a report ranking the most liveable places in Australia[20]. Liveability is a key focus area in the DIAP and includes; the physical environment, transport, housing, recreation and access to the community. Enhancing liveability to improve access and inclusion benefits the entire community.

PLANNING FOR AN AGEING POPULATION
We are a growing community with the current population of 235,000 expected to reach 266,000 by 2036[21]. Sutherland Shire has an ageing population, with 23% aged over 60 years. By 2036, this group is anticipated to increase 26%[22]. In 2020, half of Australians aged over 65 years have lived experience of disability[23]. The ageing of our community presents many opportunities to proactively plan for the changing and different needs of older residents that will enable people to age in place.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN AND BEST PRACTICE PLANNING
Universal design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors. Universal design is about creating an inclusive community. An inclusive community benefits everyone and improves health and wellbeing[24]. Undertaking best practice planning and applying universal design principles will create a more accessible Sutherland Shire for people with disability.

INCREASING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

One in five Australians experience a mental illness in any year[25], with mental health issues increasing since COVID-19 with a rise reported in people experiencing loneliness and social isolation[26]. More than half (57.9%) of all people with a profound or severe disability reported having a mental or behavioural condition[27]. Prevention, early intervention and community support programs are required to provide for the wellbeing of the community, along with challenging the stigma associated with mental health.

CREATING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

People with disability are more than twice as likely not to have a job, and 93% of people with disability experience difficulties in finding employment[28]. All engagement demonstrated the willingness and eagerness of people with disability to access meaningful employment. Council can provide opportunities to upskill and employ people with disability, as well as educate and bring together potential employers.

9. DIAP VISION

To support the rights of people with disability and provide for an accessible and inclusive Sutherland Shire where services, facilities, information and programs enable meaningful participation for people with disability, their families and carers; and people with disability are empowered to reach their full potential.

10. DIAP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Connected: A connected community that is informed, supported and empowered to access services and programs to live active healthy lives.

Resilient: Strengthen the capacity of people with disability to live safe, respected and dignified lives.

Responsive: To keep abreast of community trends, issues and needs and proactively plan, advocate and respond to change in order to enhance access and inclusion.

Empowered: To realise human rights and provide an active and liveable community with a high quality of life for people of all abilities.

Inclusive: Foster a community that respects and celebrates diversity, promotes fair, equitable access and meaningful participation by all.

Accessible: Support the rights of people with disability to engage in all aspects of community life.

PHOTO: Children and families enjoying the 2018 ShireABILITY Family Fun Day

11. POSITIVE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

We all have a role to play in challenging negative attitudes and reducing discrimination by how we portray, treat and value people with a disability. Attitudes based on ignorance, fear, lack of understanding and invisibility can lead to bias, stigma, and stereotypes and have a negative impact on the lives of people living with disability.

In an accessible, inclusive and liveable Sutherland Shire, people with disability are valued and acknowledged through sharing their unique stories and experiences and supported by facilitating equitable and independent access to enable meaningful participation.

Council can play a leading role in promoting positive attitudes and behaviours. By supporting and acknowledging the skills and capabilities of diverse individuals and celebrating those in our community with disability, increasing visibility and raising awareness about inclusion, together with the wider community, we will contribute to reducing discrimination and disadvantage experienced by people with disability.

Greater collaboration, partnership and communication will enhance community understanding and acceptance, which will impact change and encourage positive community attitudes and behaviours towards people with lived experience of disability or mental health conditions.

Increasing awareness, understanding and creating opportunities for people with disability to share stories of lived experience can encourage more positive community attitudes and behaviours. Providing better and easily accessible information and training and embedding disability awareness within Council programming and activities with the wider community, together we can create a culture of respect and can inspire others in the community to be advocates.

What actions will we focus on:

- Providing disability awareness and inclusion training and specialist training
- Sharing stories of lived experience
- Participating and celebrating community days
- Embedding access and inclusion into mainstream programming
- Raising knowledge and access to disability and community services and NDIS
- Building the capacity of the disability and mental health sector

Area of Focus 1	Positive Attitudes and Behaviours										
	Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
1.1	Ensure employees are aware and confident to engage with people with disability and promote equitable access to facilities, services and programs	Continue to implement Disability Awareness and Inclusion Training for Council	1.1, 1.3, 3.2	People and Culture	Business and Community	Unfunded	●		●			Training schedule for staff developed and implemented # and % staff completing training % staff have increased awareness and understanding
1.2	Provide specialist training to increase understanding and inclusion working with people with disability or mental health conditions	Provide specialist training e.g. Mental Health, Intellectual Disability, Vision Impairment etc	1.1, 1.3, 3.2	People and Culture	Business and Community	Unfunded		●		●		Training schedule for staff developed and implemented # and % staff completing training % staff have increased awareness and understanding
1.3	Build a culture of positive community attitudes towards people with disability fostered through greater awareness, exposure, understanding and respect	Develop case study stories of lived experience to share via Council's communication channels	1.1, 3.2	Business and Community	Communications and Engagement	Funded	●		●			# of stories shared # of people featured in mainstream communications with a visible disability
		Develop an educational resource celebrating people with disability and share with local schools and community groups	3.2	Business and Community	Communications and Engagement	Funded				●		# resources distributed % of students have increased awareness and understanding
		Review and update brand and editorial guidelines to include best practice guidance on inclusive terminology	1.1	Communications and Engagement		Funded		●				Brand and editorial guidelines updated and inclusive terminology shared across Council
		Advocate and raise awareness of access and inclusion and the DIAP in internal communications	1.1	Communications and Engagement		Funded					●	# of stories shared

	Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
		Celebrate Council's participation and support of relevant days including IDPwD, R U OK Day, Mental Health Month, Carers Week and Neighbour Day across Council and in the community	3.2, 3.3, 3.4	Business and Community	Communications and Engagement	Funded					●	# of events and # of people attending % people have increased awareness and understanding
		Review Library collections for diversity and ensure new and emerging collections consider inclusion of people with disability	3.2, 4.3	Library Services		Funded					●	Review complete # of collections showcase diversity and include people with disability
		Children's Services Curriculum to include programming celebrating people with disability	3.2, 4.3	Children's Services		Funded			●			# of inclusive programming % of children have increased awareness and understanding
1.4	Increase awareness and access to disability services and NDIS	Create and promote a comprehensive Disability Directory	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community	Communications and Engagement, Disability Services	Unfunded	●					# Disability Directory distributed # website hits
		Partner to provide targeted information seminars on disability, including promoting access to NDIS	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community	NDIS Partners in the Community	Funded					●	# seminars and # attendees % of participants report increased awareness and understanding
		Partner with CESPHN, NSW Health, NSW DCJ, General Practitioners, and disability services to increase knowledge of local supports available for people with disability or mental health conditions	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community	CESPHN, NSW Health, NSW DCJ, General Practitioners, Disability Services	Funded				●		# resources distributed # of GP's have increased awareness and understanding
1.5	Provide capacity building for the disability and mental health sectors	Provide sector support and development training and education to upskill and resource the disability and mental health sectors	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community	Disability and Mental Health Interagencies	Funded					●	# participation in collaborative forum # of trainings provided and # participants % of participants report increased awareness and understanding

"I am a man who lives with a disability and mental health struggles. For over 40 years I travelled through life feeling excluded. I fell into a destructive routine to dull the pain of it all. To be excluded is no joke! It took a lot for me to find the courage to speak out for help and I was fortunate, I linked with some very good people and created a life in which I feel valued and where I can contribute my talents. Since then I have taken opportunities to tell my story and be an advocate for others because sometimes people need help to find the hope. Inclusion should happen automatically, but it doesn't. Processes like the DIAP and creating opportunities for real conversation around inclusion are so very vital to give people like me an opportunity to be included, have a voice and be the people we are meant to be!"

~ Robert Antal

12. LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Sutherland Shire is a liveable community offering a high quality of life for all. A place to live, learn, work, play, feel safe, have a sense of belonging, form connections to family, friends and their community and to grow old within. A liveable community is one that supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of all in our community by providing opportunities to participate and form lasting community connections. This includes physical access, accessible housing, access to transport, community recreation, social engagement, and universal design.

The inability to physically access facilities, public spaces and easily move around the Sutherland Shire was a common barrier for people with disability. Accurate understanding of the physical access challenges, whether related to mobility, visual and/or hearing can be achieved by conducting access audits and the prioritisation and funding access improvements demonstrates a clear commitment to inclusion and Council supporting the Sutherland Shire as a liveable community. Also working collaboratively with local businesses and community organisations to raise awareness and increase access for people with disability will further advance liveability across our community.

Ensuring meaningful and valued input into the design and planning of our places and spaces will enhance the quality and functionality of our public spaces, open spaces, centres, neighbourhoods and facilities. Placemaking activities will help to activate our centres and spaces as well as help to promote understanding about the inclusion, health and wellbeing for people of all abilities. Full participation within social, recreational and cultural activities, programs and events for people with disability will enhance community connectedness, increase visibility and add a richness through the sharing of experiences.

Harnessing online technologies to create a safer, comfortable and 'equal playing field' will further support the active participation of people with disability within the civic and social life of Sutherland Shire. For example, a 'ShireABILITY community' could provide an online platform for people with disability to share ideas, challenges and support each other. Programs to combat loneliness and social isolation will support the welfare of people with disability, help to address the increase in mental health issues and lead to a more resilient community.

People with disability is not a homogenous community nor are their experiences and challenges the same. Recognising and understanding the unique needs of diverse communities is important to provide culturally responsive services; and promoting the right of people of all abilities to be safe, included, and respected will prevent and reduce discrimination, violence and abuse.

What actions will we focus on:

- Ensuring public domain infrastructure is accessible and inclusive

- Creating inclusive participation opportunities in places, spaces, in programs and at events

- Encourage businesses and community organisations to be more inclusive

- Support opportunities to enhance mental health and wellbeing

- Recognise, respect and support carers and volunteers

- Reducing discrimination, violence and abuse through improving access to community initiatives and advocacy

Area of Focus 2	Liveable Communities											
	Aim/ Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
2.1	Ensure public domain infrastructure is accessible and inclusive, meeting standards and promoting independence and dignity	Ensure personnel are training in the latest Access to Premises Standards and their application to Council buildings, Town Centres and open space	1.3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.2	Major Development Assessment/ Development Assessment and Certification/ Asset Services	Strategic Planning	Funded					●	# of persons completed training
		Audit Council Buildings to confirm accessibility service gap	1.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 5.1, 5.3	Asset Services		Unfunded	●					# of access audits completed % buildings audited
		Audit Council Open Spaces to confirm accessibility gap	1.3, 3.1, 3.3, 5.1	Asset Services		Unfunded			●			# of access audits completed % of Open Spaces audited
		Audit Town Centres to confirm accessibility gap	1.3, 3.1, 3.3, 5.1, 5.3, 6.2	Asset Services		Unfunded	●					# of access audits completed % of Town Centres audited
		Integrate DIAP actions into Town Centre Strategies to enhance access and inclusion	5.3, 6.2	Strategic Planning		Funded					●	Integration of actions into Town Centre Strategies
		Establish capital improvement programs for modifying accessibility to Council Buildings, Open Spaces and Town Centres	1.3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.2	Asset Services		Unfunded		●	●	●		# and % of buildings, open space and town centres adhering to access and service standards and best practice for inclusion
		Map all existing and proposed footways and prioritise ongoing new footways	5.1, 5.3	Asset Services		Unfunded			●			% of footpaths mapped and renewed % accessible footpath upgrades with accessible kerb ramps
		Prioritise and program accessibility improvements in Buildings, Open Spaces and Town Centres	1.3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.2	Asset Services		Unfunded		●	●	●		% of retrospective works allocated for access and inclusion upgrades
		Apply access and inclusion service standards and best practice guidelines in the development of Masterplans, Town Centre Plans, Strategies and Asset upgrades	1.3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.2	Asset Services		Funded					●	% of Masterplans % Town Centre Plans % of Strategies % of Asset upgrades consider access and inclusion

Aim/ Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
	Ensure access and inclusion is considered for the Sutherland Entertainment Centre	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 5.1, 5.3	Asset Services		Funded	●					# access and inclusion features Feedback from attendees with disability on access and inclusion
	Enhance inclusivity within playgrounds and provide all-inclusive play spaces for everyone	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.3	Asset Service		Funded	●	●	●	●		Cooper Street Reserve All-Abilities Playground Waratah Park All-Abilities Playground % of play spaces with inclusive play items and access features
	Children's Services Centre and Playground accessibility upgrades	3.1, 3.3, 5.1	Children's Services		Funded					●	# of Centre upgrades # of all-inclusive playgrounds
	Upgrade Cronulla Esplanade to enhance access for people with limited mobility	1.3, 3.1, 3.3, 5.1, 5.3	Asset Services		Funded	●	●				% of Esplanade complying with Access Standards grades
	Install a platform lift at Sutherland Leisure Centre	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1	Sport and Leisure		Unfunded	●					Installation of platform lift
	Develop Access Maps of Town Centres and provide information on Council's website	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.3	Public Domain and Traffic Services		Unfunded		●				# website hits Feedback on map accessibility
	Ensure accessibility information is captured for Council facilities and provide information on Council's website	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.3	Asset Services	Business and Community, Communications and Engagement	Funded	●	●	●	●		# website hits Feedback on accessibility information
	Review Council facilities and provide hearing augmentation systems where appropriate	1.3, 3.1, 3.2	Property Services		Unfunded					●	Review complete # of community facilities with hearing augmentation systems installed
	Review and support the provision of dedicated signage that that improves access and inclusion	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.3	Communications and Engagement/ Asset Services		Unfunded					●	Review complete # signage upgraded to enhance access and inclusion
	Review the provision of accessible drop-off zones in Town Centres, near medical facilities and key community facilities and develop strategies to maximise access and inclusion	1.3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.3	Public Domain and Traffic Services		Unfunded		●				Review complete # of upgrades of accessible drop-off zones # website hits

Aim/ Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
	Review the provision of mobility parking spaces in Town Centres, near medical facilities and at key community facilities and develop strategies to maximise access and inclusion	1.3, 3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 6.3	Public Domain and Traffic Services		Unfunded			●			Review complete # of additional accessible parking spaces # website hits
	Advocate for the returned provision of NSW Transport on Demand to support community access	1.2, 6.3	Public Domain and Traffic Services	NSW Transport	Funded		●				# advocacy undertaken Return of Transport on Demand
	Implement a Toilet Program that includes the provision of accessible public toilets and adult change tables at key community facilities	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.3	Manager Asset Services		Funded					●	# of accessible toilets # of adult change table facilities
2.2 Ensure community facilities, spaces and places provide for a range of inclusive participation opportunities for people of all abilities	Implement the beach wheelchair program and partner to support opportunities to enhance access and inclusion at Cronulla beaches	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.3	Public Safety and Lifeguards/ Business and Community	Disability Services	Unfunded					●	# beach wheelchair bookings Feedback from beach wheelchair users and people with disability accessing Cronulla beaches
	Explore opportunities to increase diverse representation in services and community programs	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.3	Library Services/ Arts and Culture/ Business and Community		Funded					●	% increase in people identifying as a person with disability participating in programs # inclusive programs increased
	Continue to provide a range of inclusive programs at community and creative facilities	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.3	Library Services/ Arts and Culture/ Business and Community		Funded					●	# of people identifying as a person with disability participating in programs # Auslan, sighted-guide, tactile, audio-description tours/ events, use of closed caption, large print or Easy Read formats, and quiet-time at facilities

	Aim/ Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
		Provide information on accessible and inclusive sports, leisure and recreation opportunities on Council's website	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1	Sports and Leisure		Funded					●	Provision of accessible information # of inclusive sport and recreation programs % increase in participation for people with disability
		Partner and promote active healthy living, improving wellbeing of people with disability	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1	Sports and Leisure/ Business and Community		Funded					●	# inclusive community wellbeing and health initiatives % participants reporting increased physical, social and emotional wellbeing
2.3	Local businesses and organisations are accessible and inclusive	Join Zero Barriers campaign to create more accessible and inclusive businesses in Sutherland Shire	3.2, 4.1	Manager Business and Community	Zero Barriers	Unfunded	●	●	●	●		# local businesses and organisations joining Zero Barriers campaign # of accessible business resources distributed
		Implement the Access and Inclusion Award at annual Sutherland Shire Business Awards	3.2, 4.1	Business and Community		Funded					●	# of local businesses and organisations applying for the Award Annual promotion of the Access and Inclusion Award
2.4	Provide accessible and inclusive events aimed at celebrating and connecting the community	Provide access and inclusion considerations at Council's community events	3.2, 3.3, 3.4	Arts and Culture/ Library Services/ Business and Community		Unfunded					●	# of accessible events or inclusive programming (e.g. Auslan interpreters, sighted-guide, closed captions, wheelchair accessible, etc)
		Continue to provide access and inclusion considerations at community events on Council property	3.2, 3.3, 3.4	Business and Community		Funded					●	# of people completing an access and equity compliance checklist
2.5	Emerging technologies empower greater independence for people with disability	Access and inclusion is considered for new technology platforms (e.g. One Council), programs (e.g. Zoom, MS Teams)	1.3	Information Management and Technology		Funded					●	Accessibility is considered for all new technology and programs (e.g. closed captions, screen-reader accessible, etc)

	Aim/ Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
2.6	Promote diverse housing tenures and types supporting people with disability	Require % of accessible, liveable and universally designed housing in Council's Housing Strategy and DCP	6.1	Strategic Planning		Funded					●	% of accessible, liveable and universally designed housing added to Council's Housing Strategy and DCP
2.7	Promote accessible transport options for people with disability to enable independence, mobility and community access	Promote accessible Public and Active Transport options on Council's website	6.3	Public Domain and Traffic Services		Funded		●				Promotion on website # website hits
		Advocate for accessible transport needs	1.2, 6.3	Public Domain and Traffic Services		Funded					●	# advocacy for accessible transport
2.8	Provide for a more liveable community through enhancing access and inclusion in placemaking creating public spaces that promote health, connectedness and wellbeing	Apply for grants and advocate for funding to enhance access and inclusion	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.2, 6.2	Asset Services/ Business and Community	Arts and Culture/ Library Services	Funded					●	# of grants applied for or amount of funding received
		Share grant and funding opportunities to enhance access and inclusion	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.2, 6.2	Business and Community		Funded					●	# of grant opportunities shared
		Optimise open space facilities to support people of all abilities and providing for a caring and liveable community	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.3	Asset Services	Business and Community	Funded					●	# and $ to address inclusion in the upgrade of open space facilities
2.9	Provide proactive programs to enhance mental health and wellbeing and reduce loneliness and social isolation	Explore options for a 'ShireABILITY community' online and regular email for people with disability to connect, share ideas and information, and promote opportunities to participate	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community	ShireABILITY reference group	Funded	●	●	●	●		# of people reached via online community # website hits # emails and # recipients

	Aim/ Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
		Partner with NSW Health, NSW DCJ and community organisations to provide targeted programs meeting identified needs and creating community connections	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community	NSW Health, NSW DCJ, community organisations	Funded					●	# of community programs or initiatives # Community Grants and Subsidies
2.10	Support the resilience of unpaid carers who provide assistance to person with disability, long-term illness or old age	Connect, advocate for and provide support for unpaid carers	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community	Department of Health, Benevolent Society, community organisations	Funded					●	# carer initiatives # Community Grants and Subsidies
2.11	Partner with community organisations and groups and promote opportunities for volunteerism to engage and support people with disability	Partner with community organisations and groups to promote and support opportunities for volunteerism to support and empower people with disability	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.3	Business and Community/ Arts and Culture/ Library Services/ Parks Operations	People and Culture, community organisations and groups	Funded					●	# volunteer initiatives # volunteer programs # Community Grants and Subsidies
2.12	Recognise, respect and support people with disability from diverse backgrounds	Provide cultural competency and safety training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural communities	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Business and Community	People and Culture, community organisations	Funded		●		●		# of training provided % of participants report increased awareness and understanding
2.13	Reduce disability discrimination and promote the right of people with disability to feel safe, included and respected	Promote disability advocacy and support organisations to reduce, report and address disability discrimination	3.1, 3.2	Business and Community	Community organisations	Funded					●	# of promotions or referrals
2.14	Prevent and reduce violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability through safety focused initiatives and community education campaigns	Explore establishing an Abuse of People with Disability Collaborative	3.1, 3.2, 5.2	Business and Community	Public Safety and Lifeguards, Ageing and Disability Commission	Funded	●	●	●	●		# of meetings # of initiatives

I have lived in the Sutherland Shire for 18 years, I have seen many changes over the years, some good and some not so good. I am a disability advocate and provide education to change attitudes and assumptions about limitations due to disability. I believe it is extremely important that people have the same access as each other, including to; transport, employment, retail, recreation and leisure as well as housing. Having a disability myself, I use a wheelchair for everyday use – so I understand first-hand how important equal access is! If there's a step into a shop, or no accessible toilet available, I will be unable to independently access that part of the community. That comes with having a liveable community – in a liveable community access and inclusion is key and it benefits the whole community. A liveable community is a happy, healthy and inclusive community for people of all abilities. People with disability are capable and valuable members of our Sutherland Shire, and the DIAP helps to give us a voice and create positive change for access and inclusion of people with disability.

~Shanon Bates

People enjoying ShireABILITY events

13. CREATING ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

People with disability have the same rights and desire to engage in meaningful employment and be productive members of the community. Employment contributes to feelings of self-worth, social interaction and mental health, and increases opportunities to support individual choice and control. However, it is difficult for people with disability to gain and retain employment.

Council is committed to providing equitable access to employment for people with disability and providing an inclusive workplace. We will embed diversity, equity and inclusion within Council's Workforce Strategy and actively promote employment programs and work experience opportunities for people with disability. This organisational commitment aims to demonstrate local leadership and encourage other employers and businesses to increase access and opportunity; in line with Government policy and to drive action at all levels to increase employment outcomes for people with disability.

During the DIAP Roundtable, some local employers said that they want to support people with disability, however they lack the understanding, right information and support to do it. Council can bring together employers, with Disability Employment Services, NDIS and other service providers to inform, educate and encourage more employment opportunities for people with disability. Collaboration and partnerships to support young people with disability transitioning from school to further education or employment will be undertaken along with opportunities to upskill and educate. Carers provide highly valued support for people with disability, with 12% of residents

reporting providing unpaid care[29]. Understanding the needs and experiences of carers helps to assist them in the workplace, as well as connecting them to carers support services and each other will provide the support and care that they need.

What actions will we focus on:

- Engage with staff to better understand needs and experiences of people with disability and carers

- Embed diversity, equity and inclusion within the workplace and role model inclusive programs for the community

- Investigate and remove barriers to employment and promote initiatives that provide opportunities for people with disability

- Promote success stories showcasing the diverse talents of people with disability in the workplace

- Collaborate and partner to promote and provide local education, training and employment opportunities

- Recognise, support and respect the needs of unpaid carers

Area of Focus 3	Access to Meaningful Employment											
	Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
3.1	Increase awareness, understanding, opportunities and support for people with disability employed at Council	Undertake an employee survey to better understand needs and supports for employees with disability	1.3	People and Culture	Business and Community	Funded		●		●		% of staff who identify as a person with disability increasing annually # strategies implemented supporting people with disability % of staff with disability agree their needs are well supported at Council
		Develop fact sheets for employees and managers increasing disability awareness and inclusion	1.3	People and Culture	Business and Community	Funded	●					# fact sheets distributed % of employees report increased awareness and understanding
		Investigate establishment of a Disability Network for employees with disability	1.3	People and Culture		Funded				●		# employees in Network % increase in Network numbers
		Ensure Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is embedded within Workforce Strategy	1.3	People and Culture		Funded	●					Workforce Strategy developed and implemented

Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
	Review human resources determinations, guidelines and processes to embed access and inclusion	1.3	People and Culture		Funded					●	# determinations, guidelines and processes reviewed
	Investigate and remove barriers to employment and promote initiatives that provide opportunities for people with disability	1.3	People and Culture		Funded					●	# barriers removed # people who identify as a person with disability employed at Council
	Promote stories and experiences of diverse employees at Council	1.1, 1.3	Communications and Engagement		Funded					●	# stories and experiences shared % increased awareness and understanding of diversity
3.2 Increase employment opportunities for people who identify as a person with disability at Council	Review recruitment processes to promote access and inclusion, ensure equal access to employment opportunities, and apply for reasonable workplace adjustments	1.3	People and Culture		Funded			●			Review of recruitment processes # of new staff employed who identify as a person with disability
	Consider inclusion of people with disability when developing an Apprentice, Graduate and Trainee Program and promote opportunities to Disability Employment Services	1.3	People and Culture		Funded			●	●		# of new Apprentices, Graduates and Trainees who identify as a person with disability
3.3 Upskill people with disability and improve access to meaningful employment opportunities	Bring together people with disability, employers, NDIS and Disability Employment Services to promote local employment opportunities	3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2	Business and Community		Unfunded			●		●	# of attendees % of participants report increased access to employment opportunities
	Share opportunities and resources with local businesses to support disability employment opportunities	3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2	Business and Community		Funded					●	# of resources developed and shared
	Collaborate to provide transitions support with Dept. of Education, TAFE, School Leaver Employment Services, employers and young people with disability	3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Business and Community		Unfunded	●		●			# of attendees % of participants report increased access to employment opportunities

Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
	Promote opportunities to develop employment qualifications through partnerships with Universities, TAFE and Registered Training Organisations	3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Business and Community		Funded					●	# opportunities or courses promoted
	Provide work experience program for people with disability to gain employment skills	3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3	Business and Community/ Arts and Culture/ Library Services/ Parks Operations/ Fleet and Logistics/ Waste Services	People and Culture	Funded		●	●	●		# people with disability complete work experience % of participants report increased skills and experience
3.4 Procurement policies contribute towards the creation of employment opportunities for people with disability	Incorporate Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE's) into Procurement Policy and Procedures	1.3	Corporate Governance		Funded					●	Review of Procurement Policy and Procedures to incorporate ADE's # ADE's where goods and services are procured from
3.5 Recognise, support and respect the needs of unpaid carers	Implement strategies to continue to improve the support and understanding of people with caring responsibilities employed at Council	1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3	People and Culture	Business and Community	Funded				●		% of staff with caring responsibilities who agree their needs are well supported at Council
	Promote the Carers Gateway and local carers support services and groups	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Business and Community		Funded					●	# supports provided

14. IMPROVING ACCESS THROUGH SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

Navigating complex and difficult systems and processes to access services and information is a common challenge for people with disability, their families, and carers which can add significant stress, and unnecessary frustration. Council can leverage knowledgeable and trained staff to provide assistance and improve systems and processes to be more easily accessible. The provision of information and ways of communicating can enhance the independence of people with disability and support them to make informed decisions and access what they need, when they need it.

Access to information is fundamental to being able to meaningfully participate and engage in the civic, social, economic and community life in the Sutherland Shire. There has been an expansion in the use of technologies to inform, communicate, engage, and connect people online which has made information more accessible for most people. However, discussions throughout the engagement reminded us that for some people with disability, a digital divide still exists and to effectively communicate and connect, a variety of methods are needed to be considered. The development of Council's new digital experience platform offers a great opportunity to ensure information is targeted, accessible and inclusive, meeting WAG 2.0 Level AA conformance.

Council's ongoing engagement through the Access and Inclusion Committee and Shire*ABILITY* reference group, will ensure that the voice, rights, needs and priorities of people with disability are heard and considered. Council will continue to work in partnership with specialist agencies to provide information in accessible formats, and to meet accessibility needs of participants at community programs and events. Ongoing engagement with the wider community of people with disability, their families and carers will help with the continuous improvement, decision making and advocacy of Council.

Reviewing policies and procedures aligned with best-practice inclusion strategies will allow Council to provide better services for people with disability. New technologies will be explored and utilised to enhance accessibility and Council will continue to work with specialist community service personnel to continue providing access and inclusion advice. Importantly, an internal cross-departmental DIAP Working Party will monitor implementation of this DIAP, along with the Access and Inclusion Committee, and champion access and inclusion across Council.

What actions will we focus on:
- Continue to engage people with a disability in decision-making processes
- Ensure Council information is accessible to all and seek specialist guidance to provide key information in alternate formats
- Actively ask and endeavour to provide information, services and events that meet accessibility needs
- Review policies, systems and processes to ensure equitable access for people with disability
- Utilise new technologies and systems to enhance accessibility across Council programs
- Ensure good governance and best-practice service standards are followed

Ben Richardson, Sutherland Shire Council Employee

"Mental health is often closer than we realise. Based on current statistics affecting 1 in 5 Australians, that's 240+ out of our 1200 employees at Sutherland Shire Council that will struggle with mental health issues! As an employee of Council who is "1 in 5", it's encouraging to see the things on offer to help those who need it. Counselling, flexible working conditions, various leave benefits are just a few examples of the helpful support mechanisms available to employees. Whether at work or at home, we want to ensure that when we show up, we are at our best, and with a growing awareness and importance being placed on employee health and wellbeing at Council, it will be exciting to see how we continue to build in this space in the years to come.

Area of Focus 4	Improving Systems and Processes											
	Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
4.1	Ensure community engagement informs ongoing planning for community services, programs and facilities with an aim to improve access, inclusion and liveability	The Access and Inclusion Committee will provide strategic advice to Council on access and inclusion and promote the rights of people with disability	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2	Business and Community	Access and Inclusion Committee	Funded					●	# meetings # issues addressed % participant satisfaction
		Maintain the ShireABILITY reference group for Council	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2	Business and Community	ShireABILITY reference group	Funded					●	# meetings # initiatives or events % participant satisfaction
		Continue to engage people with disability in decision-making processes and in the development and implementation of DIAP's	1.1, 1.2, 3.2	Business and Community		Funded				●	●	Annual Report of achievements # of participants and # of engagements DIAP Roundtable every 4 years
4.2	Engage broad representation of employees to develop, monitor and review Council's DIAP's	Council to facilitate DIAP Working Party Meetings to champion access and inclusion across Council and monitor implementation of the DIAP	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2	Business and Community	DIAP Working Party	Funded					●	Min 4 meetings per year Annual report of achievements

	Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
4.3	Ensure Council information is accessible to all	Review accessibility standards for the Digital Experience Platform to exceed WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard and perform user testing with people with disability	1.1, 1.3, 3.2	Communications and Engagement	Information Management and Technology	Funded	●					% Website WCAG compliant User testing results by people with disability Screen reader testing
		Training provided to staff on creating accessible PDF and Word documents and web authoring meeting WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard	1.1, 1.3, 3.2	Communications and Engagement	Information Management and Technology	Funded					●	Factsheets or user instructions developed # employees received training
		Work with IT to introduce minimum standards for public-facing documents such as Accessible PDFs and any new communication channels	1.1, 3.2	Communications and Engagement	Information Management and Technology	Funded					●	Minimum Standards Guidelines developed
		Ensure all images and videos produced meet Accessibility Guidelines	1.1, 1.3, 3.2	Communications and Engagement		Funded					●	% of images and videos produced meeting Accessibility Guidelines
4.4	Provide accessible customer services for people of all abilities	Ensure various options for customers to communicate with Council (e.g. National Relay Service, Translating and Interpreting Services, Easy Read resources, website, email, phone, in-person)	1.1, 1.3	Communications and Engagement		Funded					●	# of people using accessible options or resources % of people who identify as a person with disability reporting easy communication with Council
		Ask the question during bookings at Council services, programs or events: If people have accessibility requirements and accommodate requirements wherever possible	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 4.3	Arts and Culture/ Library Services/ Business and Community		Funded					●	# people who identify as having accessibility requirements # accessibility modifications provided
4.5	Promote best practice standards for access and inclusion and manage implementation of Council's DIAP	Provide specialist community service personnel to provide access and inclusion advice and build the capacity of the disability sector	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	Manager Business and Community		Funded					●	Disability and Mental Health Annual Sector Plans # information and referrals # disability or mental health services supported

	Aim/Outcomes	Action (what we will do?)	Strategic Links	Delivery Stream	Collaboration	Funding	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Ongoing	Measures
4.6	Ensure people with disability can easily report access and inclusion issues	Ensure Snap Send Solve is accessible and customer services staff are trained on access and inclusion with Community Services personnel to provide specialist advice	1.1, 1.3, 3.2, 3.3	Communications and Engagement/ Business and Community	Information Management and Technology	Funded					●	# of access and inclusion Customer Request Management # issues resolved in a timely manner
4.7	Review Policies, Systems and Processes to ensure equitable access for people with disability	Review policies, guidelines and toolkits and update to ensure they meet best practice accessibility and inclusion	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	Communications and Engagement		Funded		●				# of Policies/ Guidelines/Processes reviewed and updated
4.8	Utilise new technologies to enhance accessibility across Council programs	Increase accessibility of e-learning through the implementation of Web Content Accessibility, Zoom and MS Teams	1.1, 1.3	People and Culture/ Information Management and Technology		Funded			●			# e-learning programs and web content with accessibility features
		Provide contemporary, reliable, secure and fit-for-purpose information management and technology services	1.1, 1.3	Information Management and Technology		Funded					●	# new programs or technology services % of user satisfaction
4.9	Endeavour to provide best-practice inclusion strategies for Council services	Continue to implement Inclusion Guidelines for Children's Services and develop a supportive enrolment and transition process	3.2, 4.3	Children's Services		Funded					●	Implement Guidelines # of children who identify as having a developmental delay or disability
4.10	Strengthen the connection to Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI and NDIS) and local disability service providers	Partner with Lifestart (ECEI Partner in the Community) to inform and educate staff for supporting early childhood intervention	3.2, 4.3	Children's Services	Lifestart, NDIS	Funded				●		# staff trained # children who identify as having a developmental delay or disability receiving ECEI or NDIS

1. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Integration
The actions in this Strategy may become part of our Delivery Program and Operational Plan and will help to deliver Sutherland Shire's Community Strategic Plan.

Implementation
A detailed implementation Plan that includes timeframes, priorities, resources, and responsibilities will be developed to help with delivery of the Strategy.

Evaluation
Measures have been developed to record our progress towards delivering this Strategy. Data will be collected throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

Reporting
Council's progress towards delivering this Strategy will be reported as part of our normal performance reporting cycle.

Aligned with *Australia's Disability Strategy and NSW Disability Inclusion Plan*, the Sutherland Shire DIAP 2022-26 sets out the whole of Government goals that support the inclusion in the community of people with disability, to improve access to services and facilities and provide meaningful collaboration with people with disability to impact long-term change.

AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Sutherland Shire Council recognises that this Plan cannot be delivered by Council alone. In order to achieve the action outcomes, we need to partner with other levels of Government, businesses, community and disability organisations, and people with disability, their families and carers.

INTEGRATION

This DIAP and Action Plan will integrate with our four-year Delivery Program and annual Operational plans, supporting our delivery of Sutherland Shire's Community Strategic Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

The delivery of the vision and principles within this Strategy will be guided by the Action Plan contained within it. The Action Plan sets out a program of actions for each of the Focus Areas and includes timeframes, responsibilities and resources required.

REPORTING

We will report on the delivery of this Strategy in the following ways:

- Quarterly updates for Council's Access and Inclusion Committee and DIAP Working Party
- Occasional reporting on achievements via social media and Our Shire newsletter
- Annual Report and Report to the NSW Minister of Families, Communities and Disability Services
- Major review in 2016 prior to development of the next DIAP

1.1 RESOURCING

Most of the actions within this DIAP will not require additional funding and will be included as part of Council's everyday work. Some actions will require additional funding, and these will be considered as part of Council's annual budget and planning process. We may apply for grant funding or sponsorship or partner with other agencies to help us deliver the actions in this DIAP.

This DIAP recommends Council allocate of a proportion of the capital improvement funds to be earmarked for access and inclusion upgrades. This will mean that funds will be available to create prompt improvements to enhance accessibility to Council buildings, open spaces and Town Centres.

1.2 MEASURING SUCCESS

A comprehensive reporting framework drives the ongoing refinement and implementation of the DIAP by:

1. Regularly engaging with stakeholders that have contributed to the development of actions and priorities
2. Responding to the legislative reporting requirements within Council's Annual Report
3. Identifying the outcomes of actions and measures for progress to be accurately reported within Operational Plans
4. Providing the opportunity for continuous improvement to inform future directions and decisions

The Evaluation Framework detailed in the 2022-26 DIAP Action Plan details actions and measures for the four Focus Areas along with the desired aims and outcomes. This along with the demographic profile of our community and ongoing community engagement results will provide comprehensive measurement of the DIAP.

To be responsive to environmental changes, this DIAP will be dynamic to new opportunities or priorities, with ongoing participation with people with disability to enable Council to remain informed and engaged. Any modifications in actions will be documented and reported annually.

The 2022-26 DIAP, supporting documents and Annual Report of achievements will be made publicly available and be promoted to staff and the community. A comprehensive review of the 2022-26 DIAP will be undertaken prior to the development of Council's next DIAP.

Council is committed to making Sutherland Shire an accessible, liveable and inclusive city now, and into the future and the 2022-26 DIAP will help pave the way forward for people with a disability to be supported and empowered to reach their full potential.

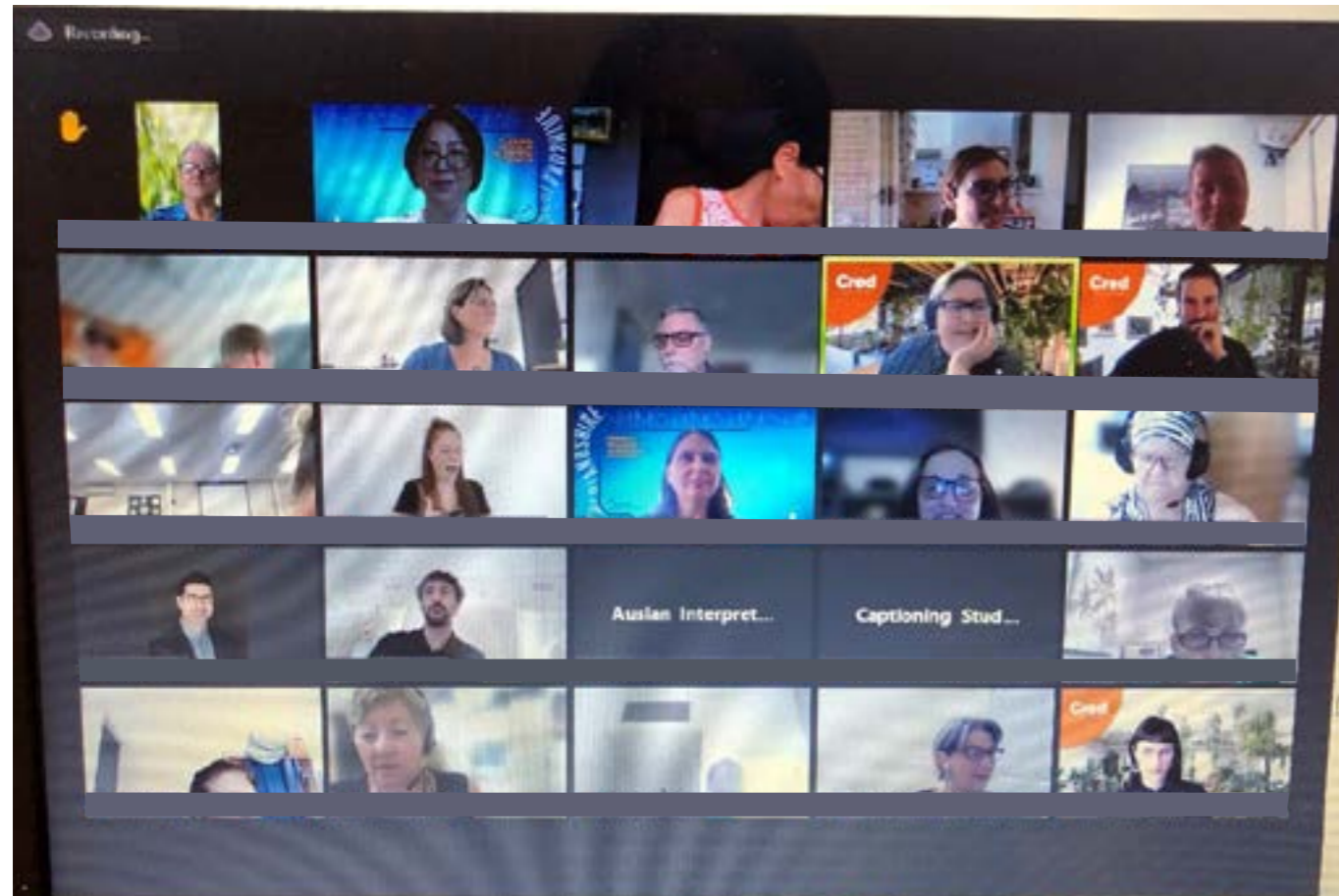**Screen photo of participants at the online DIAP Roundtable in February 2022**

2. ACRONYMS

CSP: Community Strategic Plan

DIAP: Disability Inclusion Action Plan

NDIS: National Disability insurance Scheme

UNCRPD: United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

WAG 2.0: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

Over 250 families enjoying the 2021 ShireABILITY Family Fun Day

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