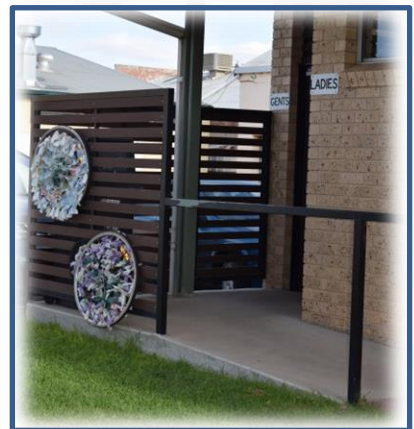




Balranald Shire Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2017 – 2019



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Message from the Mayor



Balranald Shire Council embraces the inclusion of people with a disability in all aspects of community life. We are committed to creating a more inclusive and welcoming community for people with disabilities and it is with pleasure that I present the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The Plan demonstrates our commitment to improve the quality of our services, facilities, systems and programs over a three year period. The Plan was developed through consultation with the community and outlines the actions we will take to provide more accessible and inclusive services.

We look forward to hearing about the positive impact the Plan has for people with a disability in our Shire.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Cr. Leigh Byron". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cr. Leigh Byron
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

Message from the General Manager



Disability Inclusion Planning is about supporting the basic right of choice for people with a disability in our community. People with a disability have the same right to choose how to live, work and enjoy community life as we all do.

Council's aim is to ensure that our services, programs and facilities are inclusive. The Plan aims to improve conditions for people with a disability who live, work and visit our Shire.

I look forward to working with staff and our community to put our plan into action.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Drenovski', written in a cursive style.

Aaron Drenovski
General Manager

Background

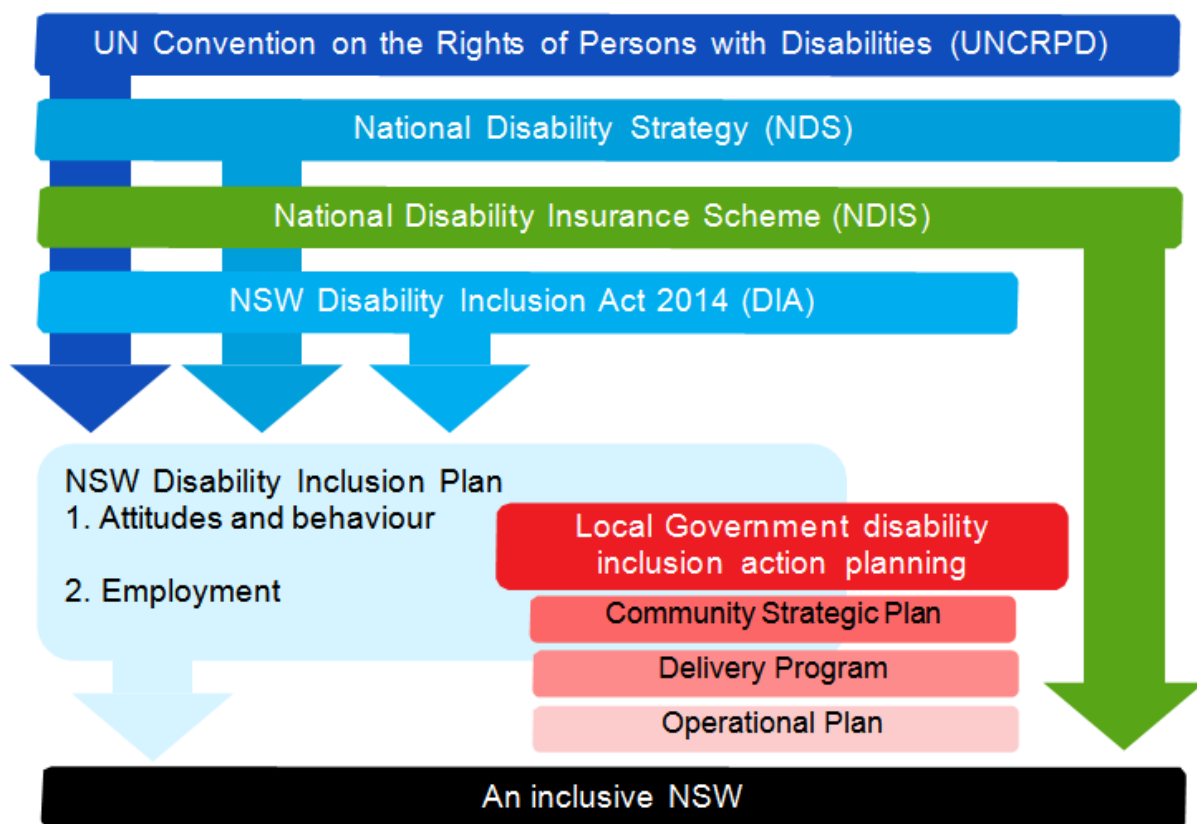
In August 2014 the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 was passed. This Act requires Balranald Shire Council to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan to help remove barriers and enable people with a disability to participate fully in their communities.

Council's vision is for an inclusive, respectful and diverse community where all residents and visitors enjoy a safe and friendly environment. Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan will aim to provide better access to Council information, services and facilities ensuring people with disabilities can fully participate in their community.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed through a community consultation and research process. A review of Council documents and Government policy took place and a staff / community survey was conducted.

The plan was endorsed at Council's March 2017 meeting and placed on public exhibition. The Plan will be formally adopted by Council following the public exhibition period.

Legislation and Policy



Source: Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines Local Government

International

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities protects the rights of all people with a disability around the world. Australia was one of the first countries to sign the Convention when it was ratified in 2008. The convention acknowledges that people with disability have the same human rights as those without disability. This commits participating governments to ensure these rights can be exercised and that barriers are removed. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities supports the social model of disability. This recognises that attitudes, practices and structures are disabling and can create barriers for people with disability from enjoying economic participation, social inclusion and equality which are not an inevitable outcome of their disability.

The Convention is guided by the following principles:

- respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices and independence of persons;
- non-discrimination;
- full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- equality between men and women;
- respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

National

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, developed in partnership by the Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments, sets out a national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers, to support the commitment made to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Actions in the Implementation Plan that involve councils include improving Web Content accessibility, access to infrastructure, recreation, employment and community participation.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a major reform that will deliver a national system of disability support focused on the individual needs and choices of people with disability. The National Disability Insurance Scheme gives participants more choice and control over how, when and where supports are provided.

State

Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)

The Disability Inclusion Act (2014) acknowledges human rights; promoting the independence and social and economic inclusion of people with disability.

The Act requires NSW government departments, local councils and some other public authorities to develop and implement a Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The plan must be consistent with the State Disability Inclusion Plan and include strategies to increase access and participation.

Local

Balranald Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2026 was created by the community and provides a long term vision for our Shire. The Community Strategic Plan informs Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, which set out Council's role in achieving the community's vision. Other Council plans and documents relevant to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan include:

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Community Priorities

Council is committed to focusing on the following future priorities;

- Ensuring Local Government Representation by striving to be "Fit for the Future"
- Increase pride in our towns and villages
- Attract and retain population and visitation numbers
- Maintain current services and improve access to services
- Create employment opportunities
- Foster a safe community
- Involve our children and youth in decisions and activities
- Build community respect and purpose within the community
- Improve our sporting and recreational infrastructure
- Encourage residents and ratepayers to have a say in decisions affecting the community
- Develop local leaders

Other legislation and standards informing Council's work

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Carers Recognition Act 2012
- Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005

Disability Snapshot in Balranald Shire

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) defines disability as:

"The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

Information about disability in Balranald Shire is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census data. The Census records information on people who identify as needing help with mobility, self-care or communication due to disability or long-term health conditions.

4.6% of the population, or 106 people living in Balranald Shire, identified as needing assistance because of a profound or severe disability.

Need for assistance with core activities 2011

Assistance needed by age group (years)	Number
0 to 4	3
5 to 14	6
15 to 19	3
20 to 24	3
25 to 34	4
35 to 44	9
45 to 54	12
55 to 64	14
65 to 74	11
75 to 84	29
85 and over	12
Total persons needing assistance	106

Council Activity

Council works to provide opportunities and raise awareness of inclusion of people with disabilities.

Some examples include:

- Footpath paving (5.3.2 b operational plan 2017-18);
- Playground design and construction (2.3.1 a operational plan 2017-18);
- Facilities (Buildings) design and construction;

- Community activities and events (1.1.1 a operational plan 2017-18)
- Community bus services
- Social media to promote and inform local residents (1.2.3 d operational plan 2017-18)
- Monitor via community survey (1.2.4 c operational plan 2017-18)
- Balranald Interagency Group (BIG) meetings to address concerns (2.1.3 a operational plan 2017-18)
- Public toilets available at Discovery Centre
- Use of heated pool (2.3.1 b operational plan 2017-18)

Community Consultation

Council advertised in local newspapers and also on local notice boards for interested community members to complete a questionnaire about how Council could make its Shire more inclusive for residents. Council staff also visited a number of people with disabilities to seek their feedback.

There was a series of questions in the survey asking the participants how the Balranald Shire can support and allow for people with a disability to fully participate in community life. Many of the questions asked in the survey were about council facilities and accessing them.

There were around 57 responses, men and women from the ages of 25 – 90 years, who completed the survey and gave their opinions on how the Balranald Shire Council can support those with a disability and their carers.

Key community responses highlighted the importance of being involved in the local community and having access to appropriate services and recreational and social opportunities.

The majority of challenges identified by participants related to mobility (in terms of navigating the built environment).

The answers in many of the surveys identified opportunities for Council to improve accessibility for those with a disability and included suggestions such as:

- Placement of braille signs on toilets could assist those with vision impairment;
- Installation of automatic doors on toilets and at key Council facilities could improve accessibility for those in electric wheelchairs;
- Improved layout of displays in Council's Visitor Information Centre to make it easier for those with a walker to get around;
- Lowering counter tops at Council facilities where the general public interact with staff; and
- Improving accessibility of and ease of use of footpaths and parks in the Shire for those with a mobility scooter or walking frame.

The participants of the survey also identified a need for more disabled parking spots around the town.

Positive feedback was provided on how businesses within the Shire sought to employ people with a disability.

Action Plan – What Council will do

1. – Positive attitudes and behaviour

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Responsibility-Business Unit	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
A community that is proactive, engaged, inclusive and connected	Audit website to ensure that images include people with disabilities and that language is appropriate.	Website includes appropriate images and language.	Tourism Manager/Community Development Officer	July 2017	CSP Pillar 5 – Our infrastructure 5.3.2
	Develop and facilitate Disability Awareness Training for staff (other than induction training).	Staff training completed.	Director, Corporate and Community Development	Develop July 2018 Facilitate annually	



2 – Liveable communities

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Responsibility	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Accessibility considered in design and construction of final plans and activities	Audit activities and events run by Council for accessibility.	Accessibility issues identified and addressed.	Tourism Manager/ Community Development Officer	July 2018	CSP Pillar 5 – Our infrastructure 5.3.2
	Develop a Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan.	Priority actions completed to timeframe and budget.	General Manager	December 2018	CSP Pillar 2 – Our place 2.1.3
	Investigate and report to Council on improvements to key Council facilities to improve accessibility for those with a disability.	Priority actions completed to timeframe and budget.	Infrastructure Services	December 2018	CSP Pillar 5 – Our infrastructure 5.3.2
	Review the number of Disabled Parks in Balranald Shire and provide additional where required.	Disabled Parking provision reviewed by Council. Outcomes communicated to Council and community.	Infrastructure Services	December 2018	
	Source funding for all play equipment to improve playgrounds throughout the Shire.	Installation of accessible play equipment throughout Shire.	Infrastructure Services	July 2017 – Dec 2019	
	Develop and maintain a NDIS page on the Council Website.	NDIS Website established and maintained.	Tourism Manager / Community Development Officer	December 2017	
	Audit Council buildings and facilities to ensure accessibility compliance.	Audit complete with recommendations for action.	Infrastructure Services	December 2017	

3 – Employment

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Responsibility	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Enhance employment of people with a disability within Council.	Develop Council's Workforce Management Strategy to include best practice guidelines for inclusion.	Gaps in Workforce Management Strategy identified and addressed.	Director, Corporate and Community Development	December 2018	CSP – Pillar 5 – Our infrastructure 5.3.2
	Review recruitment processes, forms and language for accessibility.	Recruitment process, forms and language targeted and simplified.	Director, Corporate and Community Development	December 2018	
	Provide information and training for Council supervisors/managers in order to increase their knowledge and skill.	Increased level of knowledge and skill displayed by supervisors/managers.	Director, Corporate and Community Development	July 2019	
	Continue to conduct and respond to staff disability inclusion survey.	Staff survey conducted and collated with recommendation made.	Director, Corporate and Community Development	Annually.	
	Undertake a full review of barriers to employment with Council for people with a disability and development of a Council paper on outcomes of this.	Barriers to Council employment are identified and measures to remove/minimise where appropriate are put in place.	General Manager	December 2019	

4 – Service systems and processes

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Responsibility	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Information is provided in a variety of formats	Develop a fact sheet to assist Balranald Shire Council customer service staff respond to queries regarding services for people with disabilities.	Fact sheet developed and utilised by staff. Increased level of staff knowledge.	Director, Corporate and Community Development	December 2018	CSP – Pillar 5 – Our information 5.3.2
	Develop a plan for Website content compliance with disability standards.	Website content meets accessibility standards	Tourism Manager/ Community Development Officer	December 2019	
	Investigate technologies to enhance the accessibility of customer service experience	Community members who are hearing impaired can access Council information easily	Director Corporate and Community Services	July 2018	
Consult with people with a disability regarding their needs.	Review the current community consultation procedure to include a checklist on inclusive consultation.	Community Consultation includes people with disabilities.	Community Development Officer	December 2017	

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan includes timelines to guide the completion of the actions. The process will be monitored and evaluated through the Integrated Planning and Reporting cycle.

Implementation of the Plan will be undertaken by the responsible Business Units. Each action will be monitored and reported against for the periods 1 July – 31 December and 1 January – 30 June of each year.

The Director of Corporate and Community Development will monitor the overall implementation of the Plan and the integration of its actions into Council's new Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.

Reporting

Outcomes and achievements will be reported in Council's Annual Report and General Managers six monthly report to the community. These reports will be available on Council's Website and at its Council Offices Building, 70 Market Street Balranald.

A report will also be provided to the Department of Family and Community Services and the Minister for Disability Services.

Review

The Plan will be reviewed annually in line with the Integrated Planning and Reporting cycle. An audit, evaluation and review of the Plan will be conducted at the end of Council's term.

Acknowledgement

Council would like to thank the many community members who provided their views, personal stories and ideas for positive change.

