

Central Coast Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021–2025

Central
Coast
Council

Highlights Report



Image: Three boys splashing in the waves at Umina Beach.

Image: Accessible beach matting running across the sand in front of a line of parked cars with houses in the background.



Image: An internal view of a Changing Place with privacy screen, adult changing table and hoist.



Image: Members of the Access and Inclusion Reference Group meeting around a table.



Image: A lady and two boys pushing an accessible merry-go-round at Sun Valley Play Space.



Introduction

A sense of belonging is at the heart of Council's Community Strategic Plan. For people with a disability, community participation means fair and equitable access in all aspects of community life. People with disabilities are an integral part of our community and contribute daily to the social, cultural and economic life of the Central Coast region.

Central Coast Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2021 - 2025 is legislated by the NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014) and developed in close consultation with Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group (AIRG), people with lived experience of disability, disability service and support organisations and advocacy groups. It is a four-year plan that defines the strategies and actions Council will undertake to enable people with disabilities to better access mainstream services, facilities, information and support on the Central Coast.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan sets out clear actions for Council to meet its four-year targets. These are categorised into four themes, creating a framework for action:

- 1. Attitudes and Behaviours**
- 2. Liveable Communities**
- 3. Employment**
- 4. Systems and Processes**

This report highlights some of the achievements of the current Disability Inclusion Action Plan.



Image: A lady in a pottery studio standing at a modified pottery wheel receiving instruction from a pottery teacher.



Image: A stenciled image on a cement pathway of an animated pathway user and banner that says, "Be kind. Share the Space."



Image: A lady in Central Coast Council uniform stands behind a display with a sign about invisible disabilities.

Activities to improve attitudes and behaviours toward People with a Disability

■ Two original Virtual Reality (VR) experiences to educate the community about physical and sensory disabilities. Each experience was co-designed with Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group and hosted to over 250 participants across the community. The evaluation showed that the use of this technology was able to shift biases and assumptions because it created a first-hand experience for the user that embodied the lived experience faced by people with a disability. Council was invited to talk about the experience on a local radio station who also produced a video story interviewing participants about their experience. The project was a finalist in this year's Local Government NSW Excellence Awards category of 'Special Project Initiative'

■ Council delivered the 'Invisible Disabilities' campaign to challenge community perceptions and change limiting attitudes and behaviours towards people with invisible disabilities

■ Promoted how a person with a disability can get a Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK)



■ Developed a 'Shared Pathways are for Everyone' wayfinding project where Council installed creative stencils along the Tuggerah Lake Foreshore shared pathway, as an education campaign to increase positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with a disability

■ Designed and promoted an 'Accessible and Inclusive Sport and Active Recreation Resource Booklet' to local sport and active recreation providers so that more people with a disability can participate in mainstream sporting pursuits. This program won the 2022 Sport NSW Council of the Year award and was supported by a subsequent program to provide small adjustments to enable the recommendations in the resource

■ Celebrated International Day of People with Disability 2022 with launch of Council's new Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2021-2025) and a promotional video campaign showcasing the Beach Access Program in readiness for summer 2022/23



■ Accessible and Inclusive pottery program was delivered in partnership with a local creative business to support people with a disability to participate in a mainstream pottery making program. Small adjustments were made to ensure the program was inclusive such as two portable ramps and a modified pottery wheel. A local radio station promoted the story and interviewed participants and creative practitioners. A public exhibition of participant work and launch event was held to celebrate the program and over half of the participants went on to be part of the Gosford Regional Gallery's 'Studio Gossie' program to continue developing their creative practice

■ A disability inclusion 'Come and Try' day was held at Peninsula Leisure Centre with multiple sporting codes on offer to over 120 participants

What we did to improve the quality of life for People with a Disability



- Installed beach matting and offered free beach wheelchair hire over the 2022-2023 summer patrol season at Ocean Beach, Umina, Terrigal and Toowoona Bay to enable universal access to the shoreline
- Implemented multiple projects to improve physical access in four town centres, including:
 - ◆ Sidewalk upgrades and widening within Wyong and Budgewoi
 - ◆ Clearing of shrubbery and other items on pathways throughout The Entrance, Gosford, Wyong and Budgewoi to remove obstructions for users of mobility equipment
- An Accessible Nature Brochure was developed and published to help with planning a trip outdoors, featuring locations at Somersby Falls Picnic Area, Bateau Bay Picnic Area, Carawah Boardwalk, West Gosford, St Johns Lookout, Katandra Reserve, Mount Elliot. Over 300 copies were and distributed across the Central Coast as well as being available online Central Coast Council's website
- An Accessible Beaches Brochure was developed and published profiling the accessible features of 10 beaches on the Coast featuring locations. Over 300 copies were printed and distributed to key Council contact centres and available on Central Coast Council's website
- Implemented accessibility improvements to the car park and entrance at Niagara Park Stadium
- Completed an upgrade to transform the Central Coast Visitor Information Centre located at The Entrance.



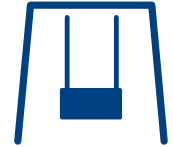
By creating a vibrant and interactive hub for visitors and residents to access tailored information on where to eat, drink and stay on the Coast.

The renewed hub will also allow the local community to access improved facilities and amenities including new toilets and function spaces year round. These include:

- ◆ New and modern amenities that encompass improved facilities, including new public toilets and a Changing Places facility
 - ◆ Improved layout and decking to take advantage of the magnificent Entrance Channel and natural environment and improved accessibility
 - ◆ Dedicated spaces for local makers and creators to showcase and sell a wide range of bespoke local products
 - ◆ Bookable function area for small scale events
 - ◆ Purpose-built accessible greenroom and backstage office area to support the existing Memorial Park stage and performers
- Supported and enabled accessible school sporting events including the Department of Education's Boccia Tournament and the Central Coast Multi Sport Days

■ New and upgraded outdoor play spaces constructed that incorporate accessible play features at:

◆ Sun Valley Park, Green Point - Changing Place and accessible toilets, shaded picnic areas and seating, nest swing, accessible carousel, paths of travel and soft fall throughout the play space



◆ Ross Park, Avoca Beach - sensory elements and a maze path, rubber soft fall, new shade structures

◆ Tunkuwallin Oval, Gwandalan – established tree canopy provides natural shade over the play space, seating throughout and sheltered picnic tables, oversized bead and rail activity, nest swing, accessible carousel and accessible pathways circulating the facility



■ Upgraded six bus stops to improve accessibility in line with the 'The Bus Stop Program' which is on track to meet the corporate target by 30 June 2023

■ Improvements to accessible parking across the Central Coast were identified with subsequent consultation underway

■ Constructed 3.1 kilometres of shared paths and footpaths in line with The Pathway Program which is on track to meet the corporate target by mid 2023



■ Tuggerawong foreshore shared path project included the provision of pram ramps and raised boardwalk ramps to provide a continuous path of travel

■ Actions in the Draft Central Coast Local Housing Strategy to advocate for updates to the adaptable Housing Standards and related policies to encourage the adoption of Universal Design in future developments

■ Council owned and operated leisure centres supported and enabled events and programs for people with a disability which included:

- ◆ Wheelchair basketball
- ◆ Accessible and inclusive soccer
- ◆ Special Olympics basketball
- ◆ Weekly swimming lessons
- ◆ Intensive swimming lesson programs for schools

■ Sport and active recreation programs led by Central Coast Council in partnership with local service providers created more opportunities for participation such as:

- ◆ An online Sports Hub to promote local sport and active recreation providers with over 150 registered on The Hub
- ◆ Hosted an 'Activate Inclusion Sports Day' in collaboration with Disability Sport Australia involving 150 local students with disabilities from across the region
- ◆ Council's 'Get Active' San Remo and Blue Haven initiative featured 155 'Come and Try' sessions



Image: A beach wheelchair sits on a cement pathway that accesses the sand of the beach. In the distance walkers are taking part in the 5 Lands Walk.



Image: A accessible ramp leads from a concrete path and through a door to an exhibition space.



Image: A lady wearing a sun hat is unloading her car in an accessible parking space at Umina Beach.

- ◆ 'Accessible and Inclusive Sport and Activation Resource' developed by Central Coast Council was presented at two state sporting industry conferences
- ◆ 'Live My Experience' virtual reality experience developed by Central Coast Council was hosted to peak body staff at the Sports House NSW in Olympic Park

■ Events and activities at our libraries included:

- ◆ Youth Service Team hosted a sensory glow room at Kincumber in the October 2022 school holidays
- ◆ Installation of a touch screen for people that are unable to use a mouse for computer activities at Gosford Library
- ◆ An Auslan interpreted National Children's Storytime live reading of 'Family Tree' by Josh Pyke was hosted online with all Central Coast Libraries



■ Events at our theatres included:

- ◆ Three theatre tours for Senior's Week which attracted 60 participants
- ◆ 'Are You Pulling My Leg?' which is a line-up of stand-up comedians with lived experience of disability was shown live captioned and Auslan interpreted

■ Public major community events included:

- ◆ A site audit examining the accessible features was incorporated into the planning of the Central Coast Music Festival
- ◆ Information and advice on accessible formats of promotional content for patrons of various events in the 2022 Lakes Festival Calendar
- ◆ The Lakes Festival Calendar of Events highlighted the accessibility features of each activity and information was provided in an accessible format and published on Central Coast Council's website
- ◆ Accessible viewing platform, outdoor event flooring and a sensory space was installed at Central Coast Music Festival
- ◆ 2022 Australia Day Awards included an Auslan interpreter
- ◆ Promotion of accessible parking spaces at Chrome Fest and New Year's Eve celebrations

How we made Council's Systems and Process Accessible

■ Quarterly meetings were convened with the Access and Inclusion Reference Group whose members guide Council on the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. A video story promoting the group and their role was uploaded to the Council website. was released in 2022.

■ In March 2023, 12 new and returning members were appointed to the Access and Inclusion Reference Group for their lived experience, skills and linkages with the sector. The new group will guide Council on the continued implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Each new member had a professional profile picture taken to complement information about their experience and background which was promoted on the Central Coast Council website



Image: A group photo of the 11 members of the Access and Inclusion Reference Group.



Image: Two boys climbing the ropes of suspended play equipment at Sun Valley Play Space.



Image: Montage of the virtual reality project. People with VR headsets and hand controls, and the avatar viewed through the headset.

- Central Coast Council's Disability Inclusion Officer attends bi-monthly meetings of the Disability Interagency convened by Social Futures and other relevant disability network meetings
- Speech to Text technology made available for frontline staff in Council's Customer Contact Centres to communicate with people from the Deaf community
- Information and advice on 'Preparedness' and 'Get Ready' disaster primary prevention information to guide research into a new software platform that will allow at-risk residents to text their emergency support needs online
- Two Auslan Interpreted Emergency Preparedness session were hosted
- All Council websites now comply with the most current Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) version
- Online training delivered to the Communications Team on how to create accessible web documents that will diversify the way that information is shared with the community
- Central Coast Council's Writing Style Guide updated and information is now available to staff on Council's intranet
- Specialist staff were given access to a training module about producing accessible information that can then be uploaded to digital information platforms
- In April 2023, Central Coast Council opened a newly upgraded Visitor Information Centre at The Entrance with improved accessibility including a new Adult Changing Place
- Information with accessible features was uploaded on Central Coast Council's website about events, programs, activities, support information and resources
- Central Coast Council's 'Knowledge Data Base' was updated in March 2023 to direct customers to asset owners who manage planned accessibility upgrades which will improve the accuracy and timeliness of responses to customer enquiries



How we supported access to meaningful employment pathways

- Council's Launchpad Program was delivered in February and March 2023. The Program was promoted to people with disabilities. Two of the start-up projects pitched from the program have a focus on accessibility for people with a disability
- Mental health and resilience training pilot rolled out May 2022
- Council has employed a new sport inclusion officer which is funded through Dylan Alcott's Sport for Everyone program. The purpose of this role is to work with local sports clubs to build capacity of grass roots sports groups on the Coast to attract more people with disability to participate in sport

Central Coast Council would like to thank the previous and current members of the Access and Inclusion Reference Group who give their time, share their lived experience and offer their expertise to inform the progress of actions from the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2023.



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