



**INVERELL**  
**SHIRE COUNCIL**

# **Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan**



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## INTRODUCTION

### A Community for Everyone

Council is committed to the ethos of **“A Community for Everyone”** - a community that is an inclusive and welcoming for people of all abilities that supports the community’s aspirations articulated in the Inverell Shire’s Community Strategic Plan. Council gives **“voice”** to this commitment and community aspiration by promoting and supporting the equal and active participation by people with disability in the economic and social life of the community. Inverell Shire Council’s Community Strategic Plan (ISCSP) embraces the aspirations for the Shire’s diverse communities. The delivery of these aspirations relies on the collaborative and committed effort between government, business and community.

The need for a collaborative approach and committed effort resulted in the Council adopting as its mission: *‘To work with the community in providing and facilitating the provision of services that enhance the quality of life of all Shire residents’*

This Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan (IDAP) is a vital component of this mission. It supports the aims and objectives of the ISCSP, Delivery Plan and the Management/Operational Plan.

NSW Local Government is required by the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (DIA) to undertake a disability inclusion action plan by 1 July 2017. This plan can be addressed through the Local Government integrated planning process. The DIA builds on the existing social equity requirements of the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting and is designed to fit the Community Strategic Planning and Delivery Program cycle. The Inverell Shire’s Community Strategic plan contains five (5) Destinations that align with the six policy areas of the National Disability Strategy (NDS) and the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan focus areas that support the DIA.

**Destination 1** - A recognised leader in the broader context

***Policy 2*** - *Rights protection, justice and legislation;*

***Policy 6*** - *Health and wellbeing; and*

***Focus Area:*** *Attitudes and Behaviour.*

**Destination 2** – A community that is healthy, educated and sustained

***Policy 1*** - *Inclusive and accessible communities;*

***Policy 4*** - *Personal and community support;*

***Policy 5*** – *Learning and skills;*

***Policy 6*** – *Health and wellbeing; and*

***Focus Area:*** *Liveable communities.*

**Destination 4** – A strong local economy

***Policy 1*** - *Inclusive and accessible communities; and*

***Policy 3*** - *Economic Security; and*

***Focus Area:*** *Employment.*

**Destination 5** – The communities are supported by sustainable services and infrastructure.

***Policy 4*** - *Personal and community support;*

***Policy 6*** – *Health and wellbeing; and.*

***Focus Area:*** *Systems and processes.*

Council's aspirations, "***Destinations***", have a number of strategies that work towards a society that is inclusive and enabling, supporting equality and opportunity for every resident to fulfill their potential. This IDAP addresses these strategies from the perspective of people with a disability both at a community and resident level that will build a strong and equitable community. The five (5) Destinations of the ISCSP cannot be viewed in isolation, they are not mutually exclusive. While each Destination has specific strategies, there are a number of processes that require achievement across all destinations.

## BACKGROUND

### Demographics

Inverell is a strong and vibrant town in country Northern New South Wales boasting an excellent shopping centre and accompanying service industries. In 1979, three (3) Shire Council's amalgamated to form what is now the Inverell Shire Council. With this progression, Local Government had undertaken a new approach in its role of not just being a provider of essential services but entered into the field of land purchase for residential and industrial use.

The Shire of Inverell covers an area of 8,623 square kilometres of rich farm and grazing land, including large mineral deposits, particularly tin and sapphires; the area produces the majority of the world's sapphires. The region is blessed with superb weather conditions, cool nights and long sunny days.

Inverell has a population of 12,000 people, while the local government area has approximately 17,000 residents. Due to its location, the commercial centre services a target area estimated to reach 60,000 people, drawing from as far as southern Queensland.

According to the ABS Census 2011, Basic Community Profile for the Inverell LGA, Inverell has 5.65% of its population of *Persons who need assistance to perform a core activity*<sup>1</sup> and 9.72 % of *Persons who provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability*<sup>2</sup>

While these statistics are for the profound or severe disability and for carers of individuals with a disability and longer term or problems relating to age, the ABS states that nearly one (1) in every five (5) of the population has a disability.



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<sup>1</sup> Defined as "Measures the number of people with a profound or severe disability. People with a profound or severe disability are defined as people needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication, because of a disability, long term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age."

<sup>2</sup> Defined as "Records people who in the two weeks prior to Census Night spent time providing unpaid care, help or assistance to family members or others because of a disability, a long term illness or problems related to old age. This includes people who are in receipt of a Carer Allowance or Carer Payment. It does not include work done through a voluntary organisation or group."

### Consultation

Inverell Shire Council addresses the inclusions (voice) of people with a disability and their valuable contribution in shaping our community through formal and informal collaborative partnerships with local business and trades, community groups and individuals, employment and disability service providers, and families and carers of people with a disability. Council's active participation in many community groups allows for formal and informal consultation with all people represented in our community demographics.

The development of this Inclusion (Disability) Action plan involved many mediums of community engagement, including one on one with individual community members and service providers and an online survey.

The Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan survey was based on seventeen (17) strategic questions to ascertain the inclusiveness of people of all abilities in the Inverell Local Government Area (LGA). The survey was completed mostly by Inverell residents (80%) and Gilgai residents (15%). Of the total number of surveys completed, people with a disability comprised 15%, family and carers comprised 40%, Community Service Providers 30%, Community members 10% and others 5%. The major age group of people with a disability was 6-12 (12.5%), 31-40 (12.5%) and 60-70 (18.8%) years of age. The major age group of respondents was 41-50 years of age being 50%, followed by 31-40 representing 20% of the survey respondents.

The survey provided an opportunity for suggestions to improve Council services and or offices to assist in community inclusion, 70% of respondents provided their feedback. The common themes were communication friendly services and increased seating in the CBD to provide shelter from the rain. With communication friendly services, suggestions included offering contact with Council via live chat and sms communication channels (this would assist people with a hearing impairment or experiencing communication difficulties), improvements in Council website (this would assist people with vision impairment).

While over 70% of respondents find information on Council and its services accessible, including the Website, Council is currently in the process of reviewing the website and its social media platforms, inclusive of the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and recommended by Media Access Australia for inclusiveness.

Community education and awareness was also a major theme, reducing stereotyping, and the understanding of all disabilities and the value and importance of people with a disability, inclusive of family and carers to be contributors to and participants in the community social fabric.

Accessibility and understanding of the requirements of people with a disability in the local businesses, shops and hospitality venues rated low with 75% of respondents stating they are not accommodating. Accessibility is not only related to entering these venues but the access within, such as, merchandise placement, fit-outs and toilet facilities making it difficult for people with limited mobility to move within the venue.

Respondents (68.4%) felt that there is a lack of employment opportunities for people with disability with our community. This was based on the lack of businesses being able to accommodate people with a disability, and included issues such as accessibility, toilet facilities, working hour capacity and stereotyping of being a hindrance.

The top three (3) priorities identified from the survey include;

- Increased Community education and awareness of disabilities,
- Increased employment opportunity,
- Increased inclusion socially, recreationally and economically within the community.

This plan addresses the above priorities, issues and concerns through the IDAP actions.

## INCLUSION (DISABILITY) ACTION PLAN

### Aims and Objectives

The major aim of this Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan is to enable Council to:

- Identify areas where there is a lack of inclusion provision;
- Collaborate with all levels of government and non-government community services providers to meet the needs of people with a disability;
- Improve inclusion and access to the Shire's facilities and services;
- Community Engagement through many media with people with a disability and carers;
- Advocate on behalf of people in our community with a disability;
- Uphold the United Nations Convention on the rights of people with a disability;
- Increase understanding and awareness of the importance of inclusion and access; and
- Increase the awareness of the *Disability Discrimination Act* obligations.
- Developing and implementing processes to ensure the delivery of best practice outcomes in community inclusion management.

This IDAP, in meeting these aims, focuses on the development and implementation of strategies to achieve ***"A Community for Everyone"*** with five (5) key visions:

- People of all abilities have access to services and infrastructure;
- People of all abilities have their rights protected;
- People of all abilities have their lifestyles embraced and supported;
- People of all abilities are heard and advocated for;
- People of all abilities have the opportunity to achieve their potential; and





## COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN – Inclusion (Disability)



### Destination 1: A recognised leader in the broader context

This community will have reached its destination when Local Government, health, education and government support services and infrastructure are provided at levels equal to or better than major centres.

The IDAP contributes to the below strategies and aligns with the *NDS Policy 2 – Rights protection, justice and legislation* and *Policy 6 – Health and wellbeing*.

#### Strategies

- R.05 Provides access to services in the Shire equivalent to or better than that in other major regional areas;
- R.08 Council leads the community by influencing and participating in policy development to the benefit of the Shire through partnerships and alliances with government, regional interests, Shire groups and communities.

ISC as a recognised leader in the broader context will promote awareness and acceptance of the rights of people with disability.

As local government, we are the voice of the people at the organic level that advocates on behalf of its residents to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom for all. We will work with all levels of government to promote awareness and understanding of the rights of people with disability that enable them to participate fully in the economic, civic and social life of our Shire and the wider community.

**NDS Policy 2 Outcome:** People with disability have their rights promoted, upheld and protected.

**NDS Policy 6 Outcome:** People with a disability attain highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.

**NSW Focus area:** Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

**IDAP Outcome:** That our citizens with a disability have access to the same support services and infrastructure as people in major centres and that their rights are protected.

#### IDAP Actions:

- Collaborative relationships between Council and all levels of government in policy development, services delivery and infrastructure to address the gaps in regional Australia for people with a disability; and
- Assist the community in achieving the objects and principles of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*.

**Destination 2: A community that is healthy, educated and sustained**



This community will have reached its destination when residents have equitable access to services, recreational, cultural and social facilities in their community and there are diverse services and support for people that require assistance.

The IDAP contributes to the below strategies and aligns with the *NDS Policy 1 - Inclusive and accessible communities, Policy 4 - Personal and community support, Policy 5 – Learning and skills and Policy 6 – Health and wellbeing.*

**Strategies**

- C.11 Develop a range of educational and skills development opportunities to meet the requirements of the Shire’s residents;
- C.13 Facilitate activities that improve the quality of life for people who are requiring support; and
- C.15 The social wellbeing and health of individuals and communities within the Shire is being maintained and improved.

**NDS Policy 1 Outcome:** People with a disability live in accessible and well designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

**NDS Policy 4 Outcome:** People with a disability, their families and carers have access to a range of support to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities.

**NDS Policy 5 Outcome:** People with a disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive, high quality education system that is responsive to their needs. People with a disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

**NDS Policy 6 Outcome:** People with a disability attain highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.

**NSW Focus area:** Creating **liveable communities.**

**IDAP Outcome:** That our residents with disabilities have equitable access to services, recreational, cultural and social facilities in their community.



**IDAP Actions:**

- Council's infrastructure, as reasonable practicable, is accessible by people of all abilities;
- Council's libraries have access, equipment, resources, programs and services for people of all abilities;
- Collaborative relationships between Council and educational institutes for a variety of mediums for people of all abilities to learn, grow and develop;
- Major parks are accessible with amenities, play spaces, sports and recreational facilities for people of all abilities; and
- Collaborative relationships between Council, local community and sporting clubs enhance opportunities for people with a disability in sport, cultural and recreational activities.



#### **Destination 4: A strong local economy**



This community will have reached its destination when Inverell is identified and recognised as a major service centre and the private sector providing a significant portion of the Shire's workforce.

The IDAP contributes to the below strategies and aligns with the *NDS Policy 1 - Inclusive and accessible communities and Policy 3 – Economic Security*.

#### **Strategies**

- B.01 Business, institutions and Council are working cooperatively towards agreed initiatives to strengthen and expand the Shire's economic base;
- B.03 Facilitate access to services and infrastructure including education, training and research for business;
- B.08 Promote the Shire as a destination for visitors.

**NDS Policy 1 Outcome:** People with a disability live in accessible and well designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

**NDS Policy 3 Outcome:** People with a disability, their families and carers have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives.

**NSW Focus area:** Supporting access to meaningful **employment**.

**IDAP Outcome:** That appropriate services and infrastructure to enhance commercial sector that provides employment, encourages tourism and welcomes access to the CBD by people of all abilities.

#### **IDAP Actions:**

- Retailers, restaurants, accommodation and businesses are accessible and accommodating to people with a range of abilities;
- Collaborative relationships between Council and educational institutes for a variety of educational media for employer/employees of all abilities to learn grow and develop;
- Collaborative relationships between Council and all levels of government and telecommunication providers for improved communication services;
- Collaborative relationships between Council and local disability employment services providers to enhance opportunities for employment of people with a disability;
- Council is an effective member of the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry to increase awareness and support initiatives for the access and inclusion of people with disability;
- Tourist attractions and facilities, major events and festivals are accessible;
- Visitors and tourists have access to information to assist in planning their trip to our community; and
- Review and facilitate hire of mobility aids for visitors and community members.

**Destination 5:           The Communities are supported by sustainable services and infrastructure**



This community will have reached its destination when communities have access to a range of core and optional services, a range of well maintained and appropriate infrastructure, available technology to connect to the wider Australian community and access to a variety of quality and reliable communication tools.

The IDAP contributes to the below strategies and aligns with the *NDS Policy 1 - Inclusive and accessible communities and Policy 6 – Health and wellbeing*.

**Strategies**

- S.02 Council displays leadership, community engagement and collaboration with others;
- S.03 Council provides equitable services, consistent with available resources and priorities to meet the Shire's identified needs and preferences;
- S.04 Council's workforce and workplace match contemporary and emerging organisational needs and requirements;
- S.07 Provide accessible infrastructure and usage recreation facilities and services to meet the needs of the community;
- S.11 Facilitate the sharing of information and ideas through remote communications.

**NDS Policy 1 Outcome:** People with a disability live in accessible and well designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

**NDS Policy 3 Outcome:** People with a disability, their families and carers have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives.

**NDS Policy 4 Outcome:** People with a disability, their families and carers have access to a range of support to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities.

**NDS Policy 6 Outcome:** People with a disability attain highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.

**NSW Focus area:** Improving access to services through better **systems and processes**.

**IDAP Outcome:** That people with a disability have access to a range of core and optional services, a variety of quality and reliable communication tools and a range of well maintained and appropriate infrastructure.

**IDAP Actions:**

- Council ensures that, as reasonably practicable, that access for people of all abilities is incorporated in all designs of public infrastructure;
- Provision of continuous accessible paths of travel (CAPT) between services and facilities in the town centres;
- Council reviews its recruitment, training and resources to uphold non-discrimination of people with a disability;
- Council workforce training to up-skill staff with information about access and disability issues relevant to their area of work; and
- Council reviews the formats and media it uses for the dissemination of information to the community.

## **RELATED LEGISLATION, GUIDELINES, POLICES and other documents**

- *National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020*
- *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*
- *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan*
- *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines*
- *Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy*
- *National Disability Agreement*
- *United Nations- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
- *Local Government (State) Award 2014*
- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Industrial Relations Act 1996*
- *Building Code of Australia*
- *Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2010*
- *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002*
- *AS 1428 Standards*
- *AS/NZS 2890 Standards*