

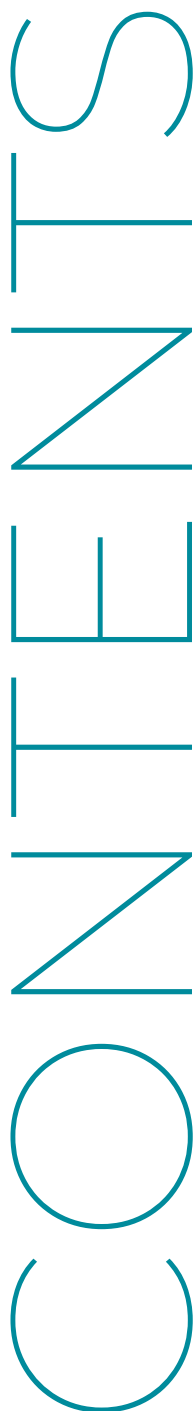
2023

LITHGOW CITY COUNCIL DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

The Experience of People with Disabilities, their Families, in Lithgow

2027

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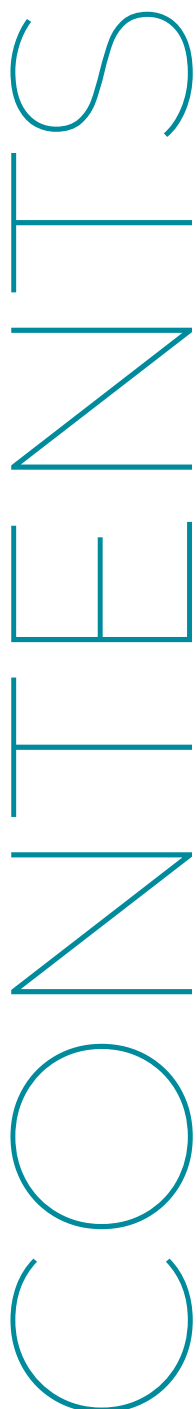
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Lithgow City Council acknowledges elders past and present of the Wiradjuri nation - the original custodians of the land on which the Lithgow communities reside. The Council also extends our respects to our neighbouring nations.

Lithgow City Council is mandated to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA). This document aims to drive the principles of inclusion while engaging with community and holding our local government accountable for making real improvements in its service delivery.

The experience of living with disabilities is often one of facing barriers that stop people accessing information, services, transport, housing, education, training, employment, and social opportunities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasises “that disability is an evolving concept, and it results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.



The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 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.’

Lithgow City Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan is informed by the social model of disability, where inclusion is defined as all citizens having the same opportunities to access enjoyable experiences and to be part of their community in a way that is meaningful to them. People with disabilities form a diverse population, with a range of requirements for support and through their multiple intersecting identities based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, religion, migration status, and socioeconomic background.

Consequently, the purpose of the Lithgow City Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023 – 2027 is to set out strategies and actions to guarantee that people with disability can fully take part in the day-to-day community activities without restrictions.

FOREWORD

“We want to retain, respect, and strengthen our sense of community by improving access, participation opportunities and inclusion for everyone.” Lithgow City Council Community Strategic Plan, 2035.

Lithgow is home to a diverse and changing community. As with any community, there are people across Lithgow who are experiencing systemic disadvantage. More than one in seven Lithgow citizens live with a disability. They are our children, siblings, parents, co-workers, friends, and partners.

Lithgow City Council is committed to ensuring we can provide an accessible, inclusive, and liveable community for all people.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan can be a catalyst for improved community engagement for people with disabilities. The Council engaged with people with disabilities, families, carers, and local services, to seek expert advice and information on the development and implementation of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The findings from these consultations and submissions, will guide the sustained focus on real and lasting improvements.

The process of inclusion across the Council's many service areas has already begun. Improving the accessibility and inclusion of Council facilities, public areas and programs is fundamental to service delivery. This is the second Action Plan, and it represents the seeds of the long journey to ensure everyone feels heard and feels truly a part of our Lithgow Community.

I personally thank everyone who has contributed their time, comments, feedback, and expertise. In this document, Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023 – 2027, Lithgow City Council reaffirms its commitment to the principles of equity, social justice and inclusion – for all.



**CR. MAREE STATHAM
MAYOR**



GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The plan is aligned with the community's vision and future direction for the LGA identified in the Community Strategic Plan.

Lithgow is a centre of regional excellence that:

- Encourages community growth and development.
- Contributes to the efficient and effective management of the environment, community, and economy for present and future generations.

Lithgow City Council's customer service mission is to provide excellent service levels to our community that contribute towards the achievement of Council's vision. We expect that all staff are committed to pursuing excellence in their role and to be responsible and accountable representatives of the Council.

Lithgow 2040 local strategic planning statement vision

The Lithgow region is an ideally located strategic centre with an evolving economy and a resilient and connected community which embraces its proud heritage and world class natural environment.

The five key themes of the Community Strategic Plan are:

1. Caring for Our Community
2. Developing Our Built Environment
3. Strengthening Our Economy
4. Enhancing Our Natural Environment
5. Responsible Governance & Civic Leadership

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Key theme 1: “Caring for Our Community” is central to this plan’s final goal, “To ensure we retain, respect, and strengthen both our overall sense of community, and the unique linked communities of groups, rural areas, villages and towns that make up the Lithgow LGA.”

Social Justice Principles underpinning the Community Strategic Plan are:

Equity

There is fairness in decision making and prioritising and allocation of resources.

Access

All people have fair access to services, resources, and opportunities to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life.

Rights

Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people from diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds to participate in community life.

Participation

Everyone has the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

On 30 March 2007, Australia became one of the original state signatories to the CRPD, which promotes, protects, and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and promotes respect for their inherent dignity.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

Australia works and partners with the WHO to advance well-being as it pertains to global health and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The WHO understands well-being as “a major underlying driver of policy coherence across sectors and encourages galvanized action.” “Advancing societal well-being helps create active, resilient and sustainable communities at local, national and global levels, enabling them to respond to current and emerging health threats such as COVID-19 and environmental disasters.”

Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person, in many areas of public life, including employment, education, getting or using services, renting, or buying a house or unit, and accessing public places, because of their disability.

Australian Government Disability Strategy 2021–2031

It 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. Its purpose is to:

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- Provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability.
- Guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability.
- Drive mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disability.
- Engage, inform, and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013

This Act authorises the delivery of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), a world first approach to the provision of disability support that puts people with disability at the centre of decision-making through the principles of reasonable and necessary.



ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Australian Human Rights Commission (2014) reports that many people will have a disability at some stage in their lives. For some, the disability will be temporary. Others may be affected for a lifetime.

Around one in five Australians have a disability (Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2018). People with a disability are a diverse population, many of whom actively engage in all aspects of Australian society. However, disability may limit a person's engagement in various aspects of life, particularly for those who have a high need for assistance.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics in its Disability and Carers Census (2021) identified 1,464,415 people requiring assistance with core activities in their day to day lives: self-care, mobility or communication because of a disability, long-term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age.

Other key findings were:

- Females are slightly more likely to indicate they require assistance at 6.1 per cent, compared to males at 5.5 per cent.
- 8.2 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identified as requiring assistance with core activities.
- 76.6 per cent of people identifying as requiring assistance live with family and 19.4 per cent live alone.

ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The National People with Disabilities and Carer Council (2009), states that it is important that strategies to advance the rights of people with disabilities, recognise the complexity of people's lives and interdependence of the following:

Experience of exclusion and discrimination:

Social exclusion and lack of community participation; people with disabilities still find themselves facing invisibility, which hinders the fight against exclusion and discrimination. They are also subjects of fear and ignorance, regarded as burdens or objects of pity.

Discrimination and human rights violations; People with disabilities reported experiencing discrimination in every aspect of their lives including education, employment, health care and housing.

The struggles with the service system

Lack of services and support; the disability service system is chronically under-funded and under-resourced, crisis driven and struggling against a vast tide of unmet needs. As a result, many people with disabilities and their families, friends and carers constantly struggle for resources and support, haunted by an ever-present fear that even a limited service would be withdrawn.

Workforce Issues; Lack of availability of trained staff is a particular problem in regional and remote areas of Australia.

ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Lack of aids, equipment, and assistive technologies; People with disabilities find it incredibly difficult and sometimes impossible to access the aids and equipment essential to daily functioning. Their ability to lead an independent life is severely compromised as a result.

Lack of housing options: Few things are more fundamental than having somewhere to live. Having little or no choice in where one lives has a profound impact on physical and mental health, and the ability to participate in employment and community activities. The concept of community living for people with intellectual disability is a much richer concept than a mere physical presence in a community setting, which by itself does not guarantee community integration and inclusion. There remains a significant risk of abuse and neglect.

The importance of health and wellbeing: People with disabilities require the same access to health care as all other Australians yet experience considerable difficulties receiving appropriate care. Despite their training, some health and allied health professionals hold myths and misconceptions regarding disability, which can affect clinical decisions and compromise quality of care. There is limited investment in early intervention, most children receive only a few hours of support a week, transferring the responsibility of early intervention to parents which adds considerable stress in their life.

ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Poverty and the cost of living with disabilities:

Australian Bureau of Statistics data has long demonstrated that people with disabilities are less likely to be employed, more likely to be dependent on income support and more likely to live below the poverty line.

The need for a lifetime care and support scheme:

The extraordinary level of unmet need has forced many people with disabilities and their families to purchase services and support privately. The NDIS has been developed as the scheme which attempts to make resources available irrespective of changes to the economic climate, government budgetary cycles or variability in political will.

The employment experience of people with disabilities:

Groups that experience significant social stigma, such as people with a mental illness or an intellectual disability, reported difficulties in obtaining and retaining employment. There is a considerable misunderstanding in the community about the cost of workplace adjustments. What is sometimes required is additional support or a more flexible approach to working hours or leave, not expensive adjustments.

The perception of employment as charity has a negative impact on people with disabilities.

ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Lack of access to the built environment and information:

For many people with disabilities the built environment acts as a powerful barrier to their full inclusion in the community.

Furthermore, once inside a building, many people with disabilities encounter further barriers such as a lack of accessible bathrooms or lifts without Braille signage. Uneven surfaces, reflective surfaces, narrow doorways, and a lack of clear signage all affect the ability of people with disabilities to successfully negotiate the interiors of many buildings. For people with a sensory impairment or an intellectual disability, access issues go far beyond structural features.

Lack of access to transport; For most, the minimal service levels or the inaccessibility of public transport leaves them reliant on family, friends or on the taxi system. There are fewer alternatives in nonmetropolitan areas, which severely curtails the independence of people with disabilities and compromises their quality of life. Even more critical in these areas to counter social isolation.



ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The education experience of people with disabilities:

Due to a reduction in adequate funding in mainstream schools, parents must seek alternatives. This has resulted in parents choosing specialist settings despite their desire for their child to attend local mainstream schools.

The social experience of disability:

The social needs of people with disabilities; When identity is always framed by others and always framed in a negative way, it is difficult to develop and maintain a strong positive sense of self and difficult to establish and maintain relationships characterised by equality and mutual support.

The importance of relationships; Not all people with a disability have or need a carer. But for those who do, families and unpaid carers provide most of the care. For too many people with disabilities, quality of life is dependent on the commitment of their families.

The experience of disadvantaged groups:

People with disabilities from a multicultural background: Few disability services possess the skills or resources to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities from differing backgrounds, and their relative inexperience with different cultural groups can make them insensitive to the issues involved. On the other hand, programs and services targeted at different cultural groups do not always understand the issues facing people with disabilities and their families, friends, and carers.



ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander identity;

Like people with disabilities from a range of cultural backgrounds, people with disabilities from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background feel they face a 'double disadvantage'. While there is now considerable attention focused on finding ways to 'close the gap', few disability service providers seem to grasp the complexity of the issues confronting Indigenous people. As a result, services and programs are rarely culturally sensitive or appropriate. Alternatively, mainstream services targeting Indigenous people do not always understand the issues facing individuals with disabilities and their families.

Disability and gender; The issue of violence against women with disabilities is sadly, a recurring theme. Women with disabilities escaping family or domestic violence are not well catered for within mainstream support organisations and services, most notably in the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program emergency accommodation. LGBTQIA+ Australians regularly experience discrimination and disadvantage, they are less likely to access support services because they fear, or have experienced, discrimination.

DISABILITY INCLUSION IN LITHGOW



Lithgow City Council is a Local Government Area located about 140km west of Sydney and with a population of about 20,842 people. At the 2021 census, 1,582 people or 7.6% of the Lithgow population reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This data suggests there is a high percentage of population living with disability in our city, compared with 6.8% in the rest of Regional NSW.

It is important to note that:

- 817 are female and 767 are male
- 259 are people over 85 years old, with increased needs due their age.
- 443 are people between 20-59 years old

From 2016 to 2021, the major differences in people's age groups reporting a need for assistance were:

- 10 to 19 years old (+64 persons)
- 20 to 59 years old (+58 persons)

DISABILITY INCLUSION IN LITHGOW

The Department of Social Services (2023) estimated that during 2022 and 2023, only 430 people of this group were assisted through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). They incurred in a total expenditure of \$18,560,000 on services like:

- Daily Living Support in Shared Accommodation
- Assistance with Community Activities
- Personal care
- Coordination and Management
- Therapy
- Group Centre Activities
- High Needs Personal Care
- Assistance with Planning and Coordination
- Capital
- Early Childhood Supports

It is forecast that the total number of NDIS participants in Lithgow by 2025 will increase by at least 200 participants, increasing NDIS expenditure by a further 10 million dollars, bringing the total spent in Lithgow and the immediate surroundings close to 30 million dollars annually. (The Department of Social Services, 2023).

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS 2019/2023

A number of initiatives have been undertaken by Lithgow City Council since the last DIAP was adopted.



A new two level back of stage wing was constructed at the Union Theatre incorporating new change rooms, storage and amenity rooms and elevators making much of the theatre wheelchair accessible for patrons and performers.

Lithgow Adventure Playground was opened in 2019. It is designed using universal access principles with many of its play features accessible for children with a disability.



New fully accessible and self-cleaning toilets have been installed at:
Pioneer Park in Main Street, Lithgow.
Kremer Park playground and skatepark, Portland
Tweedie Park playground and skatepark, Wallerawang

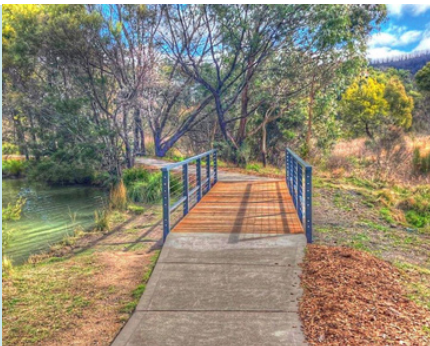
RECENT IMPROVEMENTS 2019/2023

Accessible public toilets have been installed on Farmers Creek at Watsford/Conran Ovals.

The car park at the Lithgow Visitor Information Centre was upgraded with a mobility parking spot.

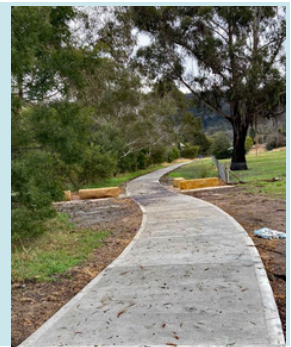
Footpaths were renewed in Martini Parade and Main Street, Lithgow.

620 lineal metres of 1.2-metre-wide footpath was constructed along James Parade from the intersection of Barton Avenue.



Lake Pillans Boardwalk, which had been burnt in the 2019 bushfires was replaced with a new boardwalk.

Council continued to develop the Farmers Creek Walkway/Cycleway with more than 2,500 metres of new shared pathway, constructed in recent years.



RECENT IMPROVEMENTS 2019/2023



Lake Wallace – Accessible Fishing Platform was completed with an accessible pathway and parking space.

6,607 large print books and 2,875 audio books were loaned out from the inclusive collection of Lithgow Library.

A large number of these loans is distributed via the Home Library Service to residents of local aged care facilities and private homes for people with mobility issues. 11,095 eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines & eFilms were loaned.



RECENT IMPROVEMENTS 2019/2023



Lithgow Library purchased a Tovertafel or Magic Table designed to be used by people with dementia or cognitive disabilities to provide stimulation, exercise and social interaction.

Lithgow Ability Awards 2020 was held to celebrate the contribution of people with disability to the community.

Lithgow celebrated International Day of People with Disability at Lithgow Library in 2021/2022.

The activities included a screening of the Ability Award short films, demonstrations, and games on the library's new Tovertafel – a magic table of interactive games, art workshop spaces, a free sausage sizzle prepared by LINC's disability services team and Lithgow's first ever Silent Disco.



New Mobility parking spaces:
Wallerawang Library
Wolgan St, Portland, near the doctor's surgery
Near Anglican Church, Portland
Roy Street, near St. Pauls church



COUNCIL'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING INCLUSION AND ACCESS: THE PLAN

The process undertaken to support inclusion and access and to develop the DIAP included a community survey, a forum with disability service providers, a community forum, personal interviews, and submissions.

Discussions were held and a working group established with Lithgow Council department managers to discuss the DIAP guidelines, to understand the needs for improvements and to develop objectives for action.

While the desire for collaboration for improvement was clear, local people and services suggested that intentions will not suffice. The message from all participants was that systemic changes in community engagement are needed and local government accountability is necessary. Therefore, we have included in the Action Plans responsibilities and timeframes for actions.



THE PLAN BY KEY OUTCOME AREAS:

Focus Area 1. Positive community Attitudes and behaviours

Aim: To build community awareness about the rights and capabilities of people living with disability and to support a cohesive community to facilitate full access and inclusion.

Lithgow City Council Ongoing Initiatives for inclusion

- Develop messages and campaigns that highlight the case for disability inclusion.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the Day of People with Disabilities.
- Collaborate with Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre, Lithgow Interagency, and the Disability Alliance Network to identify the latest updates on local services and issues for people with a disability.

You told us there are opportunities to:

- Promote anti discriminatory behaviours by partnering with people with a lived experience of disability.
- Provide opportunities for interaction for people with disabilities.
- Educate the community on disability and inclusion, to find commonalities as citizens.
- Council to have a space where people with disabilities can have a voice.
- Promote inclusivity within local business.

What we will do in actions

Focus Area 1. Positive community Attitudes and behaviours

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW ?	TIMEFRAME
1.Engage children with disabilities in Storytime activities.	Plan a regular sensory Storytime session	Sessions delivered	Number of attendees	Children's Librarian	2024/ ongoing
2.Council staff have improved skills for dealing with people with mental health conditions	Staff mental health awareness training	Training undertaken and staff more confident	Number of staff trained	Human Resources	2024/ongoing
3.Create community engagement opportunities for people with disabilities	Celebrate International Day of People with disability	Event delivered	Number of attendees and people with disability involved in planning	Community and Culture/ /Library	2024/ ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
4. Diversify event offerings to include people with disability	Investigate options for activities for disability social groups	Sessions designed	Number of attendees	Library / Community Development Officer/ local services	2024/ongoing
5. People with disabilities can have a voice to Council.	Plan annual Community Forum	Event Delivered	Number of attendees and people with disability and services involved in planning	Community and Culture/ Community Development Officer/ local services	2024/ ongoing
6. Raise awareness about the needs of people with disability within local business.	Engage and partner with Lithgow District Chamber of Commerce to identify opportunities for collaboration.	Workshops designed and delivered	Number of attendees	Economic Development/Community and Culture/ / local services	2024/ongoing
7. Council's Financial Assistance program aligns with disability and inclusion principles. ,	Investigate Strategies identified ways to ensure and implemented Council's Financial Assistance program supports inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities.	Strategies identified and implemented	Number of projects approved and funded consistent with inclusion and accessibility principles	Community and Culture	2024/ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
8. Promote inclusivity and access to local events	Implement and promote inclusive event guidelines across all Council run events	Guidelines created	Number of events delivered each year that incorporate inclusive event guidelines	Community and Culture/ Visitor Centre/Organisation Performance & Communications.	2024/ongoing
10. Distribute targeted information	Include Information relevant to people living with disability in Council's communications	Council communications include information targeted at people with disability increases	Number of messages included	Community and Culture/ Visitor Centre/ Communications/ IT	2024/ ongoing

THE PLAN BY KEY OUTCOME AREAS:

Focus Area 2. Creating liveable communities

Aim: To Increase the accessibility of people with disability to enjoy community life as they desire

Lithgow City Council Ongoing Initiatives:

- Apply the principles of universal design in the planning of all new infrastructure, buildings, open space and playgrounds.
- Provide accessible toilets in public spaces, including automated sliding doors.
- Provide accessible parking and assess requests for new disability parking spots.
- Upgrade ramps to allow ease of access for mobility scooters and other mobility aids.
- Ensure accessible parking spots are kept to current standards.

You told us there are opportunities to:

- Consider people with disabilities in new developments and housing plans to increase accessibility and housing availability.
- Conduct audits of streets, roads and Council owned buildings to assess compliance with Australian Standards for access and mobility.
- Advise the community where to find accessible public spaces.
- Promote downtime in Lithgow public spaces, for people with sensory issues.

What we will do in actions

Focus Area 2. Creating liveable communities

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
1.The needs of people with a disability are considered in planning the library refurbishment	Ensure shelving layout provides good access	Library layout works well for all customers	Increased use of the library by disability groups and individuals	Library Coordinator	2023/2024
	Selection of furniture to provide better mobility	Furniture choices are appropriate for people with disabilities.	Increased use of the library by disability groups and individuals	Library Coordinator	2023/2024
2. People with disabilities are able to use and navigate the Lithgow Library.	Selection of appropriate signage for library	Shelves and areas are clearly marked	Fewer staff directional tasks	Library Coordinator	2023/2024

What we will do in actions

Focus Area 2. Creating liveable communities

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
1.The needs of people with a disability are considered in planning the library refurbishment	Ensure shelving layout provides good access	Library layout works well for all customers	Increased use of the library by disability groups and individuals	Library Coordinator	2023/2024
	Selection of furniture to provide better mobility	Furniture choices are appropriate for people with disabilities.	Increased use of the library by disability groups and individuals	Library Coordinator	2023/2024
2. People with disabilities are able to use and navigate the Lithgow Library.	Selection of appropriate signage for library	Shelves and areas are clearly marked	Fewer staff directional tasks	Library Coordinator	2023/2024

What we will do in actions

Focus Area 2. Creating liveable communities

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
1.The needs of people with a disability are considered in planning the library refurbishment	Ensure shelving layout provides good access	Library layout works well for all customers	Increased use of the library by disability groups and individuals	Library Coordinator	2023/2024
	Selection of furniture to provide better mobility	Furniture choices are appropriate for people with disabilities.	Increased use of the library by disability groups and individuals	Library Coordinator	2023/2024
2. People with disabilities are able to use and navigate the Lithgow Library.	Selection of appropriate signage for library	Shelves and areas are clearly marked	Fewer staff directional tasks	Library Coordinator	2023/2024

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
3. Improve services are provided for the hearing impaired.	Install a hearing loop in Lithgow Library and Council Customer service area.	Hearing loop operating	Better response from visitors with hearing impairment	Library Coordinator/ Customer Service Coordinator/ Building Manager	2023/2024
4. Facilitate accessibility to the Libraries	Identify areas where access is limited to improve accessibility.	Better access to areas in the library including meeting and staff workroom	Funding secured and improvements made.	Library Coordinator/Building Manager	2024/2025 ongoing
5. Education materials on Water and Wastewater cycles are suitable for people with disabilities.	Create educational materials on water and wastewater cycles suitable for people with disabilities	Materials are created and distributed via Council and through the variety of providers, suitable for people with disabilities.	Number of materials distributed	Senior Engineer/Strategy and Projects/ community development/ IT/ communications	2024/2026

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
6.Improve accessibility to Council water and waste water plants and Resource Recovery Centre for visitor groups.	Suitable line-marking and signage installed.	The sites are appropriately signed and delineated	All sites marked and signed	Senior Engineer Strategy and Projects, Waste and Recycling Manager	2023/2024
7.Improve access to Council buildings.	Identify ways to make the Administration Centre more accessible for staff and visitors.	Better access to areas in Council offices including meeting rooms and staff workroom	Council Buildings are compliant and accessible	Senior Engineer - Operations, Waste and Recycling Manager /Building Manager	2024/2026
8. Develop an accessibility and inclusivity strategy for new playgrounds	Future plans and design give consideration to universal design principles.	Inclusive and accessible equipment is available to all users	Accessible equipment installed	Recreation and Planning Departments	2023 /2024 & Ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
9. Access to existing playgrounds is improved.	Review access to and around playgrounds.	Installation of appropriate equipment and pathways.	Length of appropriate pathways installed	Recreation and Planning Departments	2023 /2024 & Ongoing
10. Promote downtime in public spaces, for people with sensory issues.	Engage and partner with Lithgow District Chamber of Commerce and Council services like the library to promote the use of quiet downtime spaces.	Downtime in Lithgow in shops/businesses is implemented	Number of shops/businesses participating of this initiative	Community and Culture/ Community Development Officer/ local services/Library	2023/ongoing
11. Improve knowledge of accessible public spaces.	Improve and update guides to help people find accessible spaces	Guides designed	Distribution of guides	Community Development/ Tourism	2024/ ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
12. Accessible communications	Develop an Accessible Communication Guide for Council	Accessible Communication Guide developed	Guide 100% complete	Corporate Communications Team	2025/26
	Develop a signage Strategy which takes accessible and sensory signage in public places/spaces into consideration. Business Case developed to undertake a Signage Strategy.	Accessible and sensory signage in public places/spaces	Improved signage	Corporate Communications/Tourism	2025/26 – 2028/29 Year of implementation dependent upon budget approvals.

THE PLAN BY KEY OUTCOME AREAS:

Focus Area 3. Promoting meaningful employment

Aim: To Increase diversity in Lithgow workforce

Lithgow City Council Ongoing Initiatives

- Incorporate learning plans into learning and development opportunities as well as career planning.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful work experience, apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Educate people on disability and inclusion to find commonalities as citizens.

You told us there are opportunities to:

- Provide traineeship opportunities for people with disabilities to support their job opportunities and education.
- Influence local business to create accessible workplaces for persons with disabilities.
- Promote not for profit services that provide paid employment for people with disability. Promote Business incentives to hire people with disabilities and promote retention.
- Advocate for competitive salaries and benefits for people with disabilities.

What we will do in actions

Focus Area 3. Promoting meaningful employment

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
<p>1. Review recruitment and selection process for applicants to better meet the needs of people with disabilities</p>	<p>Develop an EEO Survey for data collection on staff with disabilities</p>	<p>To understand further the diversity of our workforce and ensure process and practices are inclusive for all staff and potential future staff.</p>	<p>Survey set up and attached to employment advertisements.</p>	<p>HR Department</p>	<p>2024/2027</p>
	<p>Provide options for new and existing staff to request adjustments to support their individual needs</p>	<p>To create a flexible and adaptable process to be inclusive for all people wishing to apply for employment with Council.</p>	<p>Processes and procedures reviewed.</p>	<p>HR Department</p>	<p>2024/2027</p>

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
2.Review & Update EEO Management Plan	Review EEO Management Plan	Update in alignment with the completed staff survey to ensure it is inclusive for all current and future staff	Updated EEO Management plan finalised and published	HR Department	2024/2026
	EEO training for staff	Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of EEO and working with colleagues with disabilities	Training developed and rolled to staff	HR Department	2024/2026



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
3. Employ more people with disabilities at Council.	Employ people or contract services through a local disability employment provider to work on Council sites	People with disabilities complete services across the Waste and Water directorate	No. of staff/contractors employed/contracted	Senior Engineer – Operations, Waste and recycling Manager/ HR	2024/2027
4. Influence local business to create and promote meaningful traineeship opportunities for people with disabilities, to support their job opportunities and education.	Engage and partner with Lithgow District Chamber of Commerce to develop opportunities for collaboration.	People with disabilities engage in meaningful traineeships and employment	Number of jobs created	Community and Culture/ Lithgow District Chamber / local services	2023/ongoing

THE PLAN BY KEY OUTCOME AREAS:

Focus Area 4. Improve Systems and processes

Aim: To Improve access to information and for providing input and feedback information and providing input and feedback.

Lithgow City Council Ongoing Initiatives

Council Website and all our digital communications platforms to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0AA). Currently at 76.46%

- **You told us there are opportunities to:**
- Improve the accessibility of the Lithgow City Council website.
- Provide information in different accessible formats.
- Communicate through accessible media during emergencies.
- Establish more accessible ways for people to raise issues and complaints.
- Provide more face-to-face interactions with customers.
- Create an Access Committee of Council with representatives of people with disabilities, not for profit and service providers.

What we will do in actions

Focus Area 4. Improve Systems and processes.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
1.Accessible Communications	Review PDFs and other forms on Council's website	Forms reviewed and updated	All scanned PDFs removed from website	IT Team	01/01/2024 – 31/12/2024
	Update Council YouTube videos to include captions	YouTube videos of Council meetings and events will include captions	All videos to include captions	IT Team	01/01/2024 – 30/06/2024
	ALT Text for images on website to be expanded to be more descriptive	Improved description of images on websites	All images and their ALT Text properties to be review	IT Team	01/01/2024 – 31/12/2024

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
	Accessibility widget to be included on Council websites to allow for text resizing	Visitors to site can resize text according to their preference	Accessibility options available on website	IT Team	01/01/2024 – 30/06/2024
	Increase the availability/access to Council services via web sites as per IT strategy	Ability to conduct more business with Council online	Deployment of modules/services to website	IT Team	01/01/2024 – Ongoing
	Improve WCAG compliance rating to 95%	Improved experience for website users with disabilities	95%compliance as identified by Monsido web tool	IT Team	01/01/2024 – ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
2.Capture up to date data on existing Council workforce to review and support individual needs.	Survey all current staff (non-compulsory) to understand the current diversity of the workplace.	Audit Councils' current procedures to ensure they are adaptable and inclusive for all staff.	Processes and procedures reviewed.	HR Department	2024/2025
3. Communicate through accessible media during emergencies.	Develop a community engagement plan for disaster resilience which includes strategies to communicate and inform people with disabilities.	Community engagement plan for disaster resilience created and people with disabilities considered.	Accessible strategies to communications	Community and Culture/ Community Resilience Officer	2023/2025 ongoing

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	WHO WILL ACTION/HOW?	TIMEFRAME
4. Establish accessible ways to raise issues and complaints.	Promote Council's website option for contacting Council	Website option to contact Council is used	Number of issues and complaints raised using the online Feedback form.	Community and Culture/ IT	2023 ongoing
	Promote face to face options for contacting Council	Increased face-to-face interactions with costumers.	Number of issues and complaints raised through it	Customer Service	2023/ ongoing

MONITORING REVIEWING AND REPORTING

Monitoring:

Council's Executive Management Team will support the Plan and the Community Development Committee will oversee and monitor the implementation of the actions in the Plan. An implementation plan will be developed to assist with delivering the actions in the Plan, and an evaluation framework has been developed which identifies key performance indicators and priority actions to track and measure change.

Reviewing:

Council has developed an online survey which will facilitate the measurement of community satisfaction. At the same time, Council will discuss with the community on a yearly basis through the community forum, to check that the priorities in the Plan haven't changed and to make updates when needed.

Reporting:

Regular updates will be provided in Council's newsletter on progress with implementing this plan. Council will report on implementation of the Plan in its Annual Report and forward a copy to the NSW Minister for Disability Inclusion. Council will prepare and submit reports to the NSW Disability Council as required.

APPENDIX

1. Survey analysis

Almost 70% of survey respondents were women, 70% live in Lithgow urban area and most were aged 25 to 59 years old. 40% of survey respondents appreciate Lithgow's beauty and heritage, almost 30% said that the City is friendly and welcoming and more than 50% think the community is accepting of people with a disability.

More than 50% percent think it is hard to get a job in Lithgow and 40% say it is hard to get the support they want.

Almost 60% of respondents indicate that they have noticed discrimination when they are out in the community and 20% while at work.

More than 30% consider that educating the community and Council staff about disabilities and discrimination can help to stop discrimination from happening to people with disabilities. A further 25% think that incorporating accessibility into building design plans and Council services could help to prevent discrimination. 50% said that footpaths in town make it hard to get around, which makes them feel unsafe.

More than 40% indicated that buses and trains do not come often enough.

Almost 70% said that accessible paths and ramps would make it easier to visit places in Lithgow.

Around 60% said that it is mostly easy to get into shops and they are generally made to feel welcome.

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