



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

2023-2027

2024/2025 Delivery Report

FOCUS AREAS

FA1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

FA2: Creating liveable communities

FA3: Supporting Access to Meaningful Employment

FA4: Improving Access to Mainstream Systems through Better
Systems and Processes

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 NSW public authorities, including Councils, must develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans through robust community engagement and ensure progress in the delivery of these plans is publicly reported.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plans play a vital role in ensuring that everyone in NSW can enjoy to same opportunities to participate in all aspects of community life. Lithgow City Council is committed to building an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming community for people with disabilities and their carers.

This report outlines key achievements during 2024-2025 in the delivery of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2023–2027.

FOCUS AREA 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Partnerships with community

Council maintains partnerships with a range of community organisations and groups to deliver and support programs for people with disability and their carers. In 2024-25 Council joined the Lithgow Disability Alliance Network and regularly attends interagency meetings, supporting disability services with advocacy and collaborative programming.

In 2024-25 Council also collaborated with VERTO, OCTEC, APM, and LINC to promote inclusive employment, community participation, and access to support services.

Inclusive programs and events

Each year Council works with community partners to deliver disability programming and events. In 2024-25 these initiatives included

- International Day of People with Disability celebrations at PCYC Lithgow which included a performance by an All-Abilities Choir.
- A regular community gathering space at Lithgow library, co-hosted with LINC. This program invites people with disabilities, their carers and families, to share stories, play games, and build social connection.

- In 2024 Council received funding to deliver the 2025 Connecting Seniors Program. This program has provided a range of monthly activities supporting isolated older residents with mobility challenges to come together, form new social connections while participating in arts and cultural activities.
- The 2024 Australia Day event included a focus on celebrating people with disability and included various inclusive elements such as an Auslan Interpreter for proceedings.

Building our knowledge and understanding - staff training

In 2024, Council conducted training for all hiring managers focussed on recruitment and assessment with a strong focus on Equal Opportunity Employment and the supports that managers can call on when considering the adaptations required to support staff with disabilities.

FOCUS AREA 2: Creating liveable communities

Improvements to libraries and cultural facilities

Throughout 2024 Council made significant improvements to our libraries and cultural facilities. Many of these improvements led to increased accessibility of these facilities.

- Throughout 2024 and 2025 Council delivered a range of upgrades to the Union Theatre which includes new seating which can be adapted to support a range of uses and support increased access by people with disability.
- Inclusive quiet spaces were introduced to the Lithgow Library Learning Centre, including the installation of quiet booths which eliminate ambient sound. One booth has been adapted for disability access with a wider doorway, ramp access and height adjustable desk. Access between shelving has been increased across most of the library.
- Shelving has been assessed and altered to increase the width of corridors across most areas of the Lithgow library.
- Council installed an additional pathway at Wallerawang Library to provide better disability access to the entrance from available disability parking.
- As part of comprehensive improvements to Eskbank House, Council conducted an access audit of the site and its buildings in 2024-25. This audit will inform future funding proposals to improve disability access across this significant local heritage site.

Improvements to public spaces

Throughout the 2024-25 financial year Council completed a significant number of upgrades to public spaces which enhanced accessibility for all residents and visitors.

Upgrades to Lake Pillans including widening the footpath and creating a car park with disability parking and handrails.

New footpath construction projects undertaken under Transport for NSW Get NSW Active funded program include:

- Elm Street, Lithgow between Wenworth Street and Maple Crescent (115m)
- Maple Crescent, Lithgow between Elm Street and Church Street (255m)
- Maple Crescent, Lithgow between Church Street and Boronia Street (450m, including new bus shelter and seating at Lithgow Aged Care)
- Hartley Valley Road, Lithgow between Chifley Road and Mort Street (550m)
- High Street, Portland, between Limestone Street and Roxburgh Street (240m)
- Pindari Place, Wallerawang between Rail Pedestrian Overpass and James Parade Lane (205m, linking the CBD to Pied Piper Preschool)
- Barton Avenue, Wallerawang from Tweedie Street to Lyon Parade (220m)
- Carson Siding Road, Cullen Bullen, between Cullen Bullen School and NSW RFS Station (200m)

Projects undertaken under the Local Roads and Infrastructure Program Phase 4 includes:

- Traffic island Kirkley Street, Lithgow - improve traffic flows and pedestrian safety
- Traffic island Ilford Street, Portland - improve vehicle safety
- Installation of new disabled parking spaces at:
 - Roy Street, Lithgow (Anglican Church)
 - Main Street, Wallerawang (Dr Surgery)
 - Wolgan Street, Portland
 - Williwa Street, Portland (Anglican Church)

- Bus stop and cemetery improvements at Portland - Sunny Corner Road
- Accessibility improvements amenities + entrance - Lithgow Basketball Stadium
- Lithgow Street footpath improvements (Lithgow Valley Plaza)

Additionally, works on the footpath improvements in Main Street Stage 2 commenced in December 2024 and will be completed in January 2026. These works include improved ramps, footpath grades, tactile markings and raised pedestrian crossing.

FOCUS AREA 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment

Improvements to our recruitment processes

Council has developed and implemented a new form which collects information regarding the disability access and inclusion needs of any new staff member. In coming years this will be extended to all existing staff to support the development of a disability profile of our staff and further training and resource planning.

In 2024-25 Council conducted recruitment and assessment training for all hiring managers which included components of Equal Employment Opportunity training, which increases manager awareness and understanding of disabilities and other forms of diversity.

Improvements to supports for our employees

Information regarding the disability access and inclusion needs of new staff is now gathered during recruitment and initial medical assessment. In 2024-25 this enabled Council's Human Resources team to identify staff with disabilities prior to commencement of employment at Council and develop plans for relevant accommodations and adjustments. The process is under review to ensure this is consistently implemented for all staff.

Improving accessibility of our workspaces

Council completed improvements in the staff amenities within its Administration Building. This work included the provision of ambulant toilets.

FOCUS AREA 4: Improving access to mainstream systems through better systems and processes

Highlighting access and inclusion in Council systems

In 2024 Council hosted training focussed on Autism awareness in Emergencies. This training was delivered to Council staff and the employees of partner agencies who respond to community members in cases of natural disaster.

During 2024-2025, Council's Community Development Committee renewed its focus on disability access and inclusion by ensuring updates on the delivery of the DIAP are a fixed item on the agenda of each CDC meeting.

Improvements to our website and communications

Throughout 2024 and 2025 several actions pertaining to the accessibility of Council's website and other online systems have been set in motion for completion in 2026.

Council completed a review of its website, online forms and systems for financial transactions, including through review of disability access, in 2024. As a result, a new website has been developed through Open Cities and an online customer portal developed utilising CIA Live.

These improvements mean that

- Council's new website will be live in early 2026 and will meet WCAG 2.1 level AA
- This website includes a range of accessible online forms
- A new online customer portal, including a high standard of accessibility for people of all abilities, is due for finalisation in 2027