



Lithgow
CITY COUNCIL

Annual Report

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2018/2019

About this report

The 2018/19 Disability Inclusion Action Plan Annual Report provides a summary of performance against key Indicators actions in relation to inclusion and accessibility issues and the objectives identified by the community of the Lithgow Local Government Area in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021. This report should also be read in conjunction with the Lithgow City Council Annual Report – A Year in Review, 2017/18 and 2018/19 available on Council's website <http://council.lithgow.com/ipr/>

Legislation

In 2014, the NSW Government passed the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA), which required all local government organisations to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan by 1 July 2017. By developing a Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Council is better placed to remove barriers and enable people with disability to participate equally in their communities.

Lithgow Disability Inclusion Action Plan Reporting

In 2017/18, Lithgow City Council's Annual Report – A Year in Review was changed to include progress against the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 Indicators available for viewing on Council's website <http://council.lithgow.com/ipr/>.

Guiding Principles

The aim of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to outline precise strategies and actions that will help Council achieve its inclusion goals over the next four years. This will allow people with disability to have better access to the services, information and facilities offered by Council.

The Plan takes a holistic approach and includes actions for all areas of Council. By implementing the actions in the Plan, not only will people with disability benefit, but older people, people with acute or short-term injuries, and parents with young children will also benefit. Therefore, this Plan is based on the broader guiding principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which includes:

- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- Accessibility
- Equality of opportunity
- Non-discrimination
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- Principles of Universal Design

Front cover image courtesy Brigitte Grant Photography – Salvaged Sounds (see p5).

The Case for Inclusion

In addition to the human rights imperative the case for an inclusive community is strong:

- As a community, we are poorer without a diverse range of viewpoints and individual perspectives.
- Exclusion leads to disadvantage and discrimination, which have far reaching negative impacts across all aspects of life, including health, welfare, education and employment.

These impacts are felt beyond the individual, with families and the broader community being negatively impacted by a non-inclusive community.

- There is a strong economic imperative for increasing the inclusiveness of our society. Employment can provide independence, reduce reliance on government income support and improve the living standards of people with disability. This can also have positive health impacts and contribute to a greater sense of self-worth.
- Providing physical access to businesses benefits not only people with disability, but older people, parents with prams and business owners by expanding their business reach.
- With an ageing population there is a growing need to not simply create places for older people, but to ensure that all places are designed to support people regardless of age.

Focus Area 1.

Building Liveable Communities

Liveable communities are places people can move about easily to access services and facilities and participate in community life.

1.1 Enhance access to Council's building and facilities

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Conduct access appraisals of Council's buildings and facilities to identify access issues.	An access appraisal of council's buildings and facilities is yet to be conducted.	Council commenced upgrade of the Union Theatre which includes installation of a lift and accessible toilets (see case study pp 10-11)
Upgrade access with the JM Robson Aquatic Centre, including installation of hoist, adult change table, water wheelchairs etc.	The purchase and installation of accessible aquatic equipment at the JM Robson Aquatic Centre was adopted as part of the 2018/19 Operational Plan.	A hoist was installed next to the 50m outdoor pool to enable patrons in wheelchairs to be lifted safely into the pool. The adult change table was not installed due to lack of a suitable space.

1.2 Improve access to public toilets

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
National Public Toilet Map is updated annually.	The National Public Toilet Map was updated.	The National Public Toilet Map is updated as required.
Number of toilets accessible to people with a disability.	Council provided 3 new fully accessible toilet facilities at Blast Furnace Park, Lithgow; Kremer Park, Portland and in Daintree Lane, Wallerawang.	Accessible toilets are being installed as part of the Union Theatre upgrade (see case study pp 10-11)

1.3 Ensure there are sufficiently well-located disability parking spaces in the LGA

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Review undertaken	A review of the number and location of parking spaces in the Lithgow LGA commenced in 2017/18. Top layer assets (i.e. Number of car parks in the LGA) have been identified and are being inputted into Council's Asset Management System.	
Monitor and enforce non-compliant use of disability parking spaces.	A total of 7 infringements were issued in 2017/18 for non-compliant use of disability parking space.	A total of 15 infringements were issued in 2017/18 for non-compliant use of disability parking space.

1.4 Improve the number of accessible paths of travel to key destinations

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Number of CAPT improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of the access road at Lithgow Cemetery was sealed. • A shared footpath and cycleway along Farmers Creek, at a rate of approximately 70-80m per year is being constructed. • The footpaths along Rabaul Street, Lithgow the Great Western Highway, Lithgow and Barton Avenue, Wallerawang were renewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath was constructed along Wolgan Road Lidsdale from Skelly Road to Maddox Lane. • Footpath and pedestrian refuge were constructed in Wallerawang in the vicinity of Barton Avenue and the rail overbridge. <p>See Case Study p9.</p>

1.5 Increase the number of accessible bus stops and shelters

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Audit in progress	Council has commenced data collection and identification of Council owned assets for input into the new Asset Management System, this includes bus shelters. The information collected includes the asset attributes (such as physical location (including school routes) length, width, height, materials, condition rating and valuation). The system also identifies if the bus shelter is disability compliant.	
Number of upgrades to bus stops and shelters.	In conjunction with the local bus company one bus shelter was installed at the hospital near the Scots School.	1 new bus shelter was installed at the intersection of Willis Street & Sutcliff Street. Existing shelters were improved to meet the needs of the community.

1.6 Improve Council's policy and planning tools to create better access

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
<p>Universal Access Guidelines considered and incorporated into works and promoted in newsletter.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Main Street Revitalisation Program has seen improvements in Cook Street Plaza and Eskbank Street Precinct. These include enhancing accessibility and functionality of public spaces for all abilities to enjoy. 2. The design for the Adventure Playground (to be constructed in 2018/19) incorporates accessible pathways, facilities and amenities, contrasting colour and texture in materials to aid navigation, extension of seating areas to accommodate wheelchairs, strollers and walking frames. Accessible harnesses on swings and flying fox and accessible play equipment. 3. Media releases promoting new facility upgrades and design features are distributed to local and regional media and made available via social media channels, on councils' website and eNewsletters. 	<p>The Adventure Playground, completed in March 2019, includes a number of universal access features and equipment.</p> <p>Media releases were produced regarding the construction of the playground and its design features.</p> <p>http://council.lithgow.com/?s=adventure+playground</p>
<p>Number of plans and people consulted.</p>	<p>Council aims to include the needs of people with disability in the development of its plans. However, Council did not develop any town and village plans, master plans or precinct plans during 2017/18.</p>	<p>Council continues to consult with its community on a wide range of plans and strategies. All plans are promoted to the community through a variety of channels including www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com See pp23-26.</p>

1.7 Increase access and inclusions to the Library and Eskbank House Museum

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Maintain partnerships with disability providers	In 2017/18 Council attended the Community Interagency on a quarterly basis to maintain partnerships with key providers in town, including disability providers.	In 2018/19 Council attended the Community Interagency on a quarterly basis to maintain partnerships with key providers in town, including disability providers
Provide a range of resources to meet the diversity of needs of people with disability such as large print books and audio books both in the library and online.	In 2017/18 at total of 5,747 large print books and 2,848 audio books were loaned out from the inclusive collection. A large amount of these loans are distributed via the Home Library Service to residents of local Nursing Homes and private homes for people with mobility issues. Furthermore, a total of 1,047 eBooks and eAudio loans were made.	In 2018/19 a total of 5,513 large print books and 2,990 audio books were loaned out from the inclusive collection A large amount of these loans are distributed via the Home Library Service to residents of local Nursing Homes and private homes for people with mobility issues. Furthermore, a total of 1,580 eResources were loaned. Our eResources have grown to include; eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines & eFilms.
Continue providing Maker Space, Lego Club and/or other play therapy programs for children with disability.	Throughout 2017/18 Maker Space was made available during Library operating hours. A total of 26 Lego Club sessions were held at the library.	Throughout 2018/19 Maker Space was made available during Library operating hours. During the year pilot programs were run to meet the needs of children with special needs including; Sensory Storytime & Maths is Fun.

1.7 Increase access and inclusions to the Library and Eskbank House Museum

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Host events and develop programs that celebrate and recognise inclusion and diversity at the Library and/or Eskbank House Museum.	<p>The Ukulele Group was held every Tuesday during school term.</p> <p>A local woman with disability was invited to host a monthly story-time session with pre-schoolers.</p> <p>Lithgow Library celebrated International Day of People with a Disability at the Storytime session on 6 December 2017. The guests read stories and answered questions about living with a disability.</p>	<p>The Ukulele Group has been held regularly every Tuesday.</p> <p>Lithgow Library held a morning tea on the 11 December 2018 for our Home Library Service Clients, to provide an opportunity for social inclusion.</p> <p>Salvaged Sounds used storytelling and musical instruments to explore ideas around waste and reusing materials in creative ways. With funding from Country Arts Support Program, Lithgow City Council partnered with Mitchell Conservatorium to deliver workshops with local disability service providers. The participants worked with Mitchell Conservatorium facilitators over a 10-week period to make their own instruments, write a narrative piece and devise a performance. The performance, entitled "A Rainy Night" was presented to friends, family, carers and the community at Eskbank House Museum.</p>

1.8 Increase recreational opportunities for young people with disability

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Work with local community organisations and government to enhance recreational opportunities for young people with disability.	<p>Council supported a local disability provider, Me3, to provide a drop-in centre of young people with disability. Lithgow Hangout at Me3 was held every Tuesday during school term from 3.30 - 6pm.</p>	<p>See Salvaged Sounds program above.</p>
Ensure the planning and delivery of recreational assets takes into account the needs of young people with disability.	<p>There were no consultations with young people with disability in 2017/18.</p>	<p>There were no consultations with young people with disability in 2018/19.</p>

Case Study - Footpaths

Wolgan Road Lidsdale Footpath

As a result of significant community feedback, a 1,000m roadside footpath at 1.8m width was constructed along Wolgan Road, Lidsdale from Skelly Road to Maddox Lane.

This project facilitated the provision of a range of community outcomes including promoting healthy lifestyles, improving quality of life for Lidsdale residents and providing recreational infrastructure to meet the needs of the community. To date, this project has been the subject of high praise by the community.

Wallerawang Rail Overbridge Footpath and Pedestrian Refuge Project

Additional to the project above, through consultation with the community, Wallerawang Public School and the Roads and Maritime Services, it was identified that that community of Wallerawang required a pedestrian refuge and additional footpath infrastructure in the vicinity of Barton Avenue and the rail overbridge.

Additionally, the Wallerawang footpath and pedestrian refuge construction project included the construction of 50m of footpath on Tweedie Street and 50m of footpath on Pipers Flat Road with the purpose of connecting the existing western footpath on the rail overbridge, for use by the community. Additionally, this project saw the design and construction of a new streetlight and pedestrian refuge in order to better ensure the safety of the public, in particular local school children, while using the area.

Footpath Renewals

In addition to this new construction, Council is committed to the renewal of existing footpaths to ensure their longevity. Currently, this is including the removal of underlying issues such as tree roots and broken stormwater infrastructure that is contributing to the issue. \$66,033 was spent on footpath maintenance and renewals throughout the greater Lithgow area.

While it is acknowledged that the construction of new assets assists Council to meet the needs of the community, it is also accepted that the condition of many concrete footpath assets require intervention from Council in order to satisfy the service requirements of the wider community. For this reason, Council inspects every segment of footpath in response to requests from the community. In some instances, simple maintenance is not enough, and Council allocates the highest priority to this work – capital renewal. This work typically involves the identification of the underlying issue, removal of the issue and reconstruction of the footpath. Where required, footpaths were maintained and renewed throughout Lithgow, Wallerawang and Portland.

The Impact

The impacts of this work are primarily social and economic in nature. By providing the community with safe and functional recreational infrastructure that meets its needs, Council is effectively encouraging its community to lead the healthiest and enjoyable lifestyle they possibly can. In addition, these assets attract people to our area, whether they are tourists or permanent residents, and as such high-level footpath construction does a great deal in attracting people to the area and providing economic benefits to our community.

Budget

Original Budget	220,385
Actual Spend	238,824
Funding/sponsorship (List providers)	Regional Roads REPAIR Program (State Government)
Volunteer Contributions	Nil
Cost Savings realised through efficiencies	Nil

Learnings

Undertaking this project, Council learnt a great deal regarding the importance of street trees to the amenity of the local Lithgow area. The removal of such trees, even when their removal assists in the longevity of footpath assets, needs to be in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Links to plans & strategies

Community Strategic Plan 2030

Developing our Built Environment

BE 1.2 - We provide cultural and recreational infrastructure that meets the needs of the community.

Case Study - Lithgow Union Theatre Improvement Program

The lack of dressing room facilities at the Lithgow Union Theatre has resulted in limited use of the facility which is an important heritage building that was constructed in 1918.

Performers are required to use temporary portable dressing rooms external to the building during productions at the theatre. Access to toilet facilities also requires performers to use an external uncovered walkway. As a result, what should be an important cultural facility is unsuitable for use by travelling performers. Not one travelling performance occurred at the theatre in 2018.

An extensive community consultation process determined that there was a need for a multipurpose cultural facility in Lithgow.

In 2018/19 Council budgeted \$400,000 for dressing room improvements at the Union Theatre. A request for a state government grant was also submitted through the Regional Cultural Fund for this project, which was successful, providing a further \$775,664 towards the project.

Detailed tender documentation was then prepared for the project incorporating a number of different elements which included back of house facilities such as dressing rooms, a lift, accessible toilets, green room and workshop and storage areas. Provision was also made in the tender for new digital audio and lighting equipment, new curtains and a stage lift.

A contract was then issued to the successful tenderer, Renascent, who commenced construction on the project in May 2019. Work is scheduled for completion in January 2020.

The Impact

The total cost of the project is \$1,175,664. Prior to allocation of the grant through the Regional Cultural Fund Council was required to submit a detailed cost benefit analysis to demonstrate that the project when completed will have a positive economic and social benefit to the region.

The objectives of the project to meet the requirements of the Regional Cultural Fund include:

- provide a distinct cultural experience – enable unique arts, screen, culture and heritage offerings or meet an identified need or gap
- enhance cultural vitality – improve or establish cultural infrastructure and generate additional jobs in the cultural sector or the broader economy of the area
- promote increased participation in creative and cultural activities – enable access to arts and cultural projects and increase participation and diverse audiences in cultural events for the community, including for young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ensure design excellence – the project considers design excellence as a key component of the project.

When completed it is considered that the project will have met all the Regional Cultural Fund objectives.

\$1,175,664 improvement program

dressing rooms a lift accessible toilets
green room workshop and storage areas

Case Study - Farmers Creek developed to encourage environmentally sustainable recreational and tourist use

Council has continued the construction on the shared path across Glanmire Oval with available funding. Two strong applications submitted to the Stronger County Communities (SCC) grant were unfortunately not funded. Further options for grant funding will be explored into the future to assist the implementation of the Farmers Creek Master Plan (FCMP).

Despite this significant Council funding (\$150,000) was allocated for the design and installation of one pedestrian bridge over Farmers Creek from Glanmire Oval to Coalbrook Street. The 1:100 flood modeling was used to guide the design and construction resulting in large concrete footing to secure the bridge in the event future flood events.

Significant environmental works to improve native habitat value and reduce the abundance of weeds within the riparian corridor has also commenced within Farmers Creek along Sandford Avenue. These works have been undertaken by a professional bush regeneration contractor with \$130,000 of external funding. These environmental works will continue next financial year improving habitat value of the riparian corridor. Maintenance works of previous native plantings has also been completed along Macauley Street in preparation for the coming stage of walking path development. All of these works are consistent with the outcomes detailed within the Farmers Creek Master Plan which is available for viewing on Council's website <http://council.lithgow.com/farmers-creek/>.



Focus Area 2.

Creating Meaningful Employment

Employment opportunities contribute to independence and feelings of self-worth, social interaction and mental health, and increases opportunities to support individual choice and control.

2.1 Improve Council's preparedness to employ people with disability

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Audit Council's Hartley and Administration Centre Buildings to identify barriers to physical access.	An investigation was undertaken of the Hartley Building and based on the age of the building it was determined that accessible upgrades were not feasible.	
Develop a priority list of required changes to Council's buildings and workplaces to improve our ability to employ people with disabilities.	Council Administration Centre has been identified as a priority for upgrade. Subsequently, Council has allocated funding for a modification and refit of the Admin building which includes improving access for people with disability.	Access audit of the Tourist Information Centre and Library was conducted by Melissa James - Access consultant - to highlight areas of improvement for staff and customers. (see p19)
Review recruitment procedures to support non-discrimination of people with disability and include in Council's Workforce Plan.	Council has reviewed its Workforce Plan and has promoted itself as an Equal Opportunity Employer in 2017/18.	

2.2 Incorporate workforce diversity as part of everyday Council business

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Design all work as flexibly as possible, with a focus on achieving the desired outcomes rather than starting from required work methods, location and hours.	Council has implemented flexible work practices including working from home.	Council continues to design work flexibly including the expansion of working remotely, variable hours, flexible leave arrangements, and the use of mobile technology.

2.3 Increase employment opportunities for people with disability

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Work with community, government and businesses to support local employment for people with disabilities.	Council was in discussion with Uniting Care in 2017/18 to address the transport and employment gap for people with disability in Lithgow.	Accessible tourism workshop and audits were conducted by Melissa James – Access consultant – and offered free of charge to Lithgow businesses.

Focus Area 3.

Promoting Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

People's attitudes impact all aspects of community life. The attitudes and behaviours of the community towards people with disability have been described as the single biggest barrier to participation and inclusion.

3.1 Raise awareness about the contribution people with disability make to our community

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Include images of people with disability in publications and promotional material for events.	Images of people with disability were included in the following publications and promotional material for events: Disability Inclusion Action Plan Lithgow Ability Awards 2017 International Day of People with Disability 2017	Images of people with disability were included in the following publications and promotional material for events: Lithgow Ability Awards 2018

3.1 Raise awareness about the contribution people with disability make to our community

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
<p>Celebrate International Day of People with Disability and other significant days to recognise the contribution of people with disability.</p>	<p>IDoPWD was celebrated at Lithgow Library with a storytime session. Special guests read stories to children, sang songs, enjoyed a group morning tea and answered questions about living with disability (see p26 http://council.lithgow.com/download/12707/).</p> <p>Council also hosted the inaugural Lithgow Ability Awards as part of Social Inclusion Week in 2017. The event highlighted and recognised the contributions made to our community by people with disability and other groups the work to improve the lives of people with disability (see pages 119-120 http://council.lithgow.com/download/12707/).</p>	<p>Council hosted the second Lithgow Ability Awards. The event highlighted and recognised the contributions made to our community by people with disability and other groups the work to improve the lives of people with disability – see pp11-12.</p>

23 nominations over

10 categories were received

50 people attended

3.2 Undertake programs to promote access and inclusion

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Implement a Dignity & Respect in the Workplace Plan through conducting team-based training sessions.	A total of 14 training sessions were implemented over the course of three months in 2017/18.	Council's Health & Wellbeing Committee promotes Dignity & Respect in the Workplace.
Partner with community organisations to deliver projects that support inclusion.	Council partnered with Ability Lines/Uniting to deliver the Lithgow Ability Awards in 2017/18 during Social Inclusion Week (see pages 119-120 http://council.lithgow.com/download/12707/).	The Mayors Mental Health Taskforce has worked with a number of community organisations to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the community. See over p13.
Involve people with disability in the development of communication campaigns regarding inclusion.	As part of the Mayor's Mental Health Taskforce, Council engaged a youth ambassador with disability to speak at the opening ceremonies of the Mental Health Forum and Meet Your Neighbour events.	
Review events and implement strategies to improve access.	Council conducted a debrief session after Halloween 2017 to identify areas for improvement, which included the provision of additional disability parking spaces.	
Include information about access in marketing and promotional material of all events.	As part of the planning for Halloween 2018, Council identified additional disability parking spaces to be allocated in the Eskbank Street Carpark to allow easy access to the festival. This information was promoted on the website.	

Case Study – Lithgow Ability Awards

Council recognises the importance of celebrating and acknowledging the achievements of people with a disability, their supporters and the community who work towards building a socially inclusive Lithgow.

In 2018 Council hosted its second Lithgow Ability Awards that highlighted the achievements of people with a disability, as well as their supporters including local business and organisations who were working toward socially inclusive practices.

Twenty-three nominees were treated to an afternoon tea celebration that saw the following people and organisations take out the winning categories:

- Volunteer of the Year – Jenny Creevey
- Lithgow Ability Mastery Award – Leanne Walding
- Community Leader Award – Peyton Richardson
- Fundraiser Award – Peyton Richardson
- Employee of the Year Award – Priscilla Steele
- Employer of the Year Award – Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre Limited
- Health and Wellbeing Award – Lithgow High School Wellbeing Centre
- Accessibility Award – Lithgow City Council – Adventure Playground
- Young Community Spirit Award – Lithgow High School – Transition to Work Class 2018
- Young Community Spirit Award – La Salle Academy Access Class 2018
- Community Project Award – Lithgow High School Special Education – Transition to Work Program

The Lithgow Ability Awards were hosted by Council and held at the Lithgow Workman's Club in early December 2018 where approximately 50 people were treated to a delicious afternoon tea, performances and awards presentations.

The Impact

The Lithgow Ability Awards celebrated achievement across a range of sectors, industries, disciplines, and community service. They showcased the many achievements of local people within our community who are working towards building a socially inclusive Lithgow.

The awards were well received, with many attendees stating how privileged they felt to be either nominated or in attendance; how moved they were by the ceremony, that it was lovely to recognise such a wonderful group of people. The awards received positive press through radio and newspaper; as well as through social media.

Anticipated positives outcomes as a flow on effect from the awards and accompanying media include:

- The recognition and uptake of more socially inclusive practices by businesses and organisations.
- A greater sense of community participation, connectivity, pride and social inclusion will be felt by people with a disability for having their achievements recognised and celebrated.

Learnings

The Lithgow ability Awards were well received and there has been great community support for the awards to be continued annually; which Council supports.

Through the promotion and nomination process of the *Lithgow Ability Awards* it became evident that there was more that could be implemented to promote socially inclusive practices. An outcome of this was the allocation of funds for the 'Accessibility Campaign' which was rolled out in 2018-2019. This campaign aimed to assist community, organisations and businesses to become aware of and implement practices that will make them more accessible to people with a disability (see p 13).



Nominees for the Community Project Award

Facilitate the Mayors Mental Health Taskforce

Partner with community organisations to deliver projects that support inclusion.

Lithgow

Headspace prepared for its official opening in early 2019/20

\$1 million funding

from the Commonwealth Government Drought Communities Program allocated to Lithgow Council for projects that respond to the impact of drought or build resilience against future drought.

Lithgow Rural Adversity Mental Health Program

based at Lithgow Hospital which focusses on information, education and social connection around mental health within rural communities.

New Access Mental Health Program

an early intervention/low intensity program based on a Beyond Blue model. It is self-referral with up to 6 sessions either face to face or by phone.

Focus Area 4.

Enhancing Systems and Processes to Improve Access

Accessible systems, options for communicating, and information help remove barriers to participation and support people to live independently.

4.1 Enable easy access to information

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Distribute information widely and in a variety of formats, large print, electronic, radio etc.	<p>According to the 2015/16 Community Satisfaction Survey 'Word of Mouth'(85%) was the most popular method used to source information on services and facilities. This was followed by 'Council brochures in the letterbox'(76%), 'Direct mail/letters'(75%) and 'Lithgow Mercury'(73%).</p> <p>Subsequently, throughout 2016/17 and 2017/18 Council has been more proactive in the distribution and circulation of information. Council Connections, an eNewsletter is now produced on a weekly basis to subscribers.</p>	Council continues to improve how it communicates with the community. See pp 23-26.

4.1 Enable easy access to information

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Create an online map on council's website showing disability parking spaces and toilets in the Lithgow LGA.	An online map of Council's disability parking spaces and toilets is yet to be created. Council's online mapping system will be upgraded in 2020. This will allow for specialised maps to be created for public access.	
Support local groups and/or organisations working to improve information distribution for the disability section.	Council supported the Lithgow Cares Coalition to update the Children's Services Directory. Council funded Nanna's Touch \$1,000 to host the Accessible Lifestyle Expo.	

4.2 Increase participation in Councils community engagement processes

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Engage people with disability in consultation processes and include their ideas in plans for Council services, facilities and activities.	Additional disability parking spaces were made available during Halloween 2018 and this information was publicised on the Lithgow Halloween website. Council's weekly eNewsletter, Council Connections, also promoted the JM Robson Aquatic Centre and Adventure Playground proposal.	

4.2 Increase participation in Councils community engagement processes

Key Performance Indicator	2017/18	2018/19
Promote access upgrades to services and facilities in our newsletter.	The upgrades to Blast Furnace Park have improved access to significant parts of the site. This information was included in media releases which were distributed to local and regional media outlets, Council Connections eNewsletter and placed on Council's website, social media platforms and	
Keep website and tourism app up to date with information about access.	The tourism app and the website have yet to be upgraded to include information about access.	

Engaging our Community

Council's Community Engagement is based on the fundamental principles for engagement of social equity and justice.

- Inclusiveness and diversity
- Openness, respect and accountability
- Leadership
- Purpose
- Information sharing
- Feedback and evaluation
- Resourcing and timing

Consultation Framework

Council's engagement strategy is based on the five pillars of community engagement which can be defined as follows:

Inform – Giving information to the local community

Consult – Seeking feedback from the local community

Involve – Working directly with the local community

Collaborate – Creating partnerships with the local community to produce recommendations and solutions.

Empower – Putting final decision-making in the hands of the community

Council meetings

During the reporting period, Lithgow Council resolved to meet on the fourth Monday of each month. Min No. 117-235 (14/8/17), in the Council Chambers, 180 Mort Street, Lithgow to consider matters requiring a decision by Council.

Council meetings were open to the public except on occasion where there was a discussion of confidential items such as sensitive legal or commercial matters.

Business Papers were made available on the Friday before each Council meeting at Council's Customer Service Centre and on the website at www.council.lithgow.com.

Participation in Decisions

Residents have the opportunity to address the Council at each council meeting as part of the Public Forum. This may include any matter listed for discussion at the meeting, or any other matter with appropriate notice.

Council's decisions are implemented by Council staff under the leadership and direction of the General Manager.

Section 355 Committees

Council has a number of committees made up of Councillors, Council Officers and members of the community who act in an official capacity on behalf of Council within the confines of the charter of the committee. Advisory committees provide advice to Council on specific subjects such as environmental or youth issues.

In addition to this Council appoints or convenes temporary working parties or task forces that assist in the development of short-term projects, providing professional advice and community input. During the reporting period Council had two Taskforces, the Mining Taskforce and the Mayors Mental Health Taskforce.

Volunteer Working Parties

Council convened three (short-term) Volunteer Working Parties to assist the Economic Development Committee in researching and developing policy and strategies on a range of economic development initiatives. In 2017/18, Council convened the three working parties to investigate Tourism Opportunities, Events and the Decline in Retail.

- Tourism and Events - investigating issues for exploration including the identification of a relevant and effective model for a Lithgow tourism entity and the research and development of an events framework to complement existing events in the Lithgow tourism Calendar; And
- Decline in Retail – National, International & Local - investigating the global trend in the decline of the Retail Sector. The Lithgow Local Government Area has not been immune to this. In order to implement strategies to assist retail businesses, Council needs to understand why the retail sector at International, National and Regional levels has been subject to change over the last few years. the working party assisted Council in identifying the causes through research and reporting back in the context of a large amount of commentary already existing on this subject.

Communication Channels

Council utilises a wide range of communication channels to ensure that the community is provided with information of Council programs and activities and is continuing to adapt to the changing environment of modern communications.

Media Releases

Media Releases are distributed weekly to local and regional print and radio and television media. Once released they are posted on Council's website and relevant social media sites.

Letterbox Drops

When required, council will undertake a mailout or letterbox drop to affected residents in relation to a matter which will impact residents.

Inserts in Rates and Water Accounts

Council inserts promotional information and updates on Council activities in the mailout of Rate Notices and Water Billing to ratepayers.

Council Column

A weekly column detailing Council initiatives, programs and legislative required activities is published in the Village Voice each Friday.

Advertising and Promotional Materials

Where required and within budget, council produces advertising materials, radio and television advertising to inform the community of major events.

Council Connections eNewsletter

A weekly subscriber newsletter for the community which provides information on Council activities, links to media releases and opportunities to participate in Council engagement activities encouraging the community to have their say on matters on exhibition. Members of the community can subscribe on Council's website at <http://council.lithgow.com/council-publications/> Information published in the eNewsletter is also published in the Council Column of The Village Voice, a free community newspaper, distributed Friday's throughout the LGA.

HaveYourSay eNewsletter

A monthly subscriber newsletter to promote opportunities for the community to provide input into plans and strategies being developed, surveys, and policies or documents on exhibition. The newsletter also provides readers with a full list of recent media releases. Members of the community can subscribe on Council's website at www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com Information published in the eNewsletter is also published in the Council Column of The Village Voice, a free community newspaper, distributed Friday's throughout the LGA.

Lithgow Tourism & Business Matters eNewsletter

A monthly subscriber newsletter for tourism and business operators to keep them informed of upcoming events, council activities, educational opportunities and business improvement initiatives. Local business and tourism operators can subscribe by Contacting Councils Economic Development Manager on 6354 9999.

Websites and Social Media Channels

The following websites and social media channels are managed and maintained by Council:

Websites

- www.council.lithgow.com
- www.tourism.lithgow.com
- www.library.lithgow.com
- www.eskbank.lithgow.com
- www.invest.lithgow.com
- www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com
- www.drought-communities.lithgow.com

Facebook

- @LithgowCityCouncil
- @LithgowLibrary&Museum
- @lithgowtourism
- @revitaliseLithgow
- @LithgowlgaYouth
- @LithgowAnimalShelter
- @lithgowHalloween
- Lithgow Halloween – Businesses (closed group for Lithgow LGA Business operators)

Twitter

- @Lithgow Council

Instagram

- @lithgow_tourism
- @LithgowHalloween



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