

Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022–2026

Appendix 2



Agency Name	City of Coffs Harbour
Reporting Period	1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Accessible and inclusive communities is a vital part of enabling people with a disability to participate in community life. The purpose of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) is to help make sure that people with a disability have equal access to information, services and facilities provided by the City, and can participate in the public spaces and public life of the community.

Supporting the development of an accessible and inclusive area benefits all people living in and visiting the Coffs Harbour Local Government Area. Particularly those with a disability, older people, people with a chronic illness, people experiencing temporary illness or injury, and parents of young children and their families.

The DIAP establishes the framework and priorities to implement significant improvements for access and inclusion for people with a range of abilities.

The plan has four focus areas:

1. Developing Positive Attitudes towards Disability

Objective: Community awareness of the rights and capabilities of people with disabilities reduces barriers to full access and inclusion.

2. Creating liveable communities

Objective: A liveable community is one which allows everyone to participate.

3. Increasing Access to meaningful employment

Objective: Many barriers can impact on the ability of people with disabilities to gain employment.

4. Improving access to mainstream services improved systems and processes

Objective: Access to information is important to ensure that everyone is able to participate and engage in our community. Community members need to be able to make informed choices about available services and to understand decision making processes that impact on their lives.

Creating liveable communities

The City has delivered the following projects to increase access to the built environment for people with a disability:

- Significant upgrades to the footpath network and accessibility upgrades to bus stops
- Installing a mobi-mat at Coffs Harbour Jetty Beach with a lifeguard service during peak holiday periods
- New accessible amenity block at the Sawtell Reserve Hall.
- The Wiigulga Sports Complex now complete, which has accessible change rooms available and a high tech sensory room.
- New accessible female change rooms and pathways at Toormina Oval.

The City is working toward greater access across the LGA and has allocated funding in the 2022/23 budget for:

- Bus stop upgrades for Disability Discrimination Act compliance across the local government area
- Develop and implement guidelines to ensure graphic design publications are accessible for people with disability
- Various plans and strategies making clearer links to the DIAP

Improving access to mainstream services through improved systems and processes

The City has worked to increase access to information including:

- Social media and web pages promoting information relevant to people with disabilities such as access to beach wheelchairs and installation of the mobi-mat at Jetty Beach
- 318 Junior fiction titles available in a print format for young people with dyslexia
- Over 2,000 accessible items were added to the library's collections during 2022/23:
 - 504 talking books (books on CD)
 - 590 eAudiobooks (for download)
 - 689 e-books
 - 734 new large print books.
- Assistive software for people with a disability installed for the library computers and purchase of adaptive technology:
 - PEARL text to speech camera with OpenBook software package
 - ZoomText keyboard, and ZoomText Fusion Professional software — designed for users with advanced or progressive vision loss, ZoomText Fusion provides the features and benefits of ZoomText
 - Magnifier/Reader, plus a complete screen reader.
- Improving the City's website accessibility to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 standards
- Road and Community Safety activations and information about the use of bikes, wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Highlight

Coffs Harbour Libraries has a large collection of junior fiction books in special fonts to alleviate some of the difficulties that readers can experience.

Some of the book features include:

- Bolds at the bottom of letters
- Gives letters larger openings
- Slants similar looking letters

- Improves layout of text on page
- Bolds capitals
- Improves spacing between letters and words

The library has also been able to purchase a scanning pen for members to use during opening hours. This is thanks to a generous donation from the Herford family. The C-Pen Reader 2 is held and operated like a highlighter, and when text is scanned by the pen it will read it out loud



Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

The City continues to be committed to consulting with people with disabilities. This includes:

- Regular meetings of the City's Disability Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee and engagement with City staff
- Disability Inclusive Emergency Forum — hosting this forum in partnership with the University of Sydney means in the future we can better support everyone in our community.
- The Disability Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee has provided input into the design of major developments, including Yarrila Place and the Wiigulga Sports Complex.

The City has worked to promote positive community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities through:

- Promoting library services and events to people with a disability as a key audience
- Including community members with disabilities and sharing information about disability services on the MyCoffs Connect Facebook page.

Community Safety Programs

Community Safety Programs continued to deliver events and workshops over the year that were free. They were held in venues that were easily accessible. These programs included offering four +65 On The Road presentations with Transport for NSW and experts. These presentations covered mobility aids, driving with a disability and how to obtain a disabled parking permit.

Other Road and Community Safety activations also offered information about the use of modified bikes, wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Work was also done with Department of Health to deliver part of their Stepping On program for falls prevention. This program provides a positive space for community to discuss accessibility issues and helps create a more liveable community.

City Public Swimming pools

Many people with a disability and their support services utilise the pool for a variety of reasons — recreation, therapy, exercise, social networking. The pools have:

- ramp access and water wheelchairs, hoist lift in accessible changerooms.
- North coast Swim Academy, the squad program operating at Coffs pool has swimmers competing at state and national multi-event competitions.

A community member visits the pool most days with a support worker. Being able to use the pool and be in the water helps to lessen their chronic pain. They can move and exercise and have also motivated some of the support workers around them to get into swimming.

Sailfish Swim School provides swim classes to students with a disability. Students can join a group swim session or have one on one classes, with swim teachers who have Access and Inclusion Qualifications. The classes focus on:

- Water safety
- Swimming stroke development
- Social skill development
- Communication
- Motor planning
- Working towards student's individual NDIS goals
- Fun and enjoyment
- Building confidence, self-esteem, and positive self-image

The swim instructors use a range of strategies to support their students:

- Use of visual schedules
- Use of signing
- Consistent teaching methods
- Adapting as required
- Transition from one on one to group classes.

Increasing access to meaningful employment

The City has worked to increase employment opportunities for staff with a disability including:

- Access to flexible work arrangements that support employment of people with a disability and carers of people with a disability.
- Updating the content of the City's recruitment advertising, including the careers section of the City's website to ensure it provides meaningful and transparent information in respect of applying for and being interviewed for a vacant position with the City.
- Actively reviewing the language used when writing new or updating existing policies, procedures, guidelines and position descriptions to ensure the language used is relevant and inclusive in nature.
- Undertaking unconscious bias training for our people leaders to provide a foundation for ensuring bias is eliminated from all people related activities, including recruitment, and performance review processes.
- Supporting leaders in working effectively with employees with a disability through capability development, as well as one on one support with specific issues.
- Working with a variety of Agencies that support disability in the workplace, to broaden awareness and implement support programs.

Highlight

The City held a Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning Forum in April 2023.

The forum was attended by more than 35 community members, people with disability, emergency services, government agencies and local service providers. The forum produced a report which reflected the five thematic learnings from the forum.

Subsequently, the City's Resilience and Recovery Service has initiated the P-CEP Connect Mid-North Coast community of practice. P-CEP is the acronym for Person Centred Emergency Preparedness toolkit, and the City is working with diverse stakeholders to encourage the use of this tool.





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