Central Coast Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan Highlights for 2024 – 2025



Image: Surrounded by manicured gardens, two ladies and a girl look over a curved timber bridge at the water, ducks and koi fish below. One lady is a wheelchair user and the other lady wears a Sunflower Hidden Disabilities lanyard.



Image: A group of five people use a timber boardwalk. The weather is wet and they share four umbrellas. One man is a wheelchair user and one lady wears a Sunflower Hidden Disabilities lanyard.



Image: A man wearing a hearing aid looks at black and white photographs featured in a public exhibition.



Image: A lady using a wheelchair sits in front of a large wall map of the Central Coast region. Another lady holds the Accessibles Beaches Central Coast brochures and points to Soldiers Beach on the wall map.



Image: Two ladies sit at a timber picnic table in an outside area. One lady is a wheelchair user and has her chair pulled up to the table opposite the other lady.

Introduction

Belonging to the community is at the heart of Council's Community Strategic Plan. This includes ensuring people with disability can access and participate in all aspects of community life. People with disability are an integral part of our community and contribute on a daily basis to the social, cultural and economic life of the Central Coast region.

Central Coast Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025 (DIAP) defines the strategies and actions for Council to enable people with disability to better access mainstream services, facilities, information and services. The DIAP, which meets legislative requirements under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014), is informed by genuine community consultation to enable people with disabilities to better access mainstream services, facilities, information, events and activities to be fully included and participate in all aspects of community life.

The actions in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan are aligned under four specific outcome areas which include:

1. **Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours**
2. **Creating liveable communities**
3. **Supporting access to meaningful employment**
4. **Improving access to services through better systems and processes**



Image: A group photo of the 13 members of the Access and Inclusion Reference Group.



Image: The glass door with the words "Meeting room hire", toilet symbols and the Hidden Disability Sunflower icon.



Image: The front cover of the Accessible Playspaces Central Coast brochure showing children on accessible play equipment.

Central Coast Council Access and Inclusion Reference Group

Council wishes to thank the **Access and Inclusion Reference Group** (AIRG) members whose knowledge and lived experience of disability continues to guide the implementation of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The group meets regularly and brings together people with lived experience of disability, carers, and professionals from the disability sector who advise Council on how to improve access and inclusion across the region and provide feedback on Council plans, policies and services, drawing on their diverse lived experience to highlight barriers and suggest practical ways to address them.

We sincerely thank them for their time, ongoing dedication, and valuable contribution helping Council continue to improve access and inclusion in our community.

Members participated in:

- 4 Quarterly meetings at an accessible and sensory friendly venue that were Auslan interpreted
- Engagement forums on Council's new four-year DIAP
- 5 members participated in a photoshoot across 3 locations on the Coast

Staff across areas of Council engaged the Access and Inclusion Reference Group for input on their key projects. They included project managers from Open Space and Recreation, Events and Town Centre Activation, Libraries, Facilities and Asset Management, Customer Service, Arts and Culture and Strategic Planning.

Council projects informed by consultation with the Reference Group included:

- Sunflower Hidden Disabilities program
- Accessible Playground design
- Accessible Playgrounds brochure design
- Amendments to new draft water bill format
- Programming at the Laycock Street Theatre
- Outdoor Public Domain Guidelines

Reference Group members comments:

"I have really enjoyed the group.**"**

"It's so amazing to feel useful again and to be making a contribution to society.**"**

"Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity!" "A huge thank you again for inviting me to speak today. These events are so important for raising awareness, so I'm glad I was able to be part of it.**"**

"I am really pleased to be invited to be part of this group.**"**

"It was very enriching to be part of the discussions.**"**

DIAP achievements in the last 12 months

Council continues to build on the progress made each year through the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and we are now at the end of our current Plan.

In close consultation with people with disability, we are developing a new 4-year Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 to continue the work and commitment Council make to increase meaningful participation in mainstream community life.

Over the last 12 months we have focused our work and progressed actions in the following way:

Focus Area 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

- Newly elected Councillors briefed on Council's obligations under the **Disability Inclusion Act 2014** and provided with an overview of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and progress on implementation to date

Council is now part of the **Sunflower Hidden Disabilities** scheme which was promoted on International Day of People with Disability. Staff at the following Council managed facilities are now trained to recognise the Sunflower symbol:

- Council customer service centres
- Ten (10) library branches
- Five (5) leisure centres
- Gosford Regional Gallery
- Laycock Street Theatre
- The Entrance Visitor Centre



Image: A lady wearing a bright green and yellow Sunflower Hidden Disabilities lanyard, and carrying an umbrella, accesses a timber boardwalk.

- Celebrated **International Day of People with Disability** on 3 December 2024 which is a United Nations recognised day dedicated to celebrating the achievements and contribution of people with disability and increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability. We recognise the diverse skills, leadership and resilience of people with disability across our region

Activities Council was involved in to celebrate International Day of People with Disability included:

- Co-hosted with Social Futures and Blind Cricket NSW, a Blind Cricket and Accessible Sport Expo for community leaders and local identities
- Council launched the Disability Sunflower program across Council's customer facing community facilities which also included a local media release and ABC radio interview
- Virtual Reality Program hosted to internal staff on International Day of People with Disability

- Completed a photoshoot across three (3) locations adding over three hundred (300) images of people with disability for use in Council publications. Locations included Terrigal Boardwalk, Gosford Regional Gallery and The Entrance Visitor Information Centre

- Completed additional print run of two thousand (2000) accessible information brochures on Accessible Nature, Beaches and Playspaces as well as **"Think Outside the Chair Hidden Disability"** bumper stickers which were distributed to Council customer facing points across customer service, libraries and other community facilities

- Shared the progress Council made to improve access and inclusion over the last year at the quarterly Central Coast Disability Interagency meetings



Image: A group of five people walk along a timber boardwalk in wet weather. One man is a wheelchair user and one lady wears a Sunflower Hidden Disabilities lanyard.



Image: The front cover of the Accessible Beach Central Coast brochure. A second brochure is open showing a map, beach image, text and icons.



Image: A lady smiles at a young child as they use an accessible swing. The lady is a wheelchair user and is pushing the swing with long handles.

Focus area 2: Creating Liveable Communities

- Accessible upgrades completed in the following town centres:
  - Installed a 'We-Go' accessible swing at The Entrance Memorial Park as well as increased number of accessible and long vehicle only parking spaces
  - Re-marked accessible parking spaces at The Toukley Village Green carpark as well as a wheelchair in the Creative Spaces container
  - Picnic Point Playspace which has been designed and constructed to include accessible pathways, seating, is fully fenced and has accessible play elements
- Council has constructed 5.7km of new footpaths
- Ongoing consultation is being undertaken with key NSW Government Agencies to discuss planning and transport matters for the Gosford City Centre
- Council upgraded forty-three (43) bus stops that comply with accessible standards
- An Accessible Adult Changing Facility was included in the design and build of the new Gosford Regional Library. Council's Access and Inclusion Reference Group was invited to do a pre-opening tour of the facility and library. An accessible changing facility also installed at Toukley Aquatic Centre
- Pool hoists and wheelchairs were purchased for The Grant McBride Baths at The Entrance, Toukley Aquatic Centre, Wyong Olympic Pool and Peninsula Leisure Centre

- Upgrades completed to accessible change rooms to improve ventilation as well as ceiling renewals at Gosford Olympic Pool. Also, Lake Haven Recreation Centre has been upgraded with an additional accessible change room
- Installed a concrete ramp on front of Soldiers Beach Surf Club
- Purchased ten (10) new sports wheelchairs for Niagara Park Stadium. These will allow the facility to host and welcome people to participate in wheelchair basketball and other accessible indoor sports. A $2.8 million upgrade to Niagara Park Stadium also completed which now has four (4) accessible change rooms
- Niagara Park Stadium hosted in partnership with Basketball NSW a wheelchair club challenge event
- Facilitated **World Pickleball Day Event** in collaboration with Office of Sport and local Pickleball Providers featured activations specifically for people with a disability
- Held meetings with Sports4All to discuss their programs in the region and have supported them with connections with local sector contacts
- Delivered accessible events and activities at Council libraries including Auslan Story Times, and Plot Play and Coastlink Story Times
- Collaborated with One Culture Support Services to host accessible and inclusive World Pickleball Weekend activation
- Sixteen (16) accessible arts programs delivered at the Gallery, including Studio Gossie. Participants of this program also hosted a workstation at the Big Draw event at the Gallery which was a program led by artists living with disability. Over two hundred (200) people engaged with this program. The gallery also hosted two (2) tours to disability groups from Cumberland City Council
- Two (2) relaxed performance sessions hosted at The Laycock Street Theatre for audiences with sensory sensitivities and a consultation session hosted with the local Deaf community on future Auslan interpreted performances at Laycock
- Upgraded Your Voice Our Coast website to conform with website accessibility standards

Focus area 3: Employment

- Audio transcriptions provided for internal staff work
- Leisure and lifestyle staff were trained in working with neurodiverse children
- Adjustments implemented for twelve (12) candidates who are neurodivergent and with physical disability which included:
  - online interviews
  - providing interview questions in advance
  - supplying printed questions during the interview
  - having a carer present at the interview
  - applicants can also respond to selection criteria with a video submission

- Requirement for driver's license no longer essential except for certain driving certifications such as forklift drivers and operating plant equipment
- Council hosted a Talent Acquisition event with other Human Resources practitioners from surrounding local Councils. Two (2) members of the Central Coast Council Access and Inclusion Reference Group presented
- Council's work experience program, which has an option for Disability employment agencies to request work experience placed five (5) people with disability in roles in Strategic Planning and Libraries. One participant transitioned into paid employment
- Refurbishment of the Wyong Council Administration building includes accessibility upgrades to training facilities currently under construction
- All training material produced in an accessible format. Disability Inclusion Officer has input to disability awareness training and scheduled to present Disability Awareness presentations at all new staff induction days
- Invitations to all training incorporate an access statement inviting participants to request adjustments where required

Focus area 4: Improving access to services through better systems and processes

- The new suite of Council's key public facing reports incorporate accessible formats as well as an easy English version of the Community Strategic Plan
- Drafted the Sportsground Allocation Policy that rewards clubs that provide accessibility and inclusiveness. Policy was drafted with associations and Sport Central Coast providing input
- Council's four (4) major events profiled in the event program and via social posts accessible features including parking, ramps and drop off zones, accessible facilities
- All current Customer Service staff participated in Disability Awareness and Sunflower Hidden Disabilities training as well as doing the virtual reality 'Live My Experience' immersive training
- Accessible consultation provided via a wide range of tools including more in-person public consultations and non-digital tools
- Communications shared through multiple formats including, text, graphics and video
- Contract documentation for installing local play spaces stipulate that designs are to be compliant with the Everyone Can Play Guidelines
- The public exhibition of the Draft Public Toilet Strategy finalised and includes universal design principles. Renewal of public toilets on Tuggerah Parade, Long Jetty, incorporate universal design

- Community Engagement Strategy updated and adopted by Council in March 2025 includes strategies for engaging people with disability and other vulnerable and hard-to-reach community members
- Upgraded Your Voice Our Coast website to the Social Pinpoint platform which conforms to website accessibility standards
- Closed captioning available on live stream and subsequent replay of Council meetings
- The renovations on the new Council chambers included accessibility upgrades i.e. Hearing Loop and continuous accessible path of travel from accessible parking to the Council chamber
- Council has provided communication to key groups via the Disability Interagency Meetings, Access and Inclusion Reference Group meetings and with relevant community, government and not for profit organisations
- Recruited twelve (12) new community members with lived experience and from the local disability sector for the Council Access and Inclusion Reference Group via an Expression of Interest and media release. Selection involved application screening, interviews, outcome letters, Terms of Reference, and a profile of each person uploaded to website and promoted through a media release
- Council partnered with Carers NSW Care 2 Prepare Project Team to deliver Person Centred Emergency Preparedness Training to disability services and those with lived experience
- Members of the Disability Interagency and disability sector were invited to attend the Central Coast Disaster Recovery and Resilience Forum
- Council linked and promoted the new Get Ready NSW website as the single source of preparedness information which is available in easy read formats as well as other languages
- Person Centred Emergency Planning workshop delivered to twenty (20) service providers in partnership with carers NSW, Local Emergency Management Officer and local disability services. AUSLAN interpreters were in attendance
- Council website has been updated to include links to accessibility resources via the SES including resources for low or no hearing, physical disability and mobility issues, intellectual and mental health conditions and information for carers of people living with disability and older people
- Drafted and consulted with local sporting associations on a sporting facilities usage policy that rewards clubs for improving inclusivity for people with disabilities
- Thirteen (13) local playspace renewal tenders were evaluated before the tenderer was appointed against the "Everyone can Play Guidelines" to continue to make playspaces more accessible and inclusive. Every renewal has included elements from the guidelines

For further information contact Council's Access and Inclusion Officer at **ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au**

Central Coast Council

centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

Council Offices: 2 Hely St Wyong / 49 Mann St Gosford
8.30am–5.00pm, Monday–Friday
T: 4350 5555 / 4325 8222