



## Version Control

Date	Action	Procedure Number	Resolution Date	Resolution Number
29/06/2017	Adopted by Council	SVC-CorpPlan-Pln-001-01	29/06/2017	M93/17
15/09/2022	Adopted by Council	SVC-CorpPlan-Pln-001-02	15/09/2022	M273/22

## Font and font size

**PLEASE NOTE** that ARIAL has been used as the font because it is the most accessible and inclusive using easily recognizable characters.

Font at 12 point is recognised as a well-defined point for readability, which adequately addresses the needs of visually impaired people. Ref *The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). "What makes print more readable for the visually impaired?" ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 30 November 2016.*

## Acknowledgement of Country

"Snowy Valleys Council proudly acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of this land and water and pay respects to their Elders past and present".

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For each action, the Disability Inclusion Action Plan must indicate the:

- outcome area
- action title and description
- aim and expected outcome
- target population or audience
- timeframe for action to be commenced/achieved
- individual/or area responsible
- resources
- specific and measurable indicators to assess performance
- reporting requirements

## Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADA	Anti-Discrimination Act
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
DAS	Disability Advisory Service
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DIA	Disability Inclusion Act
DIAP	Disability Inclusion Action Plan
ED&SP	Economic Development and Social Plan
IAC	Inclusion Advisory Group
LGAs	Local Government Areas
NSW	New South Wales
PwD	People with Disability
SEIFA	Socio-economic indices for areas

## General Managers Message

Council's vision is for Snowy Valleys Council's to be an inclusive and accessible community. As part of this vision, Snowy Valleys Council has developed a second four-year Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022-2026 to continue the commitment to inclusion and enhancement of all aspects of life in the Snowy Valleys.

Engagement with people with disability, their carers, family and friends and Council has informed this important plan. Council has listened to the people of Snowy Valleys and acknowledges that disability impacts many of our residents, their carers and families,

Through this plan, Council will strive to provide equitable opportunities for people with disability to participate in social and cultural life, in meaningful employment and decision-making processes. Actions from the plan will directly inform Council's Community Strategic Plan ensuring accountability and reporting of the measures that will flow to the Delivery and Operational plans

Thank you to everyone who helped to develop this Plan, especially those people with disability, families and carers who have shared their lived experience. A special thanks to Council's Disability Inclusion and Access Reference Group (DIARG) members whose knowledge and lived experience will guide Council as the actions are carried out.

Council would also like to thank the local disability services sector for supporting our people with disability and their families in our communities

# 1. How to use this Plan (and find the things you are interested in)

This plan comprises a short introduction to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 and details of the actions Council will do to improve accessibility and inclusion in Snowy Valleys. The Actions are split into four focus areas containing a short summary of what the community told us.

## 2. Introduction

Snowy Valleys Council embraces the social model of disability which sees 'disability' as the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers.

Consequently, the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

The social model seeks to change society in order to accommodate people living with impairment; it does not seek to change persons with impairment to accommodate society. It supports the view that people with disability have a right to be fully participating citizens on an equal basis with others.

The social model of disability is now the internationally recognised way to view and address 'disability'. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) marks the official paradigm shift in attitudes towards people with disability and approaches to disability concerns<sup>1</sup>.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Plan is to build on the work undertaken in the 2017-2021 Disability Inclusion Action Plan setting out principles, strategies, and actions to guide Council's aim to make inclusion core business. The plan will put into action the findings and recommendations identified through the community engagement process, ongoing community engagement and the relevant legislative requirements.

These actions will directly inform Council's Community Strategic Plan ensuring accountability and reporting of the measures that will flow to the Delivery and Operational plans.

### How we developed the Plan

The Snowy Valleys Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 was developed in consultation with people with disability, carers, service providers, advocacy groups, staff and Councillors.

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<sup>1</sup> People with disability Australia. [www.peopewithdisability.org.au](http://www.peopewithdisability.org.au) accessed February 2021

We offered people a range of ways to have their say through surveys, community forums, one on one interviews, email communications and feedback from individuals, service providers and other organisations.

The community told us what is working well and what needed to improve for Snowy Valleys Council to be more accessible and inclusive. People with lived experience of disability with expertise in accessibility, communication, community engagement, legislation, advocacy, and planning, provided feedback and suggested actions that responded to what the community said.

It is important for all areas of Council to involve and consider people who have lived experience of disability when making decisions, planning and providing programs, services and facilities.

Council plans to engage with these stakeholders in the monitoring and reporting of the Plan

### **3. Vision**

Snowy Valleys Council's is an inclusive and accessible community, where people with disability, their carers, family, and friends have equitable opportunities to participate in social and cultural life, in meaningful employment and decision-making processes.

Council believes an inclusive community is one where people with disability are viewed positively by the wider community and acknowledged and celebrated for their diverse contributions and experiences.

#### **Principles**

- Snowy Valleys Council affirms that inclusion is core business.
- Physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with disability to participate in society on an equal basis with others.
- People with disability are viewed positively by the wider community and acknowledged and celebrated for their diverse contributions and experiences.
- Council will be accountable to people with disability, their carers and stakeholders.

#### **Reporting**

In accordance with the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA)*, this Plan will be lodged with the NSW Disability Council and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act requires all councils to report on the progress of implementation of their DIAPs in their annual reports to align with their current reporting processes.



## 4. Policy and legislative contest

### Definition

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) 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.”

This plan is a legislative requirement under the DIA. It provides strategies for positively shaping Council practices over the next four years to ensure greater inclusion of people with disability, their carers and families.

### National and legislative context

In 2008, all levels of Government across Australia committed to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) through the development of the National Disability Strategy (NDS). This strategy sets out a national, unified approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) were introduced in NSW to provide greater individual choice and control for people with disability.

### Relevant Legislation

The relevant legislation, policies and conventions include

- Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014the reporting
- Government Sector Employment Act
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- NSW Disability Inclusion Plan
- National Disability Strategy 2010 - 2020
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Website
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

### NSW Disability Inclusion Act

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (DIA) recognises that disability results from barriers in society that prevent or limit inclusion. The DIA reinforces Snowy Valleys Council's general obligation to reduce barriers for people with disability. The DIA recognises that people with disabilities have a right to participate as fully as possible in the life of the community. Under the DIA, Council has an obligation to make its facilities and services accessible and inclusive.



## 5. Governance and Accountability

### Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 proposes principles and strategies to guide Council's continued actions over the next four years and to empower people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

#### Governance

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 will put into action the findings and recommendations identified through the community engagement process, ongoing community engagement and the relevant legislative requirements. These actions will be accountable through reporting of the measures to the Delivery and Operational plans.

#### Accountability

Accountability, ongoing monitoring, and evaluation of the Plan be overseen by the Snowy Valleys Disability Inclusion Action Reference Group (DIARG) comprising community, service providers and disability advocacy representatives.

Council will report on progress of the Action Plan as part of the Snowy Valleys Council Annual Report and will also provide a summary of its achievements to the NSW Disability Council on an annual basis.

A comprehensive review and evaluation of the Plan will be undertaken at the completion of the four-year term (2022-2026). The results will be reported to Council, NSW Disability Council and Australian Human Rights Commission as well as the Snowy Valleys community.

## **Performance indicators**

Performance Indicators are an important tool in ascertaining the progress in implementing the DIAP as well as maintaining the profile and commitment to disability inclusion within Council.

The challenge for Council is that issues may be important and have a significant impact on people with disability but be outside the direct control of Council. Council will monitor progress against these indicators to measure the wellbeing and inclusion of people with disability in the community.

## **Risk Assessment**

The DIAP will provide evidence of Council's commitment to continue to improve access for people with disability. As part of the development of the DIAP a risk management approach has been implemented in accordance with Council's Risk Management process. This risk assessment considered risks associated with the development of the draft DIAP, identified potential risks and mitigation strategies in the ongoing implementation of the draft DIAP.

## **Financial Implications**

The DIAP is primarily funded through the existing operational and capital budgets. The strategies and actions in the Plan will be identified within the Community Strategic Plan. Some strategies are unfunded and would require a funding proposal to progress. Unfunded projects will be considered as part of the preparation of the Delivery Program and annually via the annual planning process. A number of strategies within the Action Plan relate to audits being undertaken as the first step. Such audits would then inform a strategic and holistic approach to improvement. This work will need to be costed and funding allocated when further details are available at the completion of a detailed strategy such as a public toilet strategy.

# **6. Community Profile – Our Place Our Community**

## **Snowy Valleys Council**

Snowy Valleys had an estimated resident population of 14349 in 2021, 64 less people than 2021 (ABS 2022). It is in the Riverina Murray Region of New South

Wales, about 200 kilometres west of the Canberra CBD, and about 400 kilometres south-west of the Sydney CBD.

The Snowy Valleys Council area is predominantly rural. The main township is Tumut, with smaller townships at Adelong, Batlow and Tumbarumba, and villages at Brungle, Jingellic, Khancoban, Rosewood, Talbingo and Tooma. Rural land is used largely for agriculture, particularly beef cattle farming and timber production. Sheep grazing, fruit growing, and power generation are also important industries. The Council area encompasses a total land area of about 8,960 square kilometres.

The Snowy Valleys Council area is bounded by the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council area and the Yass Valley Council area in the north, Unincorporated New South Wales in the east, the Snowy Monaro Regional Council area, the Murray River, the Victorian border and Towong Shire in the south, and Snowy Valleys Shire and Wagga Wagga City in the west (Profile id. 2022).

Snowy Valleys Council (ABS 2016)<sup>2</sup>

- Population 14,395, (Estimated resident population 14349 in 2021).
- 634 Aboriginal Torres Strait Island people (4.4%) (NSW 2.9%).
- In 2016, SVC had lower proportion of children (under 18) and a higher proportion of persons aged 60 or older than Regional NSW.
- The SEIFA score 951.
- Average personal income \$479/wk.

## Disability and Ageing in Snowy Valleys Council

Of the 14,395 people living in Snowy Valleys Council in 2016

- **703 people** (or 4.9% of the population) reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to a **severe or profound disability**.
- **1,364 carers** were providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age. This represents 11.6% of the population aged 15+.
- 2765 people were between 65 and 84 years.
- 430 people were over the age of 85 years.
- Almost 30% of the population over the age of 60yrs compared to regional NSW (27%).

In December 2021<sup>3</sup>

- 577 people received a Disability Support Pension.
- 2142 people received the Age Pension.
- 381 people received a Carer Allowance.
- 6 people received a Carer Allowance – (Child Health Care Card only).
- 198 people received a Carer Payment.

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<sup>2</sup> ABS 2016 Census Quick Stats

<sup>3</sup> Department of Social Services Dataset (Dec 2020)

## Staff with Disability at Snowy Valleys Council

Snowy Valleys Council comprises 274 staff. In the most recent staff survey 7 respondents reported to have a disability and 10 staff reported to be carers in the Staff Survey (n=143).

*It is recognised that the numbers reported amongst staff may be higher and staff who have disability or being a carer of a person with disability or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander may not identify for either category for their own personal reasons.*

Carers are individuals who provide care and support to those members of our community who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, palliative illness, drug, or alcohol issues, or are frail aged. These recipients of care are typically, but not always, family members of the carer. Carers are the foundation of community care systems, including aged, disability, and palliative care, making carers an integral part of Australia's overall healthcare system.

Unpaid carers are the main providers of assistance to people with disability in Snowy Valleys Council (1364 unpaid carers compared with 381 receiving a Carer Allowance).

Caring may include help and support with any of the daily activities of living of the person being cared for. It may include physical and personal care such as dressing, lifting, showering, toileting, feeding or providing transport.

Commonly, carers are responsible for the management of medications, and provide emotional and social support. Caring may also involve help with organising and attending appointments, banking and dealing with emergencies.

Research has identified that carers and families of people with disability experience serious sleep deprivation, high rates of mental health problems, poorer physical health, employment restrictions, financial hardship and relationship breakdown.<sup>4</sup>

### Summary

The needs of Snowy Valley's people with disability, carers and older people, underpins the importance of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026. Disability and carer needs are to increase due to in large part to the ageing population, and survival into old age is now a reality for many people who have a lifelong disability<sup>5</sup>. These patterns will require Snowy Valleys Council to embrace inclusion as core business and work closely with local and regional disability, aged care and advocacy services to ensure the community is accessible and the services systems are in place to respond to need.

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<sup>4</sup> Appleton Institute, CQUniversity Australia (2020) Sleep deficits in Australian carers

<sup>5</sup> AIHW (2020), Disability

## **7. Community Engagement**

### **How we engaged the community**

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 was developed in consultation with residents, staff, service providers, advocacy groups and Councillors.

### **Our community engagement message**

Our engagement message asked the Snowy Valleys community to have a say about access and inclusion in Snowy Valleys and for ideas on how Council could strive to create a more inclusive and accessible Snowy Valleys for people with disability, their carers, families, and friends.

We explained Council's vision for an inclusive and accessible community, where people with disability have equitable opportunities to participate in social and cultural life, in meaningful employment and decision-making processes.

### **What we did?**

We invited the following people to be involved:

- People with disability.
- People with caring responsibilities.
- People with mental health conditions.
- People who work in the disability sector.
- Interested residents.
- Council Staff.
- Councillors.

Interested participants were given 5 options to engage and provide ideas and feedback. These included:

1. Six community workshops, two in each of the major towns and one in each of the smaller villages.
2. An online survey.
3. Service provide ZOOM Workshop.
4. Two open ZOOM Workshops.
5. One on one interviews.
6. Email communications.
7. Phone consultations.

### **Who participated in the community engagement?**

Just over 100 people participated in the community engagement processes. Participants included: residents, service providers, advocacy groups, staff and Councillors.

Of the Participants:

- 20% had a disability.
- 45% were carers.
- 75% had a friend or a family member with a disability.
- 53% were service providers.
- 60% lived in either Tumbarumba or Tumut, the remainder lived in the smaller villages or rural areas.

Age group of Participants:

Age	%
Under 25	3.13%
26-44	37.50%
45-64	42.19%
65+	17.19%

Workshop participants shared their lived experiences providing valuable insight into changes that can be made to eliminate discrimination and embrace diversity in Snowy Valleys Council Local Government Area.

## Who participated in the Feedback?

The Snowy Valleys Council's Disability Inclusion and Access Reference Group (DIARG) interested community members and the broader community through the Public Exhibition will be provided with access to a draft copy of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 for feedback. Recommended changes will be made prior to going to Council for adoption of the plan.

## Summary

The engagement resulted in important information about how people living with disability and their carers could participate in Snowy Valleys on an equal basis with others.

## 8. Focus areas

Our plan is to achieve the following aims under the four focus areas set by the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan. The focus areas reflect what is most important to us in the Snowy Valleys Council. The four focus areas are summarised here and explained further in the following pages

### Positive attitudes and behaviours

- We will adopt, promote and role model positive attitudes, and behaviours toward people with disability, their carers and families and eliminate discrimination by adopting the DIAP 2022-2026.

- We will educate Councillors and staff and local businesses about people with disability and the importance of access and inclusion guaranteeing we engage with community members with disability with sensitivity and respect.

## **Liveability**

- We will apply ‘universal design’ principles and engaging people with disability in the design and planning phases of upgrades and new major infrastructure to make our communities liveable.
- We will plan for our community events to be inclusive and accessible.
- We continue to conduct audits of buildings owned or leased by SVC to assess compliance with Australian standards for access and mobility (AS1428 parts 1 to 5).
- We will work with local business to improve inclusion and access.

## **Meaningful employment**

- We will comply with the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 – Section 63 (GSE Act) review and update our Human Resource Management and Workforce Plan policies, procedures and systems to be inclusive of people with disability.
- We will provide workplace experience for people with disability.
- We will comply with the Carers Recognition Act 2010 formally recognising the significant contribution carers make to the people they care for and the community.
- We will encourage local business to improve diversity in the workplace and support people with disability to gain local employment.

## **Better systems and processes**

- We commit to ensuring our systems and processes are universally accessible.
- We commit to employing the principles of inclusive or universal design to shape all our systems and processes<sup>6</sup>.
- We will make sure that Council makes information available in accessible formats, including Easy English, Auslan interpreted and captioned information, as well as hard copy.
- We will provide information about how places and activities are accessible so that people with disability can plan ahead.
- We will ensure that people with disability have a genuine say when it comes to Council matters.
- We will provide information about how places and activities are accessible so that people with disability can plan ahead.

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<sup>6</sup> Ref: <https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/about-us/disability-inclusion-action-plan/our-plan> accessed March 2021



## 9. Focus Area 1: Attitudes and Behaviours

**Objective:** We will challenge assumptions and promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability, their carers and friends enabling them to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

### 9.1 Introduction

The attitudes and behaviours of the general community towards people with disability have been described as the single greatest barrier to full access and inclusion<sup>7</sup>. Negative attitudes towards people with disability are often determined by ignorance, fear, or lack of opportunity to interact. Developing positive attitudes involves increasing awareness and changing negative perceptions over time.

### 9.2 What we heard

Our community told us about:

- Negative attitudes and behaviours experienced towards people with disability and their carers. Discrimination is common.
- Exclusion from sport and community activities.
- Employer discrimination.
- Lack of respect for disability car parks and toilets.
- Limited and in most instances, no understanding of invisible disabilities including autism, mental illness, sensory disabilities and dementia.
- Lack of knowledge and awareness from local business and Council.
- Focus is on the disability, not the abilities. Ignorance and awareness of abilities.
- Services are not available locally.
- Lack of advocacy and support in general, disability advocacy services are not visible.
- Council's Disability Inclusion and Access Group (DIARG) is not truly representative and is not taken seriously by Council.

*“Can you promote / publish in the newspaper /radio what you do for residents who have a disability / elderly and/or their carers. This isn't well publicized or known about. You want to develop this plan but how does the community hear about how it is being carried out and fulfilled in a practical way?”*

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<sup>7</sup> NSW DIAP Guidelines accessed April 2022

**Focus Area 1: Attitudes and behaviours**

We will adopt, promote and role model positive attitudes, and behaviours toward people with disability, their carers and families and eliminate discrimination by adopting the DIAP 2022-2026

Action	Responsible team/unit/area	Key Partners	Aim/Expected Outcome	Time Frame	Indicators
<p>Councillors and staff will improve capability and capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• role model and adopt inclusive behaviours and attitudes</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination</li> <li>• engage people with disabilities in planning and design</li> <li>• improve access to Council facilities, events, and community amenities</li> <li>• increase accessible parking spaces and toilets,</li> <li>• provide workplace experience and employ people with disabilities and carers of people with disability.</li> <li>• include inclusion and access as core requirements in all council processes and systems and interactions</li> <li>• value and expand the role of the DIARG.</li> </ul>	<p>People &amp; Culture, Executive Chief of Staff</p> <p>Technical Assets &amp; Event Activation Officer Technical Assets Road Safety Officer, People &amp; Culture, Executive Chief of Staff</p> <p>Governance &amp; Risk</p>	<p>Regional Disability Advocacy Service</p> <p>Valmar</p> <p>Intereach</p> <p>Seniors Right service</p> <p>DIARG</p>	<p>Adoption of the DIAP 2022-2026</p> <p>Outcomes achieved</p>	<p>Yr 1</p> <p>Yr 2</p> <p>Yr 3</p> <p>Yr 4</p> <p>Yr 1</p> <p>Yr 2</p> <p>Yr 1</p>	<p>Included in IP&amp;R documents</p> <p>Annual DIAP reports to DCJ</p> <p>Reporting through DIARG bi-monthly meetings</p>

<b>Focus Area 1: Attitudes and behaviours</b>					
We will adopt, promote and role model positive attitudes, and behaviours toward people with disability, their carers and families and eliminate discrimination by adopting the DIAP 2022-2026					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Our Councillors and staff will undertake training about inclusion and access and hear from people's lived experience in SVC.	People & Culture, Executive Chief of Staff.	Regional Disability Advocacy Service (RDAS) Valmar Intereach	Inclusion and access training included in biennial professional development program.	Yr 2	Biennial training.
Customer service staff improve attitudes and behaviours toward people with disability and have the capability to use aids and equipment for inclusion and access.	Customer Service		Aids and equipment capability is improved.  Reduced levels of complaints received.	Yr 3 funding required	Developed list of equipment required e.g. Hearing loops etc.  No of customer complaints.
Work with local business chambers and businesses to better understand the needs of people with disability, their carers and families.	Economic Development	Local Chambers	Improve education among the business community with regards to accessibility.  Local businesses become more welcoming, accessible and inclusive.	Yr 2	Number of education sessions and business implementing improved access and inclusion. (Staff training)

**Focus Area 1: Attitudes and behaviours**

We will adopt, promote and role model positive attitudes, and behaviours toward people with disability, their carers and families and eliminate discrimination by adopting the DIAP 2022-2026

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Advocate for a higher presence of disability service providers and advocacy services in the SVC.	Community Services	RDAS	RDAS visit the SVC on a regular occasion.		RDAS report increase in referrals.

## 10. Focus Area 2: Liveable Communities

**Objective:** Improve liveability by creating an accessible and inclusive Snowy Valleys

### 10.1 Introduction

A liveable community is one that is safe and secure. It offers choices in where to live and how to get around. And it equitably serves residents of all ages, ability levels, incomes, races, ethnicities, and other backgrounds. The focus is on the elements of community life that most people desire. Creating liveable communities for people with disability is more than modifying the physical environment, it covers areas such as accessible housing, access to transport, community recreation, social engagement and universal design<sup>8</sup>.

### 10.2 Places for everyone

The Centre for Universal Design Australia<sup>9</sup> recommends adopting the Five Principles as a basic framework from which to set policy and practice for places for everyone:

**Principle 1:** Design places with beauty and character that ALL people feel proud to belong to.

**Principle 2:** Design inviting public spaces to support engagement by all members of the community.

**Principle 3:** Design productive and connected places to enable everyone to thrive in their community.

**Principle 4:** Design sustainable and greener places for the wellbeing of everyone and the environment.

**Principle 5:** Design resilient and diverse places that are socially sustainable for everyone.

### 10.3 What we heard

Our community told us about:

#### Accessible car parks

- Lack of disability car parks across the SVC.
- No disability (compliant) parking in Batlow.
- No respect for disability parks – they are not policed.
- No disability car parks in front of essential businesses eg Post Office, Supermarket, Pharmacy.
- No disability parking in front of Snowy Valleys School.
- No accessibility car parks for rear loading vehicles – safety issue for passenger and carer.
- No disability car park in front of Capper St Office.

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<sup>8</sup>

NSW DIAP Guidelines accessed April 2022

<sup>9</sup> Centre for Universal Design (2021) Proposal for NSW Design and Place SEPP

### Accessible toilets

- No accessible toilets in the main street of Tumbarumba.
- Limited accessible toilets across SVC amenities and facilities.
- No adult change table available outside of Pool opening hours (Tumut).
- No information about the availability of the MLAK Key.
- Some of the local recreation areas don't have accessible car parks.
- No footpath access to public toilets (Richmond Park).
- Heavy doors to some toilets preclude access.
- No wheelchair access to public toilets on the Tumbarumba Streetscape.
- No accessible toilets at the Khancoban public hall.

### Council Events

- Accessibility and inclusion planning not done for Council events.
- Events are often held on grass surfaces precluding access for mobility aids.

### Footpaths

- Lack of continuous footpaths.
- Poor quality and not maintained and not wide enough.
- No footpath between the CDB and Hospital in Tumut.
- Footpaths congested with signage or other obstructions.
- Poor footpath access to the main supermarket in Tumut.
- Loose tiles (Taxi Rank in Tumut).

### Intersections and Pedestrian crossings

- Tactiles are not in place and not replaced after upgrades of intersections.
- No pedestrian crossing in Tumbarumba's main street.

### Parks, Gardens, Playgrounds and Swimming Pools

- Limited or no 'all abilities' swings/ playgrounds.
- Parks not accessible due to lack of suitable footpaths.
- Parks not maintained for all abilities access.
- Not all pools have disability access.

### Seating

- Most of the public seating is not accessible – the leaf shaped seats are an example.

### Lighting

- Poor lighting at public facilities, including public toilets.
- Playgrounds have grass around them and therefore no access for prams and mobility aids.

### Transport

- Limited access to all abilities transport and drivers who are able to assist.

### Local Business

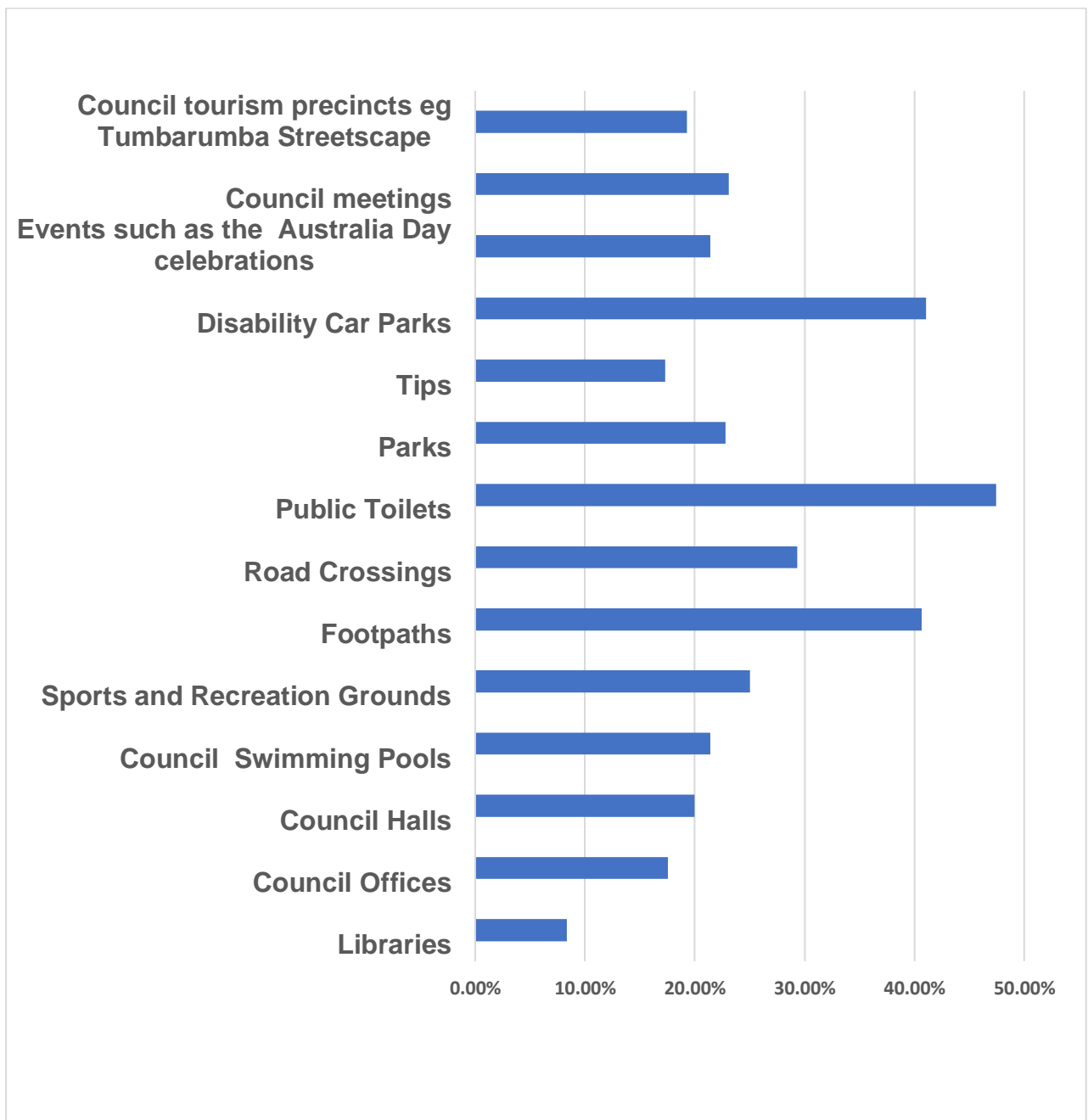
- Many of the local businesses are not accessible.

- People with disability and their carers often experience discrimination from staff who are not trained in customer service.
- No disabled parking in front of essential business – pharmacy, post office, supermarket.
- Businesses e.g., supermarkets are congested, not able to access the aisles.

#### Other

- Limited or no ‘all abilities’ access to many of the local tourism precincts.
- Council meetings are not provided in multiple formats.
- Lack of hearing loops at Council meetings
- Tips are not accessible.
- Access issues to local halls, libraries, and Council offices.
- Rails required on the ramp access to the Khancoban business precinct.
- The leash free dog area in Tumut encompasses the picnic and barbecue areas, amenities and carpark. People of all abilities are not able to share this space without risk, people with disability and people using carer dogs are not able to use the amenities. *“Such an area limits a disabled person’s independence. It is banned for Guide Dog, SEDA and Assistance Dog Handlers and their dog. Theoretically, such a dog in harness is defenceless if attacked by a free running dog”.*

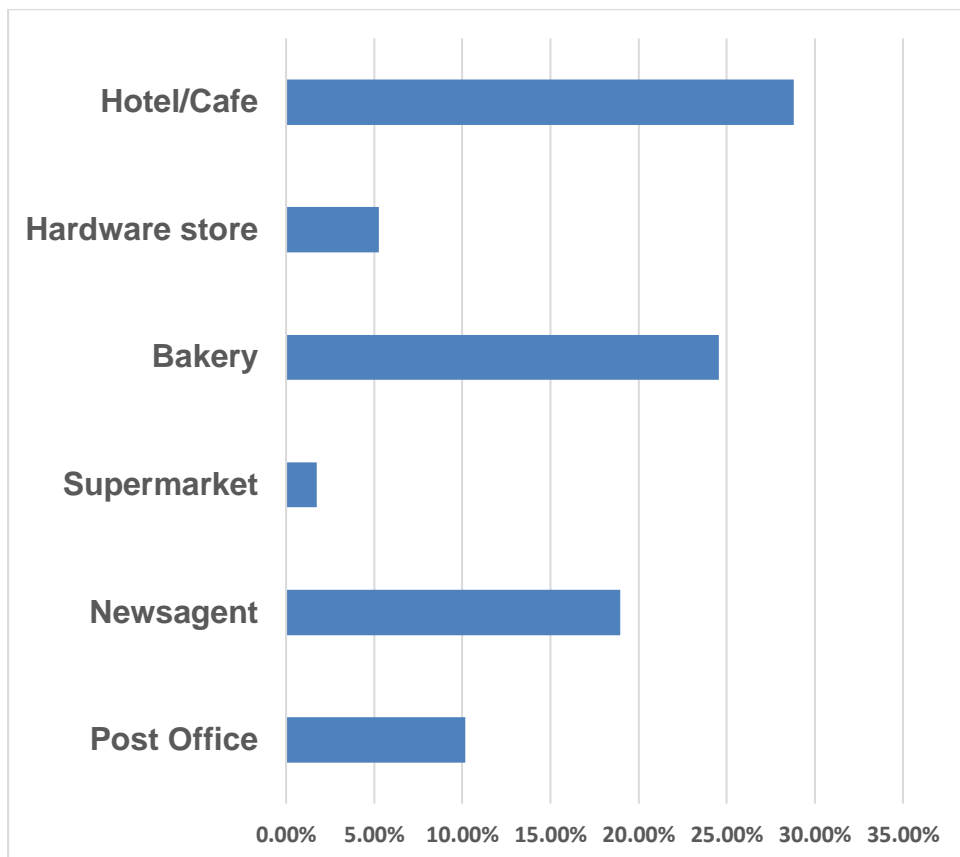
*Table 1 Council amenities and activities reported as difficult to access*



*NB: Not all place-based comments have been included, nevertheless they have been presented to Council.*



Table 2 *Businesses reported as difficult to access*



**Focus Area 2: Liveable communities**

We will apply 'universal design' principles and engaging people with disability in the design and planning phases of upgrades and new major infrastructure to make our communities liveable

Action	Responsible team/unit/area	Key Partners	Aim/Expected Outcome	Time Frame	Indicators
All planning and technical staff will undertake training and adopt the principles of universal design.	<b>Technical Services</b>	Centre for Universal Design DIARG Local residents/carers who have disability	All new designs will comply with relevant codes and comply with Disability Discrimination Act.	Yearly	Completion of training and review of relevant designs by DIARG.
People with disability and carers will be consulted through the design and planning stages of public facilities upgrades, and infrastructure projects.		RDAS	All new designs will comply with relevant codes and comply with Disability Discrimination Act.	Yearly	Completion of training and review of relevant designs by DIARG
Continuously upgrade recreational facilities (playgrounds, sports fields, amenities, parks, etc) to incorporate access and inclusion provisions to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and	<b>Technical Services</b>	Centre for Universal Design Australia RDAS	All new designs will comply with relevant codes and comply with Disability Discrimination Act.	Yearly	Completion of training and review of relevant designs by DIARG

**Focus Area 2: Liveable communities**

We will apply 'universal design' principles and engaging people with disability in the design and planning phases of upgrades and new major infrastructure to make our communities liveable

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
the relevant Australian Building and Construction Codes.		DIARG			

**Focus Area 2: Liveable communities**

We will conduct audits of buildings owned or leased by SVC to assess compliance with Australian standards for access and mobility (AS1428 parts 1 to 5)

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Asset management planning includes conducting audits for compliance with (AS1428 parts 1-5).	<b>Technical Services</b>	NSW Planning	Audits are conducted on relevant infrastructure for compliance with AS1428.	Yr 2 (funding required)	Completion of audits and reporting of improvements required.

<b>Focus Area 2: Liveable communities</b>					
We will plan for our community events to be inclusive and accessible					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Event planning will include a Disability Inclusion and Action Plan in consultation with people with disabilities and their carers.	Event Activation	Local event organisers DIARG Local people with disability and their carers	Events will be accessible and inclusive.	Yr 2	DIARG and participants report improved access to Council events.

<b>Focus Area 2: Liveable communities</b>					
We will work with local business to improve access and inclusion					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Work with the Chambers to gain an understanding of the benefits of an inclusive and accessible business.	<b>Economic Development</b>	Intereach RDAS Chambers	Chambers host speakers on inclusion and access Chambers provide access to resources on inclusivity/accessibility and associated benefits	Yr 2	Biennial presentations.

**Focus Area 2: Liveable communities**

We will work with local business to improve access and inclusion

Action	Responsible team/unit/area	Key Partners	Aim/Expected Outcome	Time Frame	Indicators
<p>Encourage businesses to adopt inclusive practices and improved access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of automated doors that are wide enough for mobility aids.</li> <li>• Establish street level access.</li> <li>• Ensure safe placement of street signage.</li> <li>• Improve internal access - decrease clutter in the isles and turning points.</li> <li>• Improve signage.</li> <li>• Installation of ramps that are compliant with regulations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <p><b>Planning</b></p>	<p>Intereach RDAS</p> <p>Chambers</p> <p>Intereach</p>	<p>Businesses upgrades include improved access</p>	<p>Yr 4</p>	<p>Number of businesses that adopt inclusive practices and improved access.</p> <p>Increased number of people with a disability visiting businesses.</p>

## 11. Focus Area 3: Meaningful Employment

**Objective:** To implement inclusive and accessible HR processes increasing the number of people with disability and carers employed by SVC

### 11.1 Introduction

People with disability are currently underrepresented in the workforce. They often experience discrimination ranging from:

- inaccessible interviews,
- directly denied employment
- denied reasonable adjustments in the workplace to enable them to work safely and productively, such as providing safe access to the workplace or assistive technology
- poor career planning opportunities
- rigid role descriptions and online testing that may place applicants at a disadvantage
- workforce breaks to manage fatigue and other health related issues.

As a result, people with disability experience:

- lower rates of labour force participation
- lower rates of employment
- higher rates of unemployment (unemployment rate has increased for people with disability -youth with disability are more likely to be unemployed)
- greater reliance on government pensions or benefits as their main source of income than people without disability.

The Government Sector Employment Act 2013 (GSE Act) requires the integration of workforce diversity, including the employment of people with disability, into workforce planning. In particular, section 63 of the GSE Act provides that the head of a government sector agency is responsible for workforce diversity within the agency and for ensuring that workforce diversity is integrated into workforce planning in the agency. This legislation supports workforce diversity obligations and processes in the local government sector. NSW government want 5.6% of the total workforce to be staff with disability.

Employment and economic security for most people are closely related. Employment contributes to feelings of self-worth, social interaction, and mental health, and increases opportunities to support individual choice and control<sup>10</sup>.

### 11.2 What we heard

Participants commented about their lived experience seeking employment and about their experience with employers in SVC region.

<sup>10</sup> NSW DIAP Guidelines accessed April 2022

- *'I can only reiterate that after hundreds of applications, some interviews, I have not been accepted for paid position since 2015'.*
- *"I have applied for many positions, gotten down to the final two preferred applicants and denied the position at interview".*
- *'I can't get passed the interview – I could do the job however my physical disability appears to be a barrier'.*
- *'I feel the employment agency has not given me the support I need'*
- *"I don't even get a response to my application, judgements in small communities'.*
- *'I only get asked to work when they are desperate'.*
- *"I get picked on because I am a bit slower, I like to do things properly'.*

*"I have not applied for any positions however council have the ability to employ PWD in many areas of industry. Council would be eligible for subsidies and financial grants depending on the individual employee's circumstances to make their workplaces more inclusive and adapted to the individual's needs. Funding to train council staff to support PWD in the workplace is available through various funding mechanisms, i.e., NDIS, DSS employment funding and funding made available to employers to employ people recruited through Job agencies. honestly don't know but had to answer yes or no".*

### **11.3 What we heard about SVC**

Respondents were asked whether SVC encourages people with disability and carers to apply for positions with Council.

Responses:

- If there is a disability or you have carer responsibilities you can't seem to progress past the interview, there always seems to be someone more qualified.
- Job Advertising does not indicate it is a disability friendly organisation.
- Never see it advertised for people with disability to apply.
- Yes, but when I went through the employment process, from contractor to f/t employee, there were some potentially dangerous mistakes made during my work capacity tests. At the time I had been a chronic pain sufferer for almost a decade and was made to do a gruelling fitness test.
- I have not seen programs that help people with disabilities join the council.
- They may apply but getting the job is a completely different Scenario.
- Snowy Valleys students have made many attempts to do work placements at council. All were refused.
- I have not met or know of anybody with a disability employed by Council.
- It doesn't seem to be widely advertised or known.
- Their promotion of job roles is very standardised and doesn't attract those from diverse needs groups.
- I don't see anyone with a disability working for Council.
- No opportunity in the recruitment process to identify reasonable adjustments.
- They don't seem willing to make allowances.

- There should be targeted positions for potential employees with a disability.
- SVC is not active in encouraging people with disability to apply for positions.

Advocates and carers mentioned that Council used to provide work experience for young people with disability, however they have not had that opportunity since the amalgamation.



### Focus Area 3: Meaningful Employment

We will review and update our Human Resource Management and Workforce Plan policies, procedures and systems to be inclusive of people with disability guaranteeing a fair selection process and ensure staff with disabilities and carers get the adjustments they need and have career development opportunities.

We will provide workplace experience for people with disability.

Action	Responsible team/unit/area	Key Partners	Aim/Expected Outcome	Time Frame	Indicators
<p>Update People &amp; Culture processes and systems and the Workforce Plan to comply with the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 – Section 63 (GSE Act) which requires the integration of workforce diversity, including the employment of people with disability, into workforce planning. (Target 5.6% of the total workforce).</p> <p>Review position descriptions, recruitment processes and onboarding to ensure people with disability including staff are not excluded from applying.</p> <p>Improve awareness of workplace adjustments that can be offered to staff.</p> <p>Integrate training on disability access and inclusion into staff induction/orientation practices</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture</p>	<p>LG NSW Job Actives RDAS</p>	<p>SVC workforce is diverse.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments are in place.</p>	<p>Yr 2</p> <p>Yr 1</p> <p>Yr 3</p> <p>Yr 3</p>	<p>People &amp; Culture processes are compliant with the GSE Act.</p> <p>People with disability report improved employment outcomes.</p>

**Focus Area 3: Meaningful Employment**

We will provide workplace experience for people with disability

We will comply with the Carers Recognition Act 2010 formally recognising the significant contribution carers make to the people they care for and the community

We will Improve accessibility and inclusion in the workplace and allow flexibility

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Council's Workplace Plan will be reviewed to include workplace experience for people with disability. This includes school students undertaking their Work Experience Placement and people post school.	People & Culture	LG NSW Job Actives RDAS	Council offers work experience places for students and adults with disabilities	Yr 3.	2-3 Students with disabilities undertake work experience each year People with disability are employed across several Council services.
Review compliance with the Carers Recognition Act 2010 formally recognising the role of carers	People & Culture	Carers NSW		Yr 1.	

### Focus Area 3: Meaningful Employment

We will encourage local business to improve diversity in the workplace and support people with disability to gain local employment.

Action	Responsible team/unit/area	Key Partners	Aim/Expected Outcome	Time Frame	Indicators
<p>Work with employment agencies, disability service providers and advocacy groups to work with local businesses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand that people with disability have the right to work in an open, inclusive, and accessible workplace.</li> <li>• Ensure application processes are non-discriminatory.</li> <li>• Understand the possible accessible options e.g., alterations to job roles (allowing for fatigue), flexible work hours, workplace adjustments.</li> <li>• Provide career pathways and opportunities for people with disabilities at all levels</li> <li>• Identify specific roles which accommodate the skills and capabilities of people with disability.</li> <li>• Understand the Carer act and NSW Carer Charter and advocate for carers in the workplace.</li> </ul>	Economic Development	Job Actives RDAS Intereach Chambers	More people with a disability employed in local businesses.	Yr 4	<p>The number of people with a disability employed in local businesses.</p> <p>The number of specific roles developed to accommodate people with disability.</p>

**Focus Area 3: Meaningful Employment**

We will encourage local business to improve diversity in the workplace and support people with disability to gain local employment.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Analyse vacancies for potential positions for people with disability.</li><li>Champion stories of successful workplaces where relevant adjustments have been made enabling people with disability to be employed.</li></ul>					

## 12. Focus Area 4: Council Systems and Processes

**Objective:** Council processes and systems become more inclusive and accessible

### 12.1 Introduction

A common barrier for people with disability is navigating the systems and process of Council. Most common, is the lack of accessible options for communicating, accessing information or providing input and feedback.

### 12.2 What we heard

Participants were asked when dealing with council staff do you feel they consider the nature of a person's disability and respond in a way that meets their needs? Just on 40% felt they did and 20% said no. Of the no responses, most said it depended on who the person was on Customer Service, noting a difference in attitudes between customer services staff at Tumbarumba (favourable) and Tumut (unfavourable). Other comments included:

- Little to no effort made to make accommodations of people's disabilities.
- There is a general lack of awareness of Council staff, or it is a tack-on.
- Training required for staff about disability and how to respond to customers with mental health issues.
- Maybe have options on the phone press 1 if you have a disability or you're a Carer to talk to someone who could be trained or understanding and have patience.

Comments were made about **Council information**. The most common:

- Fonts are too small.
- There is only one meeting facility with hearing augmentation, no touch screens or translation services.
- Electronic information is not accessible.

#### Events

- We cannot access Council events, we drove to one event and as there was no disability parking, we went home very disappointed.
- Council events don't appear to include access requirements for people in a wheelchair.

#### Walking tracks and Tourist precincts

- We don't know which ones are accessible, we need to promote our accessible walking tracks and accessible tourist precincts.

<b>Focus Area 4: Council systems and processes</b>					
We commit to ensuring our systems, processes and events are universally accessible and employ the principles of inclusion and access					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Review the membership and role of DIARG to be inclusive of people with a range of disabilities.  Improve how Council values and supports DIARG.	Community Services	Community	Representation of people with disability is equal to disability organisations on DIARG.	Yr 2.	Reported through DIARG meetings and annual delivery plan reports.
Progressively review policies, processes and systems for inclusion and access. Consult DIARG in the process as required.	Greater Leadership Team	DIARG	DIARG actively participate in the review of processes and systems.	Ongoing as part of regular policy review process.	DIARG members report improvement in council systems and processes.
Provide customer service staff and staff dealing with consumers training and support to work with people with disabilities including people with mental health problems.	People & Culture, Customer Service	Disability training agencies.	Annual training.	Yr 3.	Reduction in complaints.
Review how access and inclusion is considered in community engagement processes and Council Committees and Volunteer management.	Communications & Engagement  Governance & Risk	IDEAS Website content providers	All Council information is accessible to all abilities.	Yr 4.	Reduction in complaints. Increased Community engagement.

**Focus Area 4: Council systems and processes**

We commit to ensuring our systems, processes and events are universally accessible and employ the principles of inclusion and access

Action	Responsible team/unit/area	Key Partners	Aim/Expected Outcome	Time Frame	Indicators
<p>Establish an inclusive Style Guide compliant with accessibility guidelines, Council Website content to comply with W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to be more accessible.</p>	<p>Communications &amp; Engagement</p>	<p>Digital NSW</p>	<p>Council website is more accessible to all abilities.</p> <p>Council compliant with accessibility guidelines.</p>	<p>YR 3</p>	<p>Increase in numbers of people accessing website and materials.</p>
<p><b>Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan Council events in consultation with people with disability, their carers and older people to ensure accessibility and inclusion.</li> <li>Improve information (Website etc) about Council events adopting inclusive language and approach.</li> <li>Establish short term drop off and bus parking points for carers.</li> </ul>	<p>Event Activation/Place Activation</p>	<p>DIARG</p> <p>RDAS</p> <p>IDEAS</p>	<p>Planning of Council events includes consultation with people with disability to ensure events are more inclusive and accessible.</p> <p>More people with disability involved with event planning process.</p> <p>More people with disability attending Council events.</p>	<p>Yr 3</p>	<p>Number of people with disability consulted during event planning process.</p> <p>Number of people with disability attending Council events.</p>

<b>Focus Area 4: Council systems and processes</b>					
We commit to ensuring our systems, processes and events are universally accessible and employ the principles of inclusion and access					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Tourist information and tourism services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review access and inclusiveness of tourist information and services for visitors.</li> <li>Improve accessibility of tourist information and services for visitors.</li> <li>Identify and promote accessible walks for visitors and residents.</li> </ul>	Tourism/Place Activation	VIC, AVIC  Spinal Life	Tourist information and visitor services are more accessible and inclusive. Information presentation/delivery is more accessible and inclusive. More people with a disability using visitor services/tourist information services.	Yr 2	Number of people with disability accessing visitor information services. Number of accessible walks identified and promoted. Reported increase in disability tourism for SVC LGA.
<b>Council Offices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve external and internal signage from the street signage to be inclusive of people with impaired vision and low literacy.</li> <li>Review and monitor the ergonomics of the workplace.</li> <li>Audit floor surfaces to ensure they are safe.</li> </ul>	Customer Service  Technical Assets	Safety & Systems  RDAS	Council Offices can cater for staff with disabilities and customer service areas are equipped to cater for disabilities.	YR 4 requires funding	Review conducted.  Improvements costed and reported.



**Focus Area 4: Council systems and processes**

We commit to ensuring our systems, processes and events are universally accessible and employ the principles of inclusion and access

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible team/unit/area</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Aim/Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Install hearing loops in all Council offices.</li><li>• Install a low bench.</li><li>• Install rails and ramps.</li><li>• Install accessible waiting areas in customer service areas.</li></ul>					