



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2020-2024 DRAFT

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Responsible Officer: General Manager

Table of Contents

Message from the Mayor	3
Message from the General Manager	4
Cobar Shire Council	5
Vision	5
Mission	5
Values	5
About this Plan	6
The Case for Inclusion	6
Consultation	6
Policy Background	7
Council’s Policy Context	7
Councils Planning Process	8
Community Profile	9
Demographics	9
Accessibility to Public Buildings	9
Monitoring and Evaluation	10
Attitudes and Behaviours	12
Employment	14
Liveable Communities	15
Processes and Systems	19

Message from the Mayor

It gives me great pleasure to have Council, on behalf of our Communities to adopt the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2024.

This identifies the commitment we have to ensure that our actions and facilities are moving towards disability access and inclusion within the Shire.

The strategies and actions outlined in this Plan provides the measuring stick as to our progression and delivery of what has been approved through consultation.

The more we ensure inclusion in our Communities the more we can celebrate what the Cobar Shire can offer.



Clr Lilliane Brady, OAM
Mayor

Message from the General Manager

It is so important that this Plan demonstrates our commitment by the staff, Councillors and the Communities towards an inclusive Shire that sets actions to continually improve the way we live, work and play.

This plan has been reviewed and updated to progress current actions and develop new actions in order to demonstrate our vision for the Cobar Shire and its residents.

Our Plan is part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) which provides a major reform to deliver a national system of disability support where support is provided.

We are proud to add this Plan to Council's Strategic Vision for our Shire and therefore Council can be measured on or delivery and improvements to reduce barriers that people face.

Together we can make a difference.



Peter Vlatko,
General Manager

Cobar Shire Council

Vision

Our Vision is for Cobar Shire to be an attractive, healthy and caring environment in which to live, work and play, achieved in partnership with the community through initiative, foresight and leadership.

Mission

Our Mission is to provide sound and sensible government and ensure that works and services are delivered effectively and equitably to the community of Cobar Shire.

Council will also develop and constantly review its policy on the maintenance of its road network with current priorities to include the sealing of the following strategic roads within the Shire: The Wool Track, Louth Road and Tilpa Road.

Corporate Values



The graphic features the Cobar Shire logo on the left, which includes a stylized 'C' and 'S' in a blue and yellow circle. To the right of the logo, the words 'CORPORATE VALUES' are written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font against a dark grey background.

Cobar Shire's Corporate Values represent who we are as an organisation. They are the guiding principles for how we carry out our duties

A	Accountability We are responsible for our actions, our behaviour and the satisfactory completion of allocated tasks
C	Communication We communicate openly and respectfully, sharing timely and appropriate information with others
E	Effective Leadership We lead by positive example, embodying all of Council's agreed Values
I	Integrity We are consistently honest, transparent, ethical and fair, regardless of the situation
T	Teamwork We work collaboratively to achieve shared goals for Council and the community

About this Plan

Cobar Shire Council has developed this plan as a four year framework, outlining the key strategies and actions to be delivered by Council in its commitment to disability access and inclusion within the Shire. Council is committed, through the actions in this plan, to make continual improvement to reduce barriers that people face when living, working and visiting our Shire. The strategies and actions outlined in this plan will be incorporated into all of Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting documents.

The Case for Inclusion

- 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.
- Employment can provide independence, reduce reliance on benefits 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.

Consultation

Council is committed to undertaking true consultation with the community to continually update and develop this plan.

In 2020, Council emailed a number of service providers and non-government asking for their input, one provider responder (CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes). This group provided excellent input into the issues they believed their clients face in the Shire and provided their ideas on how to address these issues.

A Councillor Workshop to discuss the Disability Inclusion Action Plan was held in May 2020.

A draft of the updated plan will be placed on public exhibition during May 2020 to encourage further community input. Any feedback provided will be considered and implemented (as necessary).

An action item has been included in this plan that a Disability Action Working Group be introduced, with a suggested meeting to be held annually. Upon, consultation Council were advised that the community are happy with our achievements to date in relation to the previous DIAP.

Policy Background

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was developed in partnership between the Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Governments. It sets out a national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a major reform to deliver a national system of disability support focussed on individual needs and choice over how, when and where support is provided. Individuals, rather than service providers will determine how their funding is spent. Disability inclusion action planning is complementary to the NDIS and assists Councils to break down local barriers to full participation by people with disability in our community.

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.

Under the *Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014*, Council first implemented the Disability Inclusion Action Plan in 2017.

Cobar Shire Council wants to show the importance of access and inclusion and has developed a stand-alone plan which is then integrated through Council's plans. Disability inclusion action planning plays a critical role in identifying and delivering on practical measures to transform intent into action by local government.

Council has chosen to update this policy annually to ensure the community views and values are represented and to ensure that appropriate actions are included in the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents.

Council's Policy Context

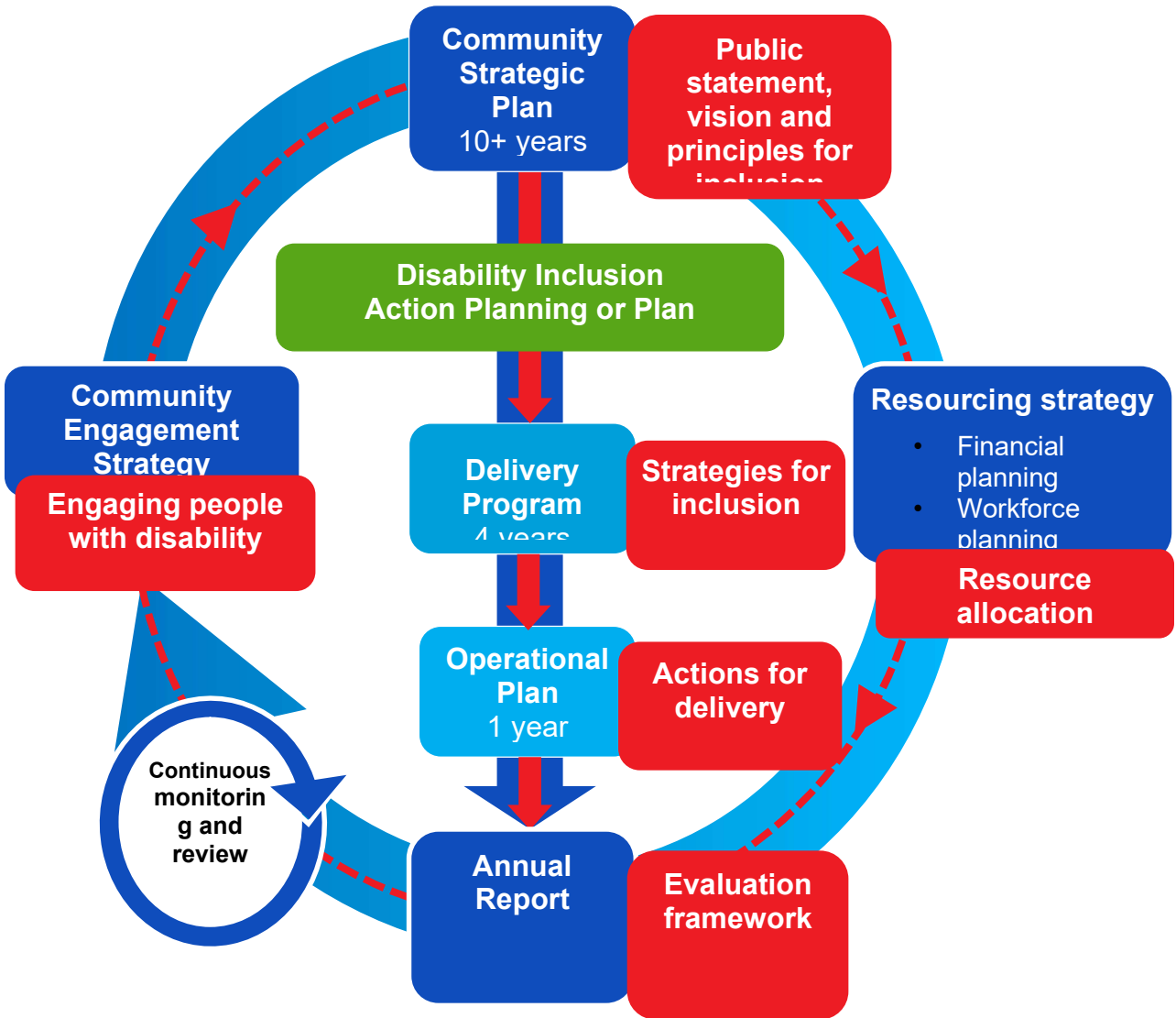
Whilst Council may not have had a DIAP in the past, there has been much work undertaken in this area. In 2019, Council adopted their Active Transport Plan which superseded the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) for the Cobar town centre and PAMP Access Audit.

Council has been implementing priority actions under these each year as funding becomes available, as part of their Annual Operational Plan. Other relevant Council documents include the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan and the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

Council also addresses access through the Development Application (DA) process, ensuring appropriate measures are included when buildings are built or altered.

Councils Planning Process

Council has one Vision and one Plan. This is the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Annual Plan. The Disability inclusion Action Plan is a supporting document that will inform the actions in our Annual Plan.



Community Profile

Demographics

Of the 118,590 people living in the Far West and Orana regions of NSW, 10,669 have identified as having a disability (SSI Data Cube). Closer to home, Cobar Shire has a population of 4,722 with 453 aged pensioners, which represents 72% of those over 65 years old. There are 180 disability support pensioners in the 16-64 age group, which equates to 5.7% being on a disability pension. There were 312 people over the age of 15 years who were providing assistance to someone with a disability in the Shire, which represents 8.5% of this age group. 3.1% of the population identified as having a profound or severe disability, or 154 people. Of these, 122 live within in the community. Of those 154, 80 are aged under 65 years old and all but 5 of those 80 people live within the community. The remaining 74 people who have a profound or severe disability are aged over 64, which is 12% of this population group. Of those 74 people, 46 live within the community (Public Health Information Development Unit – PHIDU December 2016). Noting: That a further Census has not been held since 2016.

Whilst these statistics help to understand the prevalence of people who need support in the community, it is acknowledged that the statistics do not include all people living with and caring for people with a disability in the community. Nor do they include information on those who have milder disability, including mobility concerns or mental health issues.

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is Australia’s first national scheme for people with disability. It provides funding directly to individuals and has now been rolled out in Cobar. Council will continue to monitor the situation and work with the relevant groups to try to prevent any loss of services to the Shire.

Accessibility to Public Buildings

Council is committed to improving access to public and Council owned buildings in the Shire. This includes the constant search for grant funding to assist us to meet our ambitions and the communities needs.

The Council Chambers and Administration Building are accessible, including with the fit out of appropriate amenities. Council will be updating its front entrance parking, which will include the updating of the disabled parking and the redevelopment of the ramp access to enhance greater access to the building and Chambers.

The Library is accessible and appropriate amenities are available to users of that building.

The Cobar Memorial Swimming Pool is one of the best pools in the region, with both pools fully accessible with access ramps and accessible change facilities.

Over the last 12 months, Council has installed accessible toilets and wheelchair accessible play equipment at Drummond Park and accessible toilets and updated footpaths have been installed at Dalton Park.

Grant funding has been obtained to improve accessibility at the Great Cobar Heritage Centre, including accessibility ramp and improved accessibility throughout the building.

Grant funding has been sourced for Euabalong for the construction of bus shelters designed to meet accessibility standards, and to improve accessibility at the Euabalong Community Hall via the installation of a ramp and entrance rectification, together with accessible toilets. Council will commence installation of accessible toilets at Nymagee Park in this financial year.

Additionally, the Cobar Youth and Fitness Centre will have increased accessibility via the installation of showers, additional toilets, and revised access ramps at both the front and back entrances to meet accessibility standards.

Council will also be converting a Council owned house into a Girl Guides Hall, which will include a ramp and accessible amenities.

Cobar Shire Council assisted Cobar's CWA branch in a funding application through FRRR (Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal) funding for the installation of an Accessibility Ramp at the CWA hall. This application was unsuccessful.

Cobar Shire Council have since applied for funding on behalf of CWA, for the installation of an Accessibility ramp at the CWA Hall, through the Drought Communities Program – Extension, and should hear about the outcome of this in June 2020.

Council have received grant funding to upgrade Ward Oval, with concept plans designed and initial community consultation undertaken. The project will consist of adequate disabled parking spaces, accessible toilets and change rooms and a one level structure. As a second stage to the project Council are investing the option Early Learning Precinct.

Grant funding has been obtained to design and construct accessible toilets at Dalton Park Racecourse.

For the final stage of the Medical Centre upgrade a new access entrance will be designed and implemented to enable easier patient drop off, collection and access.

There is also a substantial amount of money to go into footpaths, which is aimed at rectifying missing links.

Many commercial buildings have poor access in Cobar. This will continue to be an issue. Council will, through the Development Application process, continue to strive to improve accessibility and can work with groups such as the Cobar Business Association to alert business owners of the advantages of improving access. However, with a large proportion of proprietors who live out of the Shire and the cost of undertaking the works, it will continue to be a challenge that must be addressed over time.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The actions outlined in this plan will be integrated across Council's integrated planning documents (the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Annual Operational Plan and Resource Strategy). As such, actions from this plan will be included in these documents and will be reported against in line with reporting for each document. These are public documents, available on our website or in hard copy. The Annual Report is provided to the Minister. Which will include an annual review of the DIAP, with a copy supplied to the Disability Council of NSW.

Council will hold an annual meeting of the Disability Inclusion Working Group (once created), that will consist of service providers and people with disability, their family and carers, to gain feedback on the implementation of the DIAP and new initiatives to be included in the following years. However, Cobar Shire is a close community and it is expected that more frequent feedback will be received when appropriate from the public.

Attitudes and Behaviours

The attitudes and behaviours of the community towards those with disability have been described as the single biggest barrier to full participation and inclusion. It was identified that mental health issues in particular in Cobar are poorly understood and there is a need to ensure adequate socialisation opportunities for all in the community, as well as education on promoting strong mental health and how to assist those with poor mental health and ways in which these services can be accessed.

Disability awareness is at the core of disability inclusion. Training, particularly for frontline service delivery staff, regarding the importance of, and practical steps toward disability inclusion is critical.

Another concern raised was in relation to mobility scooters and driver education and the importance of information sharing and training.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
1. Improve staff awareness of disability issues to improve customer service for those with a disability.	1.1 Include disability awareness training in staff inductions.	1.1 Training included in all staff inductions held throughout the year.	HRM	Implemented 2018 – ongoing.
2. Promote access and inclusion at Council facilities	2.1 Partner with community organisations to deliver projects and programs that support inclusion in Council facilities.	2.1 Number of activities undertaken in partnership with other organisations.	GO	Ongoing.
	2.2 Take action to support Mental Health Services in Cobar Shire.	2.2 Number of activities Council has endorsed or participated in.	GM	Ongoing.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
3. Ensure continued consultation with those with disabilities and key service organisations to ensure there is targeted opportunity for input into decision making.	3.1 Establishment of a Disability Working Group and hold at least one consultation meeting with key stakeholders on the implementation and updating of this plan annually.	3.1 Disability Working Group established. Those with disability and their families and service organisations have the opportunity to continually input into Council decision making. This plan is updated annually and changes are made when needed from suggested input.	GM	Annually.
4. Ensure all disability inclusion actions have an awareness and account for Aboriginal cultural sensitivities that may affect opportunity for interaction or participation.	4.1 Cultural and social planning programs that are inclusive of all community, irrespective of levels of ability.	4.1 Cultural and social planning programs that are inclusive of all community, irrespective of levels of ability.	GM	Ongoing.
5. Improved training and awareness for those using mobility scooters.	5.1 Safety Training provided for mobility scooter drivers and relevant information on road rules easily accessible and simple to understand.	5.1 Training provided annually. Information packs given to new mobility scooter owners.	POLICE	Annually (as required).

Employment

Employment and economic security for most people are closely related. Employment contributes to independence and feelings of self-worth, social interaction and mental health, and increases opportunities to support individual choice and control. Council maintains its commitment to equal employment and workplace opportunities and to reducing barriers to employees to encourage them to grow and contribute to the organisation.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
6. Develop Council employment opportunities for people with a disability	6.1 Work with non-government organisations to promote vocational work placement on a volunteer basis for people with a disability for roles in Council and investigate the potential for work experience for those with disabilities.	6.1 Number of people engaged in vocational placement and work experience as a result of the initiative.	HRM	Ongoing.
	6.2 Consider issues of disability, access and inclusion when updating Council's policies and procedures.	6.2 Access and inclusion addressed in Councils documents where appropriate.	HRM	Ongoing.
	6.3 Ensure accessible recruitment practices – simple forms and language.	6.3 Forms reviewed where appropriate.	HRM	Ongoing.

Liveable Communities

Liveable communities are important for all people in the community and are achieved by applying the principles of universal design. This is important across Council facilities, housing design, transport access, community recreation and social inclusiveness.

Major issues identified in the previous community consultation period were around the lack of options for public transport for those in a wheelchair and a lack of community transport for residents who have to travel to medical appointments but cannot take themselves and are still current issues.

It was noted that Cobar’s footpath network is difficult to navigate for those with mobility issues, but has been getting better with the implementation of the actions in the Active Transport Plan.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
7. Continuously upgrade Council assets to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, relevant Australian Standards and National Construction Code.	7.1 Identify and prioritise public buildings that require access audits in accordance with AS1428.1 – Access to Premises Standards to ensure ongoing design work complies with required standards.	7.1 Priority buildings identified and audits completed.	DPES	Ongoing.
	7.2 Review the Active Transport Plan and progressively upgrade high priority areas to improve access as funding becomes available.	7.2 Pedestrian access continues to be improved in high use areas.	DES	Ongoing.
	7.3 Identify and prioritise footpaths accessibility.	7.3 Identify and rectify footpaths to ensure safety of those with mobility issues.	DES	Ongoing. Provision for this has been allocated in the 2020/2021 budget for footpaths.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
	7.4 Investigate additional disabled carparking needs in the CBD.	7.4 Investigation undertaken and additional disabled carparking needs in the CBD have been identified to ensure that adequate spaces are available and in close proximity to amenities.	DES	Ongoing.
	7.5 Investigate additional pedestrian crossings within the CBD.	7.5 Investigation undertaken.	DES	Ongoing.
	7.6 Apply for and implement a reduced speed limit to 40kms in the Main Street.	7.6 Application submitted and speed limit reduced.	DES	To be completed in 2020/2021.
8. Improve the liveability and accessibility of public places and ensure disability inclusion is a key part of Council's Village planning and projects.	8.1 Include community input at the concept stage on projects in public places eg – accessible equipment and amenities in local parks.	8.1 Encourage community input into the design process	PC	Ongoing.
	8.2 Install two new accessibility ramps for building access at the Cobar Youth and Fitness Centre.	8.2 Accessibility ramps installed and to standard.	PC	To be completed in 2020/2021.
	8.3 The upgrades to the Girl Guides Hall to include a ramp and accessible amenities.	8.3 Accessibility ramps installed and to standard.	PC	To be completed in 2020/2021.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
	8.4 Council to build an accessibility ramp to the entrance of the Great Cobar Heritage Centre (GCHC). Other planned upgrades to the GCHC will allow accessibility to the paid exhibition that will be exclusively located on the bottom floor of the Museum once reopened.	8.4 Accessibility ramps installed and to standard. Access to paid exhibitions.	PC	To be completed in 2020/2021.
	8.5 Ensure any new public buildings and works undertaken by Council on public buildings meet universal design principles.	8.5 New public buildings all meet universal design principles.	DPES	Ongoing.
	8.6 Investigate the costs associated with all year access to the heated pool to ensure continuity of physio and health and fitness programs.	8.6 Council provide full year access to the heated pool.	DFCS	2019 - Discussions undertaken with interested parties. These initial discussions have not been progressed – Ongoing.
	8.7 Audit Events and activities run by Council to ensure accessibility.	8.7 Events audited to ensure accessibility.	TM	Ongoing.
	8.8 Social Inclusion for elderly residents.	8.8 Events held annually. Invitations sent and access to information easy to obtain.	TM	Ongoing.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
9. Advocate for improved access and inclusion outcomes in the CBD	9.1 Promote to shop keepers access issues faced in the central business district and how this limits their ability to reach customers and make sales.	9.1 Material produced and distributed to business owners.	GM	Ongoing.
10. Advocate for improved and more equitable public transport options	10.1 Investigate if there is adequate community transport available for the community and advocate for additional transport if required.	10.1 Agreed understanding in the community of the demand and supply of equitable transport options Agreed position on way forward and issue progressed if need identified.	GM	Ongoing.
	10.2 Audit line marking in disability car parking spots and repaint where needed.	10.2 Line marking clearer and a reduction in noncompliance.	DES	Ongoing, noting 2 were completed in 2018/2019.
	10.3 Ensure adequate disability parking at Ward Oval for events.	10.3 An increase in the availability of disability car parking at Ward Oval.	DES	Disability car parking will be reviewed as part of the Ward Oval upgrade project.

Processes and Systems

Council is committed to improving our capacity to assist our community to gain access to information and Council services they need within Council’s resourcing limits. Council wants the community to actively participate and partner with us for improved decision making and service delivery.

Strategy	Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Delivery
11. Increase the range of formats that information is provided in to support different needs and capabilities.	11.1 Council’s revised Website is, at a minimum, to have a “AA” rating for accessibility in accordance with Australian Government guideline and to develop a plan for Website content compliance with disability standards with appropriate/ easy to read language used.	11.1 Material on the website is more accessible.	ITM	2020/2021 in conjunction with the new web page for Council.
	11.2 Audit Council’s Website to include images of people with disabilities.	11.2 Website audited and images included.	ITM	Ongoing.
	11.3 Council Meetings are Livestreamed to provide an additional alternative to attend meetings other than in person.	11.3 Council Meetings are Livestreamed.	GM	Monthly (as Council Meetings are held).

Version Control

No.	Date Adopted	Minute No.	Date Commenced	Date notified in Local Paper
1	24.04.2017	74.4.2017	28 April 2017	N/A
2	28.06.2018	152.6.2018	29 June 2018	N/A
3	DRAFT			