

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Summary document



2017-2021



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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



It is my honour to present Council's first Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021. Council has a key role in making Lockhart inclusive and accessible for everyone, and provide equal opportunity for people with disability to utilise and enjoy the public spaces and activities of our Council.

Lockhart Shire Council embraces people with disability in all aspects of community life and is committed to meeting the principles and requirements of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* to create a more inclusive and welcoming community for people with disabilities. Council plays a key role in promoting and supporting disability inclusion by ensuring it is considered across all areas of Council business. This includes how we develop the built environment, provide information and services, support employment opportunities and promote positive community attitudes and behaviour toward people with disability.

Engagement has been a huge part in the development of this plan, with community focus groups, stakeholder engagement and community surveys across the Shire. This has helped shape the plan and provided a clear direction of how our community want to create an inclusive and accessible community. The plan is a living document, and we will work to make sure it continues to accurately reflect the needs and priorities of our community.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of the plan and for providing valuable input in making our Council a better place for all.

Cr. Rodger Schirmer

Mayor

INTRODUCTION

About this plan

We want our community to be a place where all people can participate equally. In preparing this plan we made sure that people with disability were included in making decisions about making Lockhart Shire more accessible. We asked the community about the barriers that people with disability face and their ideas for improvement. This plan explains the actions we will take to improve the lives of people with disability in our community.

Developing our plan

Local Government is required by the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) to undertake disability inclusion action planning by 1 July 2017. We have integrated our Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) into our Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework to ensure disability inclusion is considered by all levels of community and our organisation. Lockhart Shire Council commenced integrated Disability Inclusion Action Planning in September 2016.

In October 2016, we conducted a review of Council's policies and strategies, and delivered three workshops with Council staff to identify and map potential barriers and improvements across Council's portfolio. In late October 2016, we held two consultation forums for people with a disability, their families and carers, and disability service providers. We also sought community input through an online survey.

The findings were collated and analysed and we presented these to Council in November 2016. From here, strategies and actions were prepared and integrated into the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program which was adopted in February 2017.

This document is a summary of the disability inclusion action plan items from our Community Strategic Plan.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Our community believes it is important that our community is inclusive and accessible to everyone. During 2016, Lockhart Shire Council worked with the community to review the Community Vision. Our Community Vision 2027 is:

In 2027, we are:

- Deeply connected to the land and proud of our independence;
- Dynamic, resilient and have a strong sense of community;
- Passionate for innovation and diverse opportunities; and
- Welcoming, vibrant, inclusive, accessible and value the rights of people equally.

Lockhart Shire Council acknowledges the Community Vision 2027 and is committed to making our community more inclusive, accessible and a place where we value the rights of people equally. We will do this by:

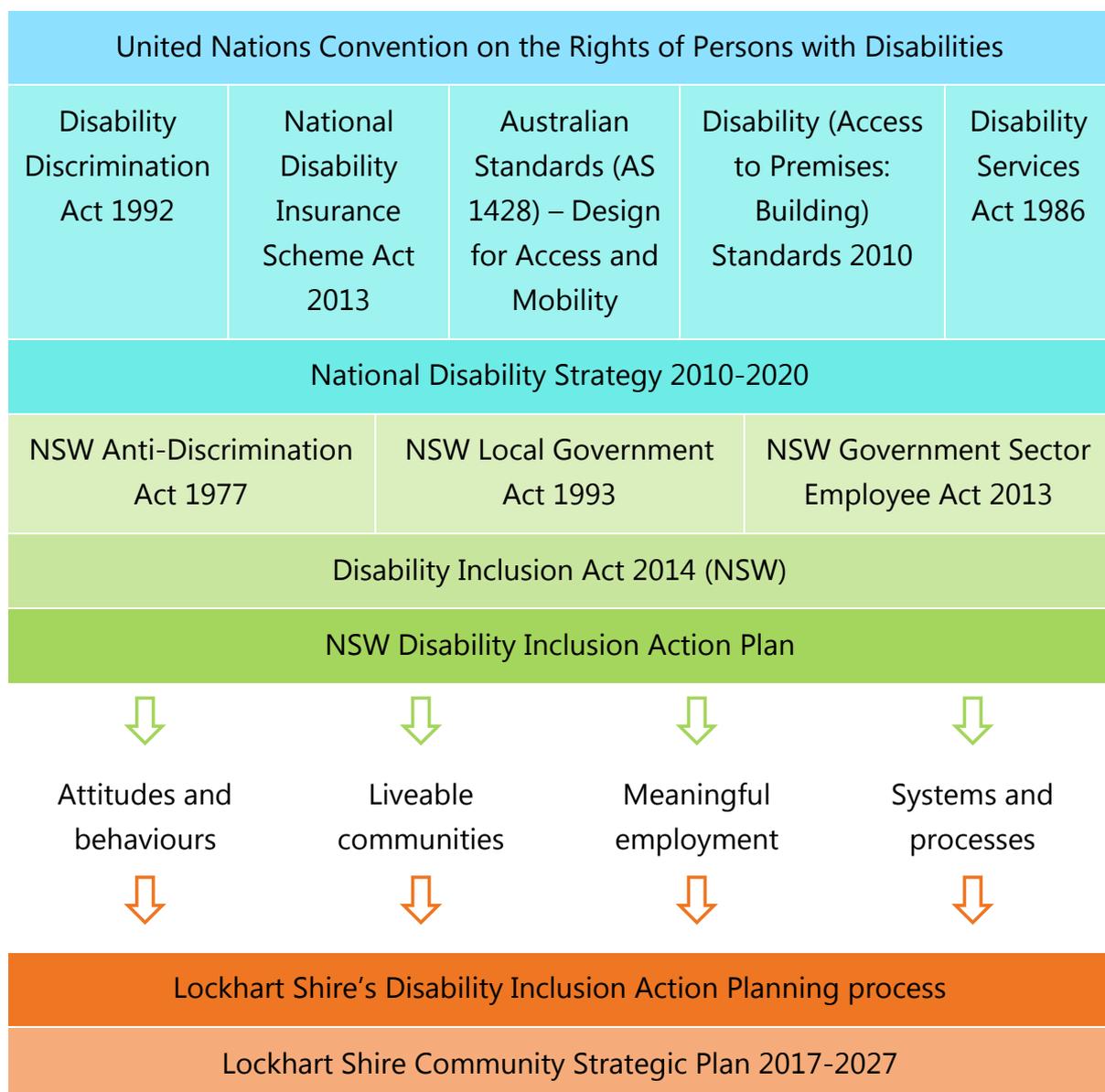
- Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours;
- Creating liveable communities;
- Supporting access to meaningful employment; and
- Improving access to services through better systems and process.



POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

People with disability, their families and carers have the same rights as all people to access services and facilities in their community. The rights are part of State and Commonwealth policy and legislation which make it unlawful to discriminate against a person with disability.

The plan sets out to achieve the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to ensure the equal rights and opportunities for all persons with disability are protected and promoted. This plan is aligned with the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan and the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Lockhart Shire covers an area of 2,942 km² and is located in the Southern Riverina area of New South Wales. With a population of 3,080 the Shire includes the townships of Lockhart and The Rock and the villages of Milbrulong, Osborne, Urangeline, Yerong Creek and Pleasant Hills.

The Shire has a vibrant and varied history and is renowned for the majestic land form of Galore Hill and The Rock Hill. The Lockhart Shire area was known for bushranger activity in the 1860s.

The Shire has grown in popularity as a place to live and as a place of business. While geographically close to the regional centres of Wagga Wagga and Albury, the Shire still relies on a strong primary industry. Tourism, especially heritage and eco-tourism, have seen growth over recent years.

Lockhart Shire is the centre of farming excellence. Fertile soils led to agriculture flourishing, firstly as a grazing district and, with the advent of cropping, became a prosperous mixed farming area. Today, its proud history is reflected in the agricultural initiatives and distinction for which the Shire has become renowned. The Shire's agriculture continues to produce quality grain, prime lamb and beef, with the wool industry still an integral part of its agricultural diversity.



POPULATION



MEDIAN AGE



AGE GROUPS

15% aged 45-55 years
14.7% aged 5-14 years
14.4% aged 55-64 years

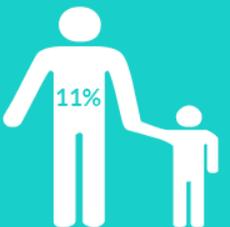
FAMILY TYPES



Couple families without children



Couple with children



One parent families

LABOUR FORCE

Full time 60%
Part time 29%
Unemployed 4.4%
Away from work 6.5%

INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

Agricultural, forestry and fishing 30%
Health care, and social assistance 13%
Transport, postal and warehousing 8.8%
Retail 7.5%
Education 6.75%

SEIFA



DISABILITY

5.84% or
180 people need
care and assistance
with core activities

13.7% or
324 people provide
unpaid assistance to a
person with a disability

DISABILITY INCLUSION

Total population: 3,080 people.

Of these:

5.9% have a profound or severe disability (181 people)

7.2% are HACC clients (222 people)

55.2% of the total population are aged 16 to 64 years

Of these:

8.0% are disability support pensioners (136 people)

21.2% of the total population are aged 65 years and older

Of these:

17.3% have a profound or severe disability (113 people)

60.9% are age pensioners (397 people)

76.8% of the total population are aged over 15 years

Of these:

6.5% have a current Mobility Parking Scheme (disability parking) permit
(154 people)

13.7% provided unpaid support to persons with disability (324 people)

32.5% volunteered with an organisation or group

ENGAGEMENT INSIGHTS

Council engaged with the community during October and November 2016, and activities consisted of two community forums for people with a disability, their families and carers; one each at The Rock and Lockhart; and an online community-wide survey. A total of 103 people participated in the disability inclusion community engagement.

The engagement provides Council with valuable information to assist and guide the development of the DIAP. Information was analysed and key themes were identified under each of the four priority areas of the plan.

Promote positive attitudes and behaviours

The Lockhart community are generally welcoming to people with disability and people feel that they are supported. The lack of services in the local area can isolate some people and general lack of understanding of disability causes barriers in the community. Engagement shows that there is strong social supports and network in the Lockhart Shire.

Create liveable communities

Lockhart Shire Council offices and public buildings rated well for their accessibility, as well as its customer service and newsletters. There are numerous businesses in the townships that lack basic physical access and limit the ability of people with disability to live independently. Council infrastructure that could be improved to meet the needs of people with disability include the swimming pools at Lockhart and The Rock, footpaths, and main street crossings. Units at Magnolia Lodge require upgrades and the community garden has poor access. There were concerns with accessing businesses and around age-specific accommodation.

Support access to meaningful employment

Employment is a key issue for people with a disability, with less than one-third of people of working age with a disability work full time (Australia wide) and 2 in 5 people of working age rely on a government pension or allowance. Council currently employ people with disability and will continue to support diversity in employment. The rurality of Lockhart Shire creates barriers for people with disability accessing meaningful work. Discussions focused on supporting people with a disability to be and remain employed in the community, supporting businesses to employ people with disability, looking at

opportunities for social enterprise within the community, and looking at pathways to employment.

Improve access to services through improved systems and processes

The importance of establishing suitable systems and processes in Council to guide and assist the community is vital for the inclusion of people with disability. It provides a platform for people to be heard and acknowledged as well as being able to seek information on services and programs they can access in the community. The Lockhart Shire Council community newsletter is a valuable tool for seeking information, as are calls to customer service and visits to administration centre. Council's website was highlighted as requiring improvement, and there were barriers contacting medical practitioners. Most people with disability have adapted to the barriers they had faced in accessing retail outlets through improved customer service options from retailers.



STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Promote positive attitudes and behaviours

IP&R REF	STRATEGY	ACTION	PARTNERS	TIMING
A1	Build capacity, capability and partnerships to encourage sustainable community groups and clubs.	Facilitate and support programs and projects within the community to make them accessible to people with all abilities.	Council Community groups Community	Ongoing
A3	Provide support for people with a disability and their families and carers.	Participate in a collective approach within Lockhart Shire's disability sector to improve the understanding, access and operation of the sector.	Council Service providers	2017/18
B1	Exercise leadership by championing the value of access and inclusion across Lockhart's business and tourism community.	Promote the benefits of being fully accessible and inclusive for businesses.	Council	Ongoing
E3	Represent and acknowledge the needs and challenges and characteristics of our community.	Continue to lead and advocate on key social and community issues.	Council	Ongoing

Create liveable communities

IP&R REF	STRATEGY	ACTION	PARTNERS	TIMING
A2	Work with stakeholders to ensure our community is safe and well prepared to respond to adversity.	Strengthen mechanisms that support access and inclusion for our community.	Council, Service providers	Ongoing
	Support, or partner to provide, welcoming and well maintained community spaces and facilities.	Plan, develop and maintain facilities, parks and gardens that respond to the needs of the community.	Council State Government	Ongoing
	Provide and advocate for services that respond to the needs of our community.	Lobby government, business and service providers to provide accessible services to meet the needs of the community.	Council	Ongoing
A3	Provide support for people with a disability and their families and carers.	Work with community partners to lobby government and to seek funding to support people with disabilities to reach their full potential and to lead fulfilling lives.	Council Service providers	Ongoing
		Provide support for people with disability, their families and carers.	Council Service providers	Ongoing
B1	Improve the convenience and amenity of our towns	Ensure that there is sufficient and accessible parking for cars and trailers in the centre of each town.	Council	Ongoing
B2	Create a thriving tourism economy in Lockhart Shire.	Support and develop infrastructure for our tourism sector.	Council	Ongoing

IP&R REF	STRATEGY	ACTION	PARTNERS	TIMING
D1	Plan sustainable transport strategies.	Continue to implement the Lockhart Shire Active Transport Plan that plans for the future maintenance and development of pathways throughout the Shire.	Council	By 2020
		Advocate for community and transport options.	Council	Ongoing
	Advocate for diverse and affordable housing options within the Lockhart Shire.	Work with developers, investors and service providers to realise the development of diverse housing options to address affordable housing across the Shire.	Council State Government Developers	Ongoing
D2	Develop infrastructure that supports growth within our community.	Ensure maintenance, accessibility and safety of the Lockhart air strip.	Council	Ongoing

Support access to meaningful employment

IP&R REF	STRATEGY	ACTION	PARTNERS	TIMING
A3	Provide support for people with a disability and their families and carers.	Work in partnership with community organisations to improve opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in education, training and employment.	Council Service providers	Ongoing
B3	Develop the skills and employment opportunities of our residents.	Support and communicate pathways to employment for all residents.	Council Service providers	Ongoing

Improve access to services through improved systems and processes

IP&R REF	STRATEGY	ACTION	PARTNERS	TIMING
A3	Provide support for people with a disability and their families and carers.	Work with partners to identify opportunities to support the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.	Service providers Council	2017/18
E2	Use effective community engagement processes.	Increase opportunities and provide support for people with disabilities to exercise their rights for civic participation.	Council	Ongoing
	Ensure the community is informed by improving access to information.	Apply access and inclusion principles to improve access to Council services, programs, events and communications.	Council	Ongoing
E3	Represent and acknowledge the needs and challenges and characteristics of our community.	Remain updated and informed on current demographic and social data pertaining to Lockhart Shire communities and population groups.	Council	Annually

DELIVERING THE PLAN

Governance

Council executive will have overall accountability for the DIAP decision making, and will have responsibility and ownership of the development and implementation of DIAP, and will play a key role in championing the importance of inclusion and planning for people with disability throughout Council.

Further input and carriage will be sought from staff across Council as required.

Implementation

The strategies and actions for the disability inclusion action plan will be highlighted in Council's Community Strategic Plan. Strategies and actions will be integrated into Council's IP&R documents, including the Delivery Program (4 years) and Operational Plan (1 year).

Monitoring and reporting

Each year, Council will report on its progress against the Disability Inclusion Action Plan as part of its Annual Report. A summary of the key achievements will also be prepared and provided to the NSW Disability Council.

Review

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan must be reviewed every four years.