Appendix 8
Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan Report

Penrith is transforming, powering growth, and championing the aspirations of people in Western Sydney. It is essential that we build a community in which everyone shares in our positive future.

Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022–26 (DIAP) was adopted by Council on 28 June 2022. It details how access and inclusion will be embedded into our core business. Our role varies from being an action owner and capacity builder to an advocate and partner.

Council listened to feedback from the community and staff to identify our priorities over the four years. We continue to listen to people with lived experience and professional knowledge of disability to deliver strong outcomes. We acknowledge the valuable role the Penrith Access Committee plays in providing advice, feedback, and guidance to us. We would like to acknowledge the collaboration of our partners and key stakeholders. When we work together, we can strengthen outcomes for the community and ensure Penrith is a place where everyone feels welcome and able to participate.



Community members embracing each other, in a sense of community and connection

Case Study

One Community Many Abilities



One Community Many Abilities, campaign launch

In 2023-24 Council delivered a social marketing campaign, 'One Community, Many Abilities'.

The campaign aimed at increasing awareness about the diverse abilities of individuals in Penrith; advocating for greater support and resources for individuals with disabilities; promoting long-term changes in attitudes, policies, and practices; and inspiring people living with disability to live their best lives and reach their full potential.

The campaign was delivered through digital platforms of Council including social media, cinema advertising, billboards, street flags, print media advertising and even Councils waste trucks. The campaign reached more than 1.5 million people.

Delivering On Our Commitments

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 1

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS	
ACTION	**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 1: **Increase awareness and knowledge of access and mechanisms for inclusion for Penrith City Council staff**	
1.2 Support staff attendance at Access Committee meetings as appropriate to build awareness and knowledge of key issues and opportunities.	The Penrith Access Committee meets every two months to discuss and provide advice on Council business. During 2023-24, there was an increased focus on giving the Committee Members more visibility on internal strategic work, as well as Development Applications. Below are some of the topics the Committee reviewed and provided input into: **Development plans** • Construction and future urban design for Sydney metro at St Marys • Nepean Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2 • Two development applications • DDA compliant Bus Shelters **Strategic projects** • Draft St Mary's Town Centre Place Plan • Draft Cultural Strategy and Action Plan 2024–28 • Draft Penrith Community Safety Plan 2023-27 • Strategy and design for social marketing campaign One Community, Many Abilities • Penrith Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan • Penrith City Council Customer Portal

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 2

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS	
ACTION	**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 2: **Raise awareness and promote the benefits of inclusion to the community**	
2.2 Promote diversity and inclusion through marketing campaigns and positive use of Council imagery as appropriate	Disability Awareness Campaign In 2023-24 Council delivered a social marketing campaign, 'One Community, Many Abilities'. The campaign featured five residents with diverse experiences. The campaign reached more than 1.5 million people through videos, blogs, posters and photos published on Council's digital platforms, external print media, social media, street flags, waste bin trucks, in local cinemas, and in Nepean Village food court. Photographic collateral – Marketing team Council produced a suite of photographic and video materials which include people with a diversity of disabilities at locations across Penrith. These materials will be utilised in marketing, tourism and corporate collateral in coming years.

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 2: **Raise awareness and promote the benefits of inclusion to the community**		
2.3	2.3 Deliver, support and participate in community events that create awareness of people living with disability	*Library Services and Children's Programs* Penrith City Library Service offers a specialist toy service to help support children with disability or special learning needs. With a referral, children have access to switch-adapted, sensory and educational toys. These specialised resources can help with social inclusion, enable play opportunities, and give children a chance to learn independently. The Toy Library Outreach service has 30 active members, resulting in 506 items being loaned for the 2023-24 period. Weekly Little Learners early literacy programs for preschoolers included Baby Time and Story Time sessions at Penrith, St Marys, and St Clair library branches. Story Time explored popular themes such as animals, bedtime, and families, as well as cultural and community celebrations like Chinese New Year, Eid, Harmony Day and NAIDOC Week. AUSLAN was used in the introduction of every session and AUSLAN interpreters attended three times interpreting stories and songs shared in those sessions. A special Dharug story time with author Jasmine Seymour was a highlight for families. *Hublet – New Technology at St Marys library* St Marys Library is now loaning tablets to library members through a device called Hublet. The unit hold six tablets that are loaded with Library apps for easy access and enjoyment to e-books, e-magazines and all online resources. Beside the apps, Internet access is available, and patrons have up two hours free use of the devices. Young users of St Marys Library have been especially enjoying the Hublet. *Adult Programs and Services* To ensure the accessibility of our services we increased our Home Library Service which now delivers library items to 190 clients and 21 aged care facilities in the Penrith LGA. Penrith Library's Home Library Team visited aged care facilities with digital gaming projector to engage and entertain senior citizens. Several Stepping Stone sessions were offered in partnership with NSW Health to promote fall prevention. Penrith Library celebrated International Day of Disability in partnership with City Activation Community Capacity Team via book displays and social media campaigns.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 3

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 3: Raise awareness and promote the benefits of inclusive customer practices with local business		
3.2	Develop and promote resources to support and encourage small businesses to participate in inclusive practices	Zero Barriers is a program administered by the Multicultural Network, a community organisation. The program was established in Penrith, supported by Council, in 2022-24. It seeks to educate businesses and professional services about access and inclusion. An important aspect of Zero Barriers was the active promotion of businesses and professional services who participate and improve accessibility to their service or premises via a website and an accessibly awards initiative. Throughout 2022-24 Council conducted engagement with local businesses to support the Zero barriers initiative. This program relied heavily on a relational approach to engagement. Council officers visited 8 locations, including the Penrith, St Marys and Kingswood Central Business Districts and local shopping centres, to build relationships with business owners and their staff and establish a connection to the purpose of this project. In 2023-24, 160 businesses based in the Penrith LGA participated in a range of engagement and education activities including accessibility self-assessments for their businesses or services. The types of businesses involved included, retail/shops, restaurants, accommodation/ other hospitality businesses, and professional services such as Real Estate Agencies.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 4

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 4: Deliver accessible and inclusive community events, programs, and services		
4.1	Incorporate inclusive practices into community events planning, programming, delivery, and communications	Council commissioned a consultant with lived experience of disability (visible and invisible) to develop a statement of inclusion to be used at Council's community events and related engagement platforms, promoting the safety, welcome and inclusion of all participants by encouraging the use of both the inclusive approaches and spaces provided, as well as their own, to enable meaningful participation in these events. The annual flagship event, Real festival was delivered over three days from 15th to 17th September 2023. For the first time in the life of Real Festival, the Council conducted an accessibility audit of the site with key stakeholders. The site had undergone significant upgrades led by the NSW State Government and was only accessible to Council shortly before the festival. Staff from across Council collaborated to rapidly deliver treatments to improve accessibility across the site. Actions included: • Site works to reduce uneven surfaces • 25 student volunteers ensured pathways were clear • Accessibility Guides were stationed at the Information Tent and provided individual assistance as required • A 'quiet hour' was introduced which excluded loud activities and announcements • 25 accessible parking spaces reserved • All event staff briefed on accessibility and safety This year the festival also featured an exhibition of works from the collection of the No Boundaries Art Group, a collective of artists with disability. Council's 2023 NAIDOC Week event was held at Jamison Park on Friday 7 July 2023 and included several features of accessibility. These included • An Event Accessibility Plan and an Access Lead • Orientation of site plan to avoid uneven surfaces and barriers • Availability of 'Event Guides' to support attendees • Designated accessible parking close to the event site • All signage had both accessible text and pictures • A 'Quiet Hour' without loud amplified sound or sirens • Community transport options • Quiet zone available all day

Statement of inclusion

Everybody is welcome here to this Penrith City Council Event.

We want everyone to feel at home.

We recognise that everyone has their own methods and strategies to feel comfortable and relaxed.

We support and respect your approaches to navigating and enjoying our space you share today with others, including stimming, moving around the room or using our quiet space.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do that helps to include you in the event.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 5

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 5: Increase access and participation in recreational and sporting opportunities		
5.1	Include access and inclusion outcomes when implementing specific actions in Councils Sport and Recreation Strategy in the areas of play, recreation, sport, and open space infrastructure projects and planning	Council is creating an integrated network of inclusive open spaces across the LGA. In 2023–24, we completed a significant range of projects which are outlined below. Council completed 7 playspace upgrade projects, including new and varied equipment, shade, landscaping, accessible seating and surfacing. Council officers have consulted with the community about the renewal of a further 8 playspaces to be delivered in 2024-25. We upgraded 5 amenity buildings at Council's Parks, Reserves and Sportsgrounds as part of our Building Asset Renewal Program. These significant upgrades have provided new accessible, inclusive, and welcoming facilities for all users. Council's newest Mixed Recreation Space at Trinity Drive Reserve, Cambridge Gardens incorporates a recreation and play space that is easy to access, fun and inclusive. The design achieved through collaboration with community has delivered opportunities for skate and scooter riding, adventure play, parkour equipment, flying fox, dream swings with accessible seats, shelters and pathways connecting the new facilities to the local school and children's services. Several key city-wide open space initiatives have made significant headway. Tench Reserve Park and City Park Penrith projects are now complete, while Regatta Park continues to progress, and the Gipps Street Recreation Precinct is set to celebrate its grand opening on 31 August 2024. These enhancements have expanded equitable access, providing more inclusive and higher quality open spaces close to residents' homes.
5.4	Support and encourage use of Councils Community and Recreation Facilities for accessible events, activities and programs.	Council officers frequently assist customers with enquiries about the use of our community facilities. We work with community members to meet the access needs of groups or individuals when they book Council facilities. We also assist sporting clubs across the Penrith LGA who provide accessible and inclusive community recreation programs. Throughout 2023-24 Council developed an online venue management solution for booking community facilities & sporting grounds. This online tool includes accessibility features and provides information for customers on the accessibility of each facility. Our Aquatic and Leisure Centre, Ripples, is NDIS registered and offers a range of programs for people with disability. Improvements which increase access and inclusion benefit all customers who make use of our facilities. In 2023-24 opening hours were extended to support residents who require access to the hydrotherapy pool at St Marys through NDIS and, Ripples also offered accessible community programming, such as an activity for neurodiverse young people at the hydrotherapy center in St Marys which was delivered in January 2024.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 6

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 6: Support participation in the creative arts for producers, makers, and audiences with disability		
6.3	Identify and establish long-term partnerships with peer and sector organisations that deliver inclusive creative arts practices	Penrith Performing & Visual Arts (PP&VA) worked with Accessible Arts, the NSW peak arts and disability organisation throughout 2023-24, across a range of areas, including the completion of accessibility audits at our venues, an audit of PP&VA websites, and partnering with Accessible Arts for the Next Level Creative Mentorships program. The Next Level Creative Mentorships program advances the creativity and careers of artists with disability by teaming them up with industry mentors in the performing arts. This is an ongoing partnership with PP&VA. Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of The Lewers Bequest, is engaged in a partnership with No Boundaries Art Group; a group of diversely abled artists in residence in the Gallery's Sonia Farley Studio, where they meet weekly to continue their decade-long vision to inspire people who live with disability to experience the power of creativity.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 7

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 7: Improve accessibility within Penrith City's town centres		
7.2	Embed access and inclusion outcomes within strategic planning directions for St Marys Structure Plan and Master Plan	Penrith Council plans for our town centres to respond to community needs, and offer a balance of housing provision, increased employment opportunities and infrastructure to support our growing population. In this period Council has focused its efforts on planning for the future of St Marys through the development of the draft St Marys Master Plan which is underway. Pedestrian movement and overall access around the St Marys Town Centre have been a key focus of this work. Community members can have a say about the draft St Marys Master Plan during a period of public exhibition in late 2024.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 8

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 8: Provide accessible Council buildings and facilities		
8.1	Continuously upgrade and renew Council assets to standard of Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Compliance accessibility	Council considers DDA compliance and accessibility in all asset renewal projects and continues to seek grant opportunities to upgrade assets to meet DDA compliance and accessibility standards. In 2023-24 Council installed: • 5 new DDA compliant bus shelters • 20 new DDA compliant bus boarding pads • $1.1 million path projects • 3 changing places toilets, which include adult change facilities • 8 accessible toilets • A variety of inclusive play elements at playgrounds including accessible bubblers, inclusive seesaw, accessible carousel, and a variety of other inclusive elements.
8.2	Continue to assess all new developments for compliance with DDA Standards as appropriate	Achieving better or best practice accessibility and inclusion for all community members is a consideration in all of Council's projects. • Over the past year Council has completed the City Park project. This significant project has delivered accessible outcomes including public amenities, pathways, and recreational facilities such as playspace and seating areas. • Every playspace project considers and implements the State Government's Everyone Can Play guidelines. • We have implemented a contract for public furniture, ensuring furniture provided in public places meets DDA compliance. • We have implemented a Signage and Wayfinding Strategy and Implementation Plan, ensuring that new signage and wayfinding projects meet DDA compliance.
8.3	Identify funding opportunities to improve DDA compliance of Aquatic and Leisure facilities to meet the needs of the community	Ripples has undergone a review of its organisational structure which allowed for the development of a new role, the Quality and Compliance Specialist, which is specifically focused on matters of compliance. This role will actively support continued efforts to identify funding opportunities and improve DDA compliance at Ripples facilities.
8.5	Review the process for distribution of MLAK to improve access for people requiring access to public toilets and adult change facilities	Due to ongoing barriers for community members in accessing MLAK Council took initiative by providing 50 subsidised keys. These can be collected at Council offices or sent to residents by mail. Council has updated promotional material to support broad community awareness of how to access MLAK in the Penrith LGA. Council reviewed and simplified the MLAK application process and developed new signage for all accessible toilets managed by Council. New signs include braille and QR code to support easy access to information.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 9

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 9: **Improve accessible transport and pedestrian movement in and around Penrith**		
9.1	Investigate options and resources to complete audits of the pedestrian footpath network and supply of disability parking, and identify priority needs	The Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) Technical Report was finalised in February 2024. The aim of the PAMP Technical Report is to provide Council with an evidence-based prioritised list of pedestrian infrastructure treatments which will inform and assist Council in seeking external funding opportunities to deliver the required works. It will also assist Council to plan and prioritise future works programs that are aligned to clearly identified community needs and priorities, should funding become available. Detailed site audits of key pedestrian routes in Penrith, St Marys and Kingswood have been undertaken. Community engagement and the input of people with lived experience of disability has been integral to the approach. People with lived experience of visible and invisible disabilities were paid to participate in guided site visits with the project team and provided their perspective in relation to challenges faced in the public realm for people with disabilities. The consultants noted that this project was the first opportunity they had had to work alongside people with lived experience of disability in this way and they embraced the opportunity and adapted their work to honor lived experience throughout the Development of the Technical report.
9.4	Advocate for accessible public transport outcomes, including major infrastructure projects	During the 2023-24 financial year, Council made submissions as part of two State Government transport policy inquiries and the Mayor of Penrith made direct presentations to Inquiry committees in support of these submissions. The enquiries were the Current and Future Public Transport needs in Western Sydney and the Inquiry into Critical Transport Infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis. In ongoing collaboration with Sydney Metro and TfNSW, Council continues to advocate for improved cross rail connectivity in St Marys. Improved cross rail connectivity would provide unpaid, 24/7, seamless connection across the rail corridor that is safe, easily accessible by all and does not require cyclists to dismount. Furthermore, in collaboration with Sydney Metro, Council continues to provide advice on design development of new station precincts to support access and inclusion within the transport interchange areas. This has included advice on public furniture requirements, suitable pathways, and provision of accessible parking, kiss-n-ride and taxi to support access and inclusion.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 10

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 10: Support people with disability to be prepared, respond, and recover from emergencies, shocks, and stresses		
10.2	Oversee the implementation of actions contained in the Resilient Penrith Action Plan	Throughout 2023-24 Council's Village Café Program adapted to work in collaboration with local stakeholders to include Person Centred Emergency Planning (PCEP) facilitators to our regular events in Kingswood, North St Marys and Llandilo. As part of that broader flood recovery work Council extended the Village Café to Wallacia for several months and delivered some community capacity building activities, including PCEP support, in Londonderry. In June 2024, Council delivered a Sector Connect event at Penrith Panthers which brought together a range of community services which support vulnerable people including people with disability across Penrith City. This event focused on the resilience of community organisations during natural disasters to support continued service to residents during these shocks experienced by our community. Supporting the resilience of community services in these shock events extends to the resilience of residents, include those with disability, as our social networks and supports, like local services, are intrinsic to the wellbeing of vulnerable people during disasters.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 11

MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 11: Increase employment of people living with disability within Penrith City Council.		
11.3	Increase awareness of Council procurement procedures by social enterprises	Social enterprises have been supported to participate in Councils procurement process through specific social outcome projects including Village Café and 16 Days of Action Against Gender Based Violence. Council continues to build connections with social enterprises through departments which deliver direct community programs and events as well as Council participation in relevant networks and social enterprise forums such as membership of the Local Government Social Enterprise Network led by peak agency Social Enterprise Council of NSW and ACT (SECNA). Council become a member of this network in late 2023.

Disability Employment Stretch Project

Our Disability Employment Project, Inclusive Futures, will now be delivered in 2024-25.

This year, Inclusive Futures was redeveloped with the support of local expertise after an initial procurement process was unsuccessful. The renewed focus for the project is on establishing a statistical and lived experience-based snapshot of employment for people with disability in the Penrith LGA. In 2024-25, through research and community engagement the project will develop a baseline understanding of local barriers and opportunities and will develop a pilot project for delivery in 2025-26.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 13

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 13: Increase engagement and participation of people living with disability in Council decision making		
13.1	Review and update Council's Community Engagement Strategy to reflect inclusive practices	A best practice review of Council's Community Engagement Strategy was conducted in 2023-24 and which resulted in a draft updated strategy which includes a specific resource on practices for designing and delivering opportunities for Inclusive Participation. In addition, Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit were also produced for Council staff as a practical guide for planning and implementing community engagement activities. These resources include techniques and considerations which will support Council staff to ensure engagement opportunities are inclusive.

Our actions and progress in 2023–24 for DIAP strategy 14

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES		
ACTION		**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 14: Embed inclusion focused outcomes in Council planning processes and program and service design		
14.1	Embed access and inclusion in business planning, reporting, and project management tools	In 2023-34 Council delivered an approach to market to renew the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Platform including various tools which support our management of human resources, payroll, finance, property and rating, as well as asset management. Disability access and inclusion remain a key priority in the review of these tools and will be prioritised in the implementation of the upgraded ERP in 2024-25.
14.2	Include access and inclusion outcomes when undertaking service reviews or business improvement projects to ensure quality customer experience, compliance, and levels of service	

SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES	
ACTION	**PROGRESS**
STRATEGY 14: **Embed inclusion focused outcomes in Council planning processes and program and service design**	
14.3 Increase disability inclusion practices across Children's Services, including centre philosophy and provision of resources to assist staff	Several activities have been implemented which have increased resources and enhanced our capability regarding disability inclusion throughout 2023-24. Services which offer Long Day Care and Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) have been actively encouraged to access Inclusion Support Program Funding. The program provides support for services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs, alongside their typically developing peers, so all children have genuine opportunities to access, participate and achieve positive learning outcomes. In the past year Council's Children's Services have worked with the Inclusion Agency and accessed the Inclusion Development Fund Subsidy to obtain an additional educator to provide opportunities for educators to work with smaller groups of children. Our Preschool Services have accessed the Disability and Inclusion program and obtained High Learning Support Funding to engage an additional educator to support children and to work in partnership with families and specialists in a holistic approach as we develop and evaluate the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for each child. This funding enabled educators to work closely with smaller groups of children to ensure ILP's are developed and delivered. Preschool services have also accessed support and free training through the Sector Capacity Building Program. In terms of training and mentoring throughout 2023-24, the Aboriginal and Cultural Programs Manager supported services to deepen staff understanding of inclusion from a holistic perspective, ensuring that First Nations children and vulnerable children, receive culturally responsive care as staff are mentored and participate in reflective practice. Yarn sessions have been held to support educators to reflect on inclusion and to support one another. Council also provided the Trauma to Healing Transformation Trajectory workshop for staff. The workshop trained staff in the use of a tool to support children who are experiencing trauma responses. Mentoring sessions were held for educators following implementation of the tool which allowed for reflection and further learning. Finally, in 2023-24 the Children and Parenting Support Service (CAPSS), funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS), provided educator mentoring through programs such as Storytime Yoga which supports emotional regulation and mindfulness. The CAPSS Coordinator also worked closely with OSHC educators on strategies to engage and connect with young people through targeted programs such as photography and interest-based programs including STEM.