

Bellingen Shire Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan Implementation Plan – report on actions 2020/21

1. POSITIVE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

STRATEGY	TARGET ACTION	2020-2021 ACTIONS	COMMENT
1.1 Integrate training for all new Bellingen Shire Council staff at their formal induction and facilitate Customer and Business Services and Library staff training to improve awareness of all disabilities (priority)	Develop a meaningful module to incorporate into all staff inductions with people with lived experience of disability and focusing on inclusion of all abilities both in the workplace and in the community.	Council has undertaken a review of its Human Resources Policy register. During the reporting period Council has reviewed and updated policies including Equal Employment Opportunity, Dignity & Respect in the workplace, Grievance and Disciplinary procedures. Anti bullying training and grievance policy training was delivered to all staff between December 2020 and January 2021. Mental Health First Aid was also offered to staff and rolled out over the year.	
1.2 To engage public speakers and share more stories of sporting, arts and cultural and academic achievement and promote these through Council channels	Identify events and occasions to have public speakers sharing stories to highlight and promote sporting, arts and cultural and academic achievements of people of all abilities and to dismiss negative stereotypes.	Occasional activities have had speakers who have promoted achievements and dismissed stereotypes, most notably the Active Inclusion Sports Day with all abilities sports people engaging with a significant cohort and the International Day of People with a Disability events.	
	Use Council platforms including the website and Council newsletter and local media to promote stories and highlight achievements of all abilities	This has been done mostly through promotion of the Ian J Cooper Awards which take place every second year. In addition International Day of	Liaise with Councils Comms team to continue work in this area and consult regarding this

	including meaningful employment successes	People with Disability was promoted on I Love Bello Shire, which was used to promote an inclusive activity "Dance for Life"	when developing the new plan.
1.3 The bi-annual coordination of the Ian J. Cooper Awards for Access and Inclusion	Promote the nomination process for these awards through Council and non-Council channels to encourage recognition for actions to improve inclusion.	These awards are given out every second year and recognise individuals, groups and businesses who are providing excellence in inclusion and access.	
	Co-ordinate an event to showcase nominees and winners and their inclusion improvement actions to encourage creative inclusive strategies for more groups in the community	The Ian J Cooper Awards for Access and Inclusion were held on 3 December 2020 and were combined with the acknowledgement of the completion of the State Government funded accessibility project. Certificates and Awards were given to organisations and businesses throughout the Shire.	
1.4 Increase the number of awareness raising campaigns to tackle a range of issues	Contact Chambers of Commerce to discuss some of the barriers that people have identified when accessing local businesses (no access, changing room facilities, not enough aisle space)	Over the last 4 years businesses have been consulted about barriers and provided with a reference guide called Missed Business which provides positive ways business can support inclusion. In addition, support has been provided to other groups including Ability Links to engage with the business community around better inclusion which resulted in the "sticker project where local businesses display stickers based on features of the	

		business. In addition, an Accessible Tourism guide has been developed which outlines accessible areas in the Shire for visitors to the area.	
	Support promotion of R U OK Day both within Council and any community events	Councils Customer and Business Services team organised and promoted RU OK Day within Council.	
	Continue to deliver activities, expos and events to decrease stigma and increase knowledge and pathways of access to mental health services	Bellingen Shire received funding for the Suicide Prevention Project through the Primary Health Network to deliver actions to reduce suicide, including events, resources and training opportunities. Some of these activities impacted by COVID. Mental Health street stalls are also held throughout the year in partnership with various agencies in each of the townships to help raise awareness.	Some impacted by Covid
1.5 Increase opportunities for people of all abilities to perform at Council-led community events	Promote opportunities more widely to Disability Service providers and the general community	Opportunities have been promoted to disability service providers for people of all abilities to perform at Council led events at interagency meetings and through specific networks	
1.6 Increase knowledge of sporting and recreational clubs and groups of people with additional needs and promote inclusion	Source a resource with strategies for groups to consider to be more inclusive of all abilities	Bellingen Shire Council became members of Sport NSW to support more inclusive sports opportunities. A proposed all ability sports day was postponed but resources on how to make	

		activity more inclusive were distributed to local sporting clubs.	
	Support facilitation of programs such as Mental Health First Aid to interested groups	Bellingen Shire Council became members of the Dorrigo Urunga Bellingen Suicide Prevention Action Network steering committee and have supported the development of a program of mental health training in this role.	

2. CREATING LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

STRATEGY	TARGETED ACTION	ACTIONS 2020-2021	COMMENT
2.1 To improve the accessible public toilets in the Bellingen Shire	Engage people with additional needs to report on issues experienced with accessing and sometimes failing to access the public toilets in the Bellingen Shire	Regular engagement has occurred with the community to gain insight on issues relating to the public toilets in the Bellingen Shire	
	Investigate and cost Accessible toilet installation at Coronation Park	An accessible toilet has been built at Coronation Park.	
	Promote availability of MLAK toilets in Bellingen Shire and arrangements for obtaining a key.	The provision of MLAK toilets have been promoted on Councils website. Information on the National Public Toilet map has been updated and MLAK toilets noted in the Bellingen Shire mobility map.	
	Action on Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan, Bellingen Main street project in relation to improving access.	Footpath renewals have occurred in the Dorrigo and Urunga areas of the Bellingen Shire in the last 12 months	

2.2 To improve footpaths in the Bellingen Shire	Investigate installation of grates/metal covers over pedestrian crossings/drains in areas affected by build- up of leaf matter and debris so water, gravel and dirt go underneath crossings for people in wheelchairs especially in Dorrigo	The pedestrian crossing in Dorrigo has been modified as part of the Dorrigo Roundabout project and as a result is more user friendly for wheelchair users.	
	Additional initiatives investigated that support access to places in the community.	An accessible pathway was constructed in Mylestom along the river.	
	Ensure installation of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators are integrated into footpath and pedestrian crossing access points planning	The installation of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators are integrated into new pedestrian crossings and access points including the new crossing points as part of the Dorrigo Roundabout project	
	Investigate a marker for pedestrian crossings and other areas where people with visual impairment need to differentiate between surfaces	Markers have been installed at the Dorrigo roundabout.	More areas will investigated and identified with Councils operations team in the next 12 months
	Promote importance of keeping overhanging shrubbery to a minimum where it overhangs public footpaths to reduce slip hazards	This is done as part of Councils ongoing parks and gardens maintenance works.	
	Progressively conduct accessibility audit of all Council's buildings and facilities	Building condition reports have been completed for many Council buildings which include some reference to accessibility, but a specific accessibility audit has not been conducted. Funding to improve access to Memorial Hall has been received and funding to improve Dorrigo Hall and Dorrigo Library have been initiated.	

2.3 To improve access to Council buildings and facilities	Investigate installation of ramp access and an accessible toilet at Raleigh Hall	Ramp access to Raleigh Hall has been completed. An accessible toilet has also been installed.	
	Investigate funding availability for playgrounds that cater for all abilities or playground features including a wheelchair swing (Urunga Foreshores Park and Coronation Park specified).	Complete Coronation Park at Dorrigo gained funds for a redevelopment and an all abilities piece of playground equipment has been included in the design as well as an accessible toilet and pathways. Funding also received for Connell Park for inclusive play equipment to be installed.	
	Investigate and cost installation of a hearing loop in Bellingen Memorial Hall, Dorrigo Community Hall and the 3 Shire libraries.	Installation of a hearing loop at Bellingen Memorial Hall is planned as part of the Hall redevelopment. Installation at Dorrigo Public Hall and Dorrigo library subject to funding availability.	
	Investigate and cost Installation of a handrail at Mylestom tidal swimming pool	Handrails were installed at Mylestom tidal swimming pool.	
	Investigate and cost Installation of widened footpaths at Coronation Park, Dorrigo	Funding was received to upgrade Coronation Park in Dorrigo which in addition to new footpaths has included an additional disability parking space, inclusive playground equipment, a toilet block with 2 accessible stalls and a BBQ shelter with 3 accessible tables and 2 accessible BBQs	

		along with improvements to the accessible parking space. An accessible viewing platform at Dangar Falls has been completed.	
	Install any new pedestrian crossings with surface differentiation tools	New pedestrian crossings installed with Tactile Ground Surface Indicators in Bellingen.	
2.4 Improve crossings for all users including those using assisted mobility aids and the visually impaired	Investigate possibility of additional pedestrian crossing from corner of Heritage Hotel, Dorrigo to opposite corner near Ray White Real Estate.	Roundabout installed which makes crossings on all 4 intersections more user friendly	
	Promote availability of Bellingen Shire Mobility Map, Beach wheelchair, MLAK toilets, accessible buildings and features and inclusive groups	The availability of resources has been promoted including at meetings and through email networks and on the Council website.	
2.5 To increase knowledge of availability of access and inclusion features and services	Update map to include new features such as Newry Island footpath and Hungry Head cycleway and a Disability Access Guide to range of services council offers	Review of the Mobility Map is still in progress and will be made available as a map on Council's website. It will include a QR code link for access to additional features.	
2.6 Review Bellingen Shire Mobility Map	Promotion of Community Transport Accessible Services to Shire residents.	Community Transport have continued to promote the services they deliver to the community. This was especially beneficial at the beginning of the COVID pandemic	
Increase knowledge of and expand on available transport options	Promote accessible tourism features and accessible accommodation in line with Coffs Coast Tourism Plan	Council has continued to have a strong focus on inclusive tourism and has conducted professional development workshops for accommodation operators in the Shire. A greater investment into accessible	

		accommodation has been made by tourism operators in the Shire. Council is in the process of developing an Inclusive Tourism Strategy as part of its new Economic Development and Tourism Plan	
2.9 Promote disability tourism	Encourage cleaning and removal of vegetation that can block sight of directional signage to accessible amenities.	Cleaning and removal of vegetation has occurred throughout the year as part of the Council works program.	
2.10 Improve street and other features.	Investigate provision of an additional public seat on the western side of Hickory Street, Dorrigo, Bonville St, Urunga and in Mylestom	Additional consultation has indicated there are sufficient public seats on Hickory Street, but not enough in the village of Mylestom which has seen two additional public seats installed.	Ongoing public consultation required to note specific locations of seating required.
	Identify other additional improvements	Completion of Dangar Falls viewing platform in Dorrigo.	
	Investigate provision of recycled plastic decking for North Beach to improve accessibility onto beach for wheelchair users	Recycled plastic decking installed at the beach at Urunga to improve access. Investigated for North Beach and a funding application has been submitted	

3. SUPPORTING ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

STRATEGY	TARGET ACTION	ACTIONS 2020-2021	COMMENT
3.1 To raise awareness of the strengths of people with a disability to potential employers to decrease barriers	Investigate strategies to assist people with disability to demonstrate capability to potential employers and break down misconceptions	Bellingen Shire Council is an inclusive employer. The Bellingen Shire Council Workforce Strategy 2020-22 was reviewed and updated enhancing reference to	

		<p>workplace diversity which includes employing those living with disability. It recognises actions to ensure staff awareness training is delivered and strengthening of partnerships with TAFEs and NDIS providers to provide access to recruitment pathways.</p>	
<p>Equal Employment Opportunity, Anti-Bullying, Anti-Harassment and Workplace Equity and Diversity Plan</p>		<p>The Bellingen Shire Council Workforce Management Plan 2017 – 21 makes reference to workplace diversity which includes employing those with a known disability. Council has undertaken a review of its Human Resources Policy register. During the reporting period Council has reviewed and updated policies including Equal Employment Opportunity, Dignity & Respect in the workplace, Grievance and Disciplinary procedures. Council continues to review its recruitment processes to ensure open and inclusive language is used in delivering merit selection and other recruitment processes. Training has also been delivered throughout the reporting period focusing on Dignity & Respect at work which aims to promote positive</p>	<p>Waiting for Caro to have input here</p>

		behaviour and respectful dialogue in the workplace.	
3.5 Collect and record summarised de-identified abilities data	Refer to pre-employment medical data for information	This information is not collected by Bellingen Shire Council	

4. IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES THROUGH BETTER SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

STRATEGY	TARGET ACTION	ACTIONS 2020-21	COMMENT
4.1 To increase representation of people with lived experience with access and inclusion challenges on council committees	To promote opportunities for people with disabilities to participate on all council committees	This continues to be a goal for Council even though there is no official advisory committee model. Council has other committees that include people with lived experience of access and inclusion challenges.	
4.2 To improve accessibility of Council information and services	Produce public consultation documents in a range of formats including large print as required (by request) where feasible	In line with Council's engagement outcomes, Council use plain English in its communication channels.	
	Check functionality of the Bellingen Shire Council website against Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for compliance	Council have purchased a new website platform which has been checked against web content accessibility guidelines and tested by people with lived experience of disabilities The new website has strong accessibility function to ensure Council meets AA+ standards in digital publications. An intranet is also being delivered and an updated corporate brand and style guide which will provide reference to font size and	

		accessibility considerations when preparing correspondence.	
	Ensure that Council events and workshops have microphone and large visible name tags for presenters to assist people with visual and hearing impairments	Council events have microphones and large name tags can be made available on request.	
	Ensure feedback mechanisms are fully accessible for community and staff	Councils Community Engagement Platform, Create, has been developed in line with meeting or exceeding WCAG 2.0, the current global web accessibility standard. In addition, there are resources on the site for specific set up requirements.	
4.3 Improve accessibility of information and service directories	Review the formats of current directories and consider large print and/or graphics for better communication	Requests for community directories in large print have not been received but Customer and Business Services may be available to produce a larger print section if required on a case by case basis	
4.6 Improve and streamline pathway to service requests around accessibility issues.	Integrate access/accessibility defect requests into general service requests	Access /accessibility defects requests are integrated into general service requests and actioned.	Continue to educate the community around reporting on accessibility improvements requests.

