



EASY READ VERSION

Gunnedah Shire

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2017 - 2021

Enhancing Access | Cultivating Inclusion

ABOUT

Council is committed to providing its documents in a range of formats. This 'Easy Read' Plan is a shorter version of the more detailed Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021. If you would like to look at the bigger more detailed Plan, check out our website www.infogunnedah.com.au

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In presenting this document to the community, Gunnedah Shire Council would like to acknowledge the Kamilaroi Aboriginal Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and in doing so, Council pays its respect to all Elders past and present as well to as the young Indigenous leaders of tomorrow.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR

Dear residents of Gunnedah and surrounding communities,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 Enhancing Access: Cultivating Inclusion.

In developing this Plan, Gunnedah Shire Council recognises the value of creating and fostering a strong, vibrant and welcoming community and is committed to becoming both a champion and advocate for accessibility and inclusion.

The Plan is relevant to all areas of our operations and we look forward to continuing our conversations with the community, and in particular people with disability and their carers, in order to maximise the potential that this Plan provides.

Jamie Chaffey | *Gunnedah Shire Mayor*





OUR STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Gunnedah Shire Council recognises that people with disability are valued members of our community. We are committed to fostering a community in which people with disability and their carers live with optimum quality of life, independence and participation, and where the equal participation, access, rights and equity principles of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 are respected.

OUR VISION FOR AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

To be recognised as both an advocate and champion for the rights of people of all abilities in our community ensuring all of our residents are treated equally and respectfully and have opportunities to enjoy the benefits of full participation in a caring, proud, prosperous and inclusive community.

WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

- Deliver an organisational culture which fosters fairness and equity and strives for continual improvement in the provision of its works and services for all its residents and visitors, including those with disability
- Promote, advocate and champion for the equal rights and participation of people with disability in the Shire
- Enhance our amenities and infrastructure to support best practice Principles of Universal Design
- Engage with people with disability and their carers to support a continuous improvement and best practice approach to access
- Identify and remove barriers which exist to reduce access to and usage of Council's resources, services, events and facilities
- Create meaningful opportunities for persons with disability to obtain and maintain employment within Council and the community
- Identify and provide opportunities for our staff to access and complete training that increases their capacity to deliver a level of customer service that acknowledges the diversity of our Shire's residents
- Foster a person-centred approach to feedback and complaint handling across our service areas

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DISABILITY NATIONALLY

- A person with disability earns half of what a person without disability
- Only half of people with disability are in the workforce
- A person with disability can face challenges accessing and participating in community life
- It not uncommon for many people with disability to experience social and economic isolation
- Rates of reported discrimination are similar for men (8.3%) and women (8.9%)
- Young people with disability aged 15-24 years are more likely to report discrimination (20.5%) than those aged 65 years and over (2.1%)
- Over 1/3 of women and over ¼ quarter of men aged 15+ years avoid social situations because of their disability
- Older people aged 65 and over are less likely to avoid situations because of their disability (20.1%) than younger people





There were **4.3 million** Australians with disability in **2015**



The likelihood of living with disability increases with age, **2 In 5** people with disability were **65 years or older**



Almost **1/3** of people with **disability** had a profound or severe disability



Around **3 In 5** people with disability* needed assistance with at least one activity of daily life



Around **half** of people with disability used **aids or equipment** to help with their disability



Around **1 In 5** people with disability said their main long-term health condition was a mental or behavioural disorder



People with disability* aged **15-24 years** were **10 times** more likely to report the experience of discrimination than those aged **65 years and over**



People with disability



People with no reported disability

53% of people with **disability** participated in the workforce compared with **83%** of people with **no reported disability**



The weekly median income of people with **disability** was **\$465**, which was less than half of those with **no reported disability**

* Living in households

WHY DO WE NEED A PLAN?

In 2008, the Australian Government committed to implementing The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which recognised that people with disability have the same human rights as those without disability. As a result all layers of government undertook to:

“PROMOTE, PROTECT AND ENSURE THE FULL AND EQUAL ENJOYMENT OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS BY ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR THEIR INHERENT DIGNITY”.

ABOUT OUR PLAN

The Plan is effective 01 July 2017 to 30 June 2021 and covers 4 key areas:

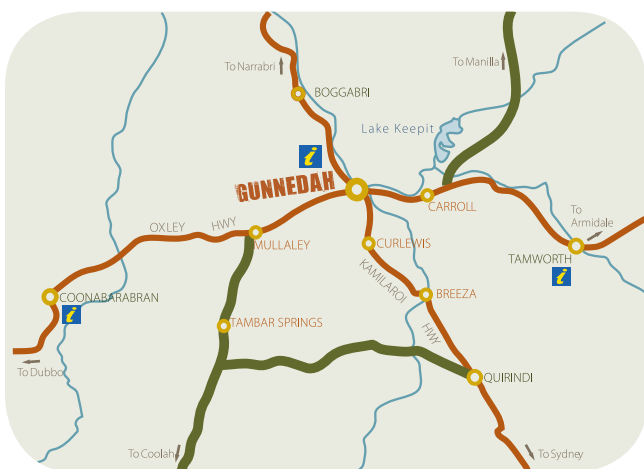
1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access through better systems and processes







ABOUT OUR SHIRE



- Population of roughly 12,989
- Located in the Northern Inland Region of NSW
- Roughly 450 kilometres from Sydney, 655 kilometres from Brisbane and just over 1,000 kilometres from Melbourne
- 24 rural localities and 7 small villages – Breeza, Carroll, Curlewis, Emerald Hill, Kelvin, Mullaley and Tambar Springs
- Over 1/2 of our population live in Gunnedah
- Indigenous population of over 10%
- 89.2% of residents were born in Australia
- Average resident age of 40 years
- Roughly, 591 (4.6%) of our residents have profound or severe disability
- 531 NSW Mobility Parking Scheme Permits issued in Gunnedah as at 31 December 2016

ABOUT OUR COUNCIL

- 171 full time equivalent staff
- The majority of our workforce resides in our Shire
- 9.39% of Council's employees identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in comparison to an average of 6.98% across other rural Councils in NSW.
- Culturally and linguistically diverse employees increased from .5% to 2.2% with 2.76% indicating English as a second language.
- 6.63% of our workforce has also indicated a need for additional literacy support.
- In 2017, 5 employees (2.93%) identified as having a disability or mobility issue.

WHERE COUNCIL STAFF ARE LOCATED

- Council Administration Building, 63 Elgin Street, Gunnedah
- Civic Cinema, Gallery and Cultural Precinct, 80 Chandos Street, Gunnedah
- GoCo, 80 Marquis Street, Gunnedah
- Sewage Treatment Plant, Kamilaroi Highway, Gunnedah
- Saleyards, Kamilaroi Highway, Gunnedah
- Shire Depot, Bennett Road, Gunnedah
- Shire Library, 291 Conadilly Street, Gunnedah
- Town Hall, Cnr Conadilly and Chandos Streets, Gunnedah
- Visitor Information Centre, 80 Chandos Street, Gunnedah
- Waste Management Facility, Quia Road, Gunnedah



WHAT WE HEARD YOU SAY! A SNAPSHOT!

Feedback from our community, staff and Councillors indicated strong satisfaction across all 4 focus areas. There was support for the way in which Council interacted and engaged with people with disability.



OUR STAFF
CONSULTED WITH
OVER 340 PEOPLE
WITHIN THE SHIRE IN
ORDER TO DEVELOP
THIS PLAN



YOU ASKED FOR SOME IMPROVEMENTS...

Getting into
local shops and
businesses

Gradients
of footpaths

Pedestrian
crossings

The width, design
and connectivity
of pathways

Accessible
parking
spaces

Interpretive signage,
interpreting and assistive
technologies such as audio
induction loops, captioning
and audio-description
services

Accessibility
friendly signage

Access to stages at
the Cinema and in
Community Halls

Physical access
to venues and facilities,
(doorways, parking and
set down zones)

Cinema seating
options

Access to
long term
employment
opportunities

All
abilities play
equipment and
recreational
spaces

YOU RECOGNISED...



The significant contribution that people with disability make to the diverse and vibrant fabric of our community



The potential for Gunnedah Shire Council to become a champion and advocate for access and inclusion, not only in our Shire but at a regional level



That a wide variety of services in our community already contribute to enhancing access for all



There is a shared will in our community for our Shire to be welcoming and inclusive for people of all abilities



That the Gunnedah Shire is a great place to live and raise a family and that the community is a caring one



YOU REMINDED US...



Attitudes to people with disability should not be determined by fear or ignorance



That Council needs to ensure information is made available to the public in an array of alternative formats and languages



That embedding access and inclusion into the mindset of Council staff will be a key to delivering on the actions within the Plan



That access to designated disability parking and non-compliance is an important and ongoing issue for people with disability



Of the need for further infrastructure enhancements to make it easier for people with disability to move around the Shire and to access events, activities and community life



That employment opportunities for people with disability in our Shire are limited and focussed effort on increasing access to employment, traineeships, work experience and volunteering opportunities is required



That Council needs to work with local businesses and the Chamber to enhance access and participation opportunities within the Gunnedah Central Business District



That Council needs to work with local businesses to raise awareness within the community of the access issues faced by people with disability and their carers



MAKING OUR PLAN HAPPEN

1. DEVELOPING POSITIVE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

- Promote diversity and inclusion principles within our community
- Ensure that we use positive images of people with disability from all walks of life in our publications

2. CREATING LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

- Identify and remove barriers which exist to reduce access to and usage of our resources, services, events and facilities
- Create and maintain parks, playgrounds, sporting fields and shopping areas that are accessible to all
- Work with local businesses to remove access challenges
- Provide access awareness training to indoor and outdoor staff



3. SUPPORTING ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

- Actively seek to employ people with disability and encourage local businesses to do the same
- Use positive images of people with disability in relevant publications to promote diversity and participation across all walks of life
- Work with other services to promote volunteering opportunities

4. IMPROVING ACCESS THROUGH BETTER SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- Create Council publications that are accessible to all
- Support Council staff and other internal stakeholders to gain the appropriate knowledge and skills to engage effectively with people with disability
- Provide different ways for people with disability to have their say and provide feedback on our services



WHAT'S NEXT?

Continue to connect with our community to promote access and inclusion	
Continue to work with the Access Working Group to identify what barriers people face and what we can do to remove those barriers	
Continue to seek feedback from people with disability and support services to track our progress	
Continue to encourage the community to provide us with feedback via the Have Your Say complaints and compliments section on our website	
Provide a report each year to Council, to the community and to the Minister for Disability Services	
Have FACS and the Minister for Disability Services been provided with a copy of the section of the Gunnedah shire Council Annual Report that details implementation of disability inclusion action planning?	





THANK YOU

Council would like to thank the community for getting involved in the development of the Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017 - 2021.





Shire of
Gunnedah
Land of Opportunity

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2017-2021

GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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