



BLAND SHIRE COUNCIL
west wyalong

DRAFT 2025–2029 DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

What is disability?

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities. The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)* defines disability, in relation to a person, includes a long term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others.

Working together



to improve our quality of life

A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE ARE **VALUED**, AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS **RESPECTED**, A FUTURE THAT IS **BRIGHT**, A COMMUNITY THAT IS **PROUD**.

Acknowledgement of Country

Bland Shire Council acknowledges the Wiradjuri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our communities are located and pays respect to all Elders past, present and emerging.

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Message from the Mayor

I take great pleasure in presenting the Bland Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2029. This Plan outlines Council's actions over the next four years to make the Bland Shire more inclusive of people with disability.

The Plan forms part of other major reforms within the disability sector, to encourage positive change to the lives of people with disability and supports the full participation of all community members in all aspects of the community.



Council has already implemented a range of programs and strategies to remove access barriers and increase participation of people with disability in our community. This Plan builds on our previous work and seeks to strengthen the capacity of all Bland Shire residents.

As an encompassing planning tool, the Plan has four major focus areas:

1. Positive attitudes and behaviour;
2. Liveable communities;
3. Employment; and
4. Systems and Processes.

Adopting a broad focus across all of these areas will make sure the Bland Shire is continually striving for improvement so our community is inclusive and offers opportunities for the full participation of all community members.

Engaging the community is vital to the Plan's success and I urge community members and other local stakeholders to support its implementation.

An inclusive Bland Shire will benefit everyone and strengthen our community.

Brian Monaghan
Mayor

Background

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (the Act), requires Council to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) to help remove barriers and enable people with disability to participate equally in their communities. Under the Act, councils are required to review their DIAP every four years. Legislation also requires councils to report progress on DIAP implementation in their Annual Report.

What is a Disability Inclusion Action Plan?

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan sets out the strategies and actions that Council will deliver in the next four years to enable people with disability to have greater participation in and access to Council services, facilities and jobs. The Plan includes actions for all areas of Council and will guide us in making our services and facilities more inclusive.

Implementation of the actions in this Plan will benefit many people in our community including older people, people with a temporary injury and parents of young children.

It is a requirement that all DIAP's cover four key focus areas and this Plan identifies priorities. The key areas are:

- **Liveable communities** – identifying and removing barriers to the environment, services and facilities for people with disability.
- **Employment** – Increasing employment and inclusion in the workplace for people with disability.
- **Attitudes and behaviours** – Developing positive attitudes by increasing awareness and inclusion practices.
- **System and processes** – Identifying and removing barriers caused by our systems and processes.

What will the plan do?

The DIAP identifies what Council needs to do to help people with disability feel and be more included in the community, and be able to access the same services, facilities, activities and opportunities as everybody else.

Who is responsible for the plan?

The Plan involves all areas of Council.

How will Council make the improvements identified in this Plan?

The DIAP covers a four year period and includes short, medium and long term approaches to improving the Bland Shire for people with disability. Some of the actions identified will have cost implications.

Actions with cost implications will be considered as part of Council's regular budget allocation and review process and will progress as resources allow.

Next steps

As part of the review process, the DIAP was presented to Council for endorsement and adoption in September 2025.

The adopted DIAP will be lodged with the Disability Council NSW and made publicly available.

Implementation of the final Disability Inclusion Action Plan will commence across Council following adoption.

Policy and legislative context

The Australian and NSW Governments are undergoing significant reform processes in the disability sector to commit to a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. The approach provides the focus on the individual and not their disability.

The key policy and legislative instruments informing the reforms are:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The UNCRPD was ratified by Australia in 2008 and acknowledges that people with disability have the same human rights as those without disability. This commits participating governments to upholding these rights so they can be exercised and that barriers are removed.

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

Was developed by the Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local Governments. It sets out a national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers to support the commitment made to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS will deliver a national system of disability support focused on the individual needs and choices of people with disability. Funding is allocated to each individual. The role of councils in the NDIS will vary depending on their community, their relationship with local disability interests, and role within disability service provision. Disability inclusion action planning is complementary to the NDIS, and will assist councils in breaking down local barriers to full participation by people with disability in the community.

NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014

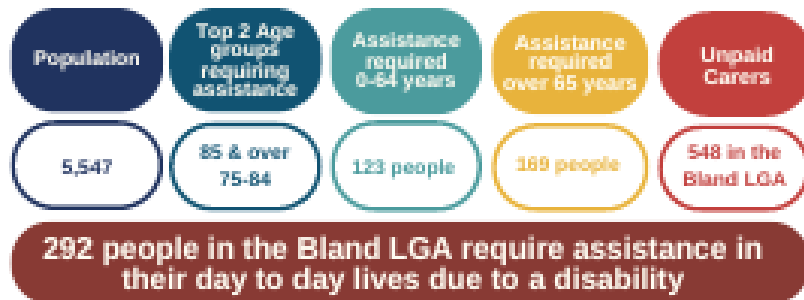
Provides the legal foundation for regulating supports, services and funding to people with disability until the full transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme is complete. The *Disability Inclusion Act* mandates the development of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan* and individual Stage Government agencies and Local Government disability inclusion action plans to support people with disability beyond the *National Disability Insurance Scheme*.

Figure 1 The relationships between the relevant policy and legislative instruments



Source: NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines, Graphics Bland Shire Council

Bland LGA Disability Snapshot



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021

Disability in our Community

Disability is an issue that affects us all, in different ways. Most disabilities (nearly 90%) are invisible. However, all affect the ability of that person to live autonomously, to work and be welcomed in their community. The families, carers and friends of a person with a disability can also find that their ability to participate in community life and their acceptance within the community can be affected.

In 2015:

- Almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3% or 4.3 million people).
- The majority (78.5%) of people with disability reported a physical condition, such as back problems, as their main long-term health condition. The other 21.5% reported mental and behavioral disorders.
- The unemployment rate for people with disability was 10%; higher than that for people without disability at 5.3%.
- More than half of those with disability aged 15 to 64 years participated in the labour force (53.4%), which is considerably fewer than those without disability (83.2%).

In the Bland Shire Council area, 292 people self-reported, in the 2021 Census, that they required assistance to complete the core activities of their daily living.

Consultation

Council offered an opportunity for open ended feedback to be provided through Councils website in conjunction with IPR consultation that was undertaken from August 2024 to early February 2025.

The Bland Shire Interagency was engaged to connect with residents of the community and discuss the principles outlined in the DIAP guidelines, in order to report back to Council to assist with the development of the plan. The Interagency consists predominately of allied health service providers, educators and state agencies who have an interest in the area of disability.

One-on-one consultation was conducted internally with relevant Council staff so a comprehensive approach was adopted when creating the Bland Shire DIAP.

As background to the consultation and to confirm issues which have been previously identified in the Bland Shire LGA, a review of existing documents and previous consultation was undertaken:

Key areas of importance or concern that were identified as a result of the review include:

- Council's Mobility Access Map is to continue to be updated and distributed on a regular basis
- Accessing hospitality outlets within the community is a huge concern as a number of local hospitality outlets are inaccessible to people with mobility issues
- Continue promotion of Councils Access Incentive Scheme, particularly to Main Street businesses and hospitality outlets
- International Day of People with Disability celebrations are to continue annually to assist in breaking down disability barriers and increasing community awareness of access and inclusion issues within the community
- The provision of access friendly public toilets.
- Improvements to access for Council properties.

Key outcome areas and actions:

1. Liveable communities

People with disability live in accessible and well designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action Manager	Performance Indicator	Measurement
1.1 Service users are consulted and provide input on the accessibility of services.	1.11 Consult and engage with the community about accessibility and inclusion planning for park facilities, visitor facilities, visitor experiences, services, consultation and communication processes. Incorporate feedback into future processes where possible. Consult the community in accordance with IPR and customer satisfaction survey.	2025 and ongoing	Community Development Officer	% of community who are satisfied with the accessibility of Council public spaces	Community consulted around accessibility issues on an annual or bi-annual basis. Community satisfaction levels.
1.2 The physical environment is accessible and inclusive of service users and customers	1.2.1 Review and improve processes so that new Council builds and renovations align with the appropriate building codes and best practice in Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards.	2025 and ongoing	Manager Development and Regulatory Services	Increase in % of new works or renovations of existing facilities that align with appropriate building codes and best practice standards.	Council data
	1.2.2 Mobility Access Map to be updated and made available to the community in hard copy format and accessible on Councils webpage.	2025	Community Development Officer	Map updated, made available on Councils website, promoted within the community through social media, Council Notices and community radio. Map available from Council offices and distributed to	Council data, access survey

				local businesses and community groups.	
	<p>1.2.3 Information on compliance with access design requirements under the Australian Standards 1428 are to be readily available to the community when required, particularly builders, designers and developers.</p>	2025 and ongoing	Manager Development and Regulatory Services	<p>Increase in the Availability of design requirement information.</p> <p>Information to be included online.</p>	Council data.
	<p>1.2.4 Promotion and administration of Councils Access Incentive Scheme to improve access to local businesses and community organisation premises with Main Street hospitality outlets prioritised.</p>	Ongoing	Manager Development and Regulatory Services	<p>Minimum of two businesses and/or community facilities upgraded each year pending the receipt of at least two applications that meet guidelines.</p> <p>Minimum of two external advertisements annually.</p>	Number of projects funded.
	<p>1.2.5 Review Council facilities, sites, parks, footpath, parking, sport and recreation facilities and library to identify barriers to inclusion and accessibility and so access is considered when renewing and building new facilities.</p>	2025 and ongoing	Manager Development and Regulatory Services	Increase in the accessibility of Council facilities, sites, parks, footpaths, parking, sport and recreation facilities and library.	Council data
	<p>1.2.6 Provide accessible toilets and amenities within the community.</p>	2025 and ongoing	Coordinator - Urban	Increase in the % of community who are satisfied with Councils Public Toilets and amenities	<p>Council data.</p> <p>Community satisfaction levels</p>
	<p>1.2.7 Funds are allocated within Councils annual budget to implement the Access Incentive Scheme Grant.</p>	2025 and ongoing	Bland Shire Councillors	Annual funds made available in budget	Review of Council budget

	1.2.8 Review and progressively improve accessibility of Councils existing facilities	Review Annually	Manager Development and Regulatory Services	One upgrade completed annually	Council data
1.3 Provide support and assistance to local groups and organisations advocating on behalf of people with disability	1.3.1 Regularly liaise with disability advocacy groups servicing the local area to provide assistance and support as required.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	Disability advocacy group representatives invited to attend all interagency meetings. Number of organisations liaised with and the outcomes of support provided.	Interagency attendance records Council data
	1.3.2 Work with the Community Reference Group to advocate for improved access and inclusion for people with disabilities.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	The community reference group is maintained with agenda items and support provided as necessary. Meetings held on a bi-monthly basis	Two agenda items to be included each year

2. Employment

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action Manager	Performance Indicator	Measurement
2.1 Provide a safe and accessible workplace for all Council staff, Councilors and visitors.	2.1.1 Review access features and barriers and conduct an audit to identify and assist in the removal of barriers and improving access.	2025 and ongoing	Manager Development and Regulatory Services	Increase in the accessibility of Council Workspaces % of staff happy with accessibility	Council data
	2.1.2 Fire Wardens are trained in assisting people with a disability during emergency evacuation procedures. A range of disabilities are to be included in the training.	Ongoing	WHS Officer	Increase in the number of training sessions/staff trained in assisting people with disability in emergency situations	Training has occurred
	2.1.3 Offer training for people with disabilities to assist them in the workplace.	Ongoing	HR	Increase in the inclusivity of the Bland Shire recruitment process	Training is made available.
2.2 The recruitment process is accessible	2.2.1 Review and update the recruitment and selection process (including application, assessment and orientation processes) so it is accessible for people with disability.	Ongoing	HR	Updates undertaken with initiatives to improve inclusion considered and adopted as required.	Council data
	2.2.2 Design position descriptions and recruitment processes to optimize the opportunities given to all applicants to demonstrate their merits against job requirements	2025-2029	HR	% of PD's updated to consider and include disability and diversity.	Council data

3. Attitudes and behaviors

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action Manager	Performance Indicator	Measurement
3.1 Senior Management and staff are to sponsor and champion a commitment to access and inclusion internally and externally	3.1.1 Disability awareness and competence training is to be provided for senior staff and management	Ongoing	HR	Increase in level of training offered and number of senior staff and management trained in disability awareness and competence	Council data
	3.1.2 Senior leaders raise the profile of access and inclusion in their communication by promoting the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) within their teams.	Ongoing	All Senior Staff	All senior staff are familiar with the DIAP to facilitate all staff are working in accordance with the actions specified in the plan.	Council data
3.2 Staff are trained in inclusive practice and disability access and awareness	3.2.1 Provide disability awareness training to Council employees with priority given to staff that have a high level of contact with the public	Ongoing	HR	Increased % of staff trained in disability awareness	Council data
3.3 Involve people with a disability in the development of communication campaigns regarding disability inclusion	3.3.1 People with a disability are to be consulted and included in the development of communication campaigns regarding disability inclusion.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	Increase in the % of people consulted regarding disability inclusion	Council data Consultation has occurred
3.4 Improve community attitudes and awareness of access issues and disability inclusion.	3.4.1 Promote access awareness and deliver community education around disability inclusion	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	A minimum of two promotional items are to be circulated annually.	Information has been published and distributed
	3.4.2 Partner with local organisations to deliver education programs within schools/community	Ongoing	Community Development Officer	A minimum of one educational activity to be held annually	Activity has been held

	3.4.4 Council hosts an annual event to celebrate International Day of People with Disability	Annually	Community Development Officer	One event to be held annually	Event has been held
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4. Systems and processes

Aim	What Council will do	Timeframe	Action Manager	Performance Indicator	Measurement
4.1 Promote available technology and assistance offered	4.1.1 Promote through all Council channels including social media, news paper, website, in library and through customer service staff describing available technologies and assistance offered.	Ongoing	Community Development Officer/Community Relations Officer	Promotion to occur at least two times per year across all promotional channels.	Information has been published and distributed
4.2 Sector information is up to date	4.2.1 Engage and consult with disability peak bodies to gather information and better understand the abilities and needs of people with different types of disability.	2025-2029	Community Development Officer	Number of partnerships maintained or increased	Council data
4.3 Councils website is accessible	4.3.1 Council website is reviewed annually with all upgrades to include accessible features and requiring web content compliance with at least conformance level AA in the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines	2025 and ongoing	Media and Communications Officer	Web content compliance maintained and/or improved	Review undertaken
4.4 Council is to work towards the provision of accessible documents provided in a number of different formats	4.4.1 Council staff are to consider disability access guidelines when developing new and reviewing existing documentation	2025 and ongoing	All staff	Investigate methods and new technologies to assist in providing information to residents in more accessible formats. Increase in the % of Council documents provided in an accessible format	Investigations undertaken and changes adopted in increase accessibility of Council information as required
4.5 Quality service delivery provided to all customers	4.5.1 Service quality monitoring is to be conducted on an annual basis	Ongoing	All Staff	Customer satisfaction levels maintained or increased	Customer satisfaction survey

4.6 All public consultation opportunities provided by Council are inclusive and accessible	4.6.1 Event Accessibility Checklist is utilised when planning public forums/events around consultation. Accessibility is considered when planning consultation and developing consultation methods	Ongoing	Community Development Officer/Media and Communications Officer	Increase in the accessibility of council events. % of responses received from service users with a disability.	Council data
4.7 Internal processes are flexible to meet the needs of service users and/or staff with disability	4.7.1 Internal processes are adapted to meet the individual needs of service users or staff as required	Ongoing	HR	Satisfaction of staff and service users maintained or increased	Council data
4.8 A coordinated approach to disability inclusion is adopted and maintained across all areas of the organisation	4.8.1 All staff are to be familiar with the DIAP ensuring directives outlined in the plan are adhered to and a coordinated and sensitive approach to disability inclusion is maintained across the organisation.	Ongoing	All staff	% of staff operating effectively in accordance with the directives specified in the DIAP	Council data
4.9 Recognition of the DIAP is in Councils IPR documentation	4.9.1 The DIAP is to be acknowledged in Councils IPR documentation	Ongoing	Executive level staff	The DIAP is acknowledged in Councils IPR documentation	Review of IRP documentation.