

Creating, Maintaining and Implementing Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAP) in NSW – The Disability Council NSW

This is a paper delivered by Mark Robinson SC, Disability Council NSW Member on Thursday 23 November to the Woollahra Municipal Council's DIAP Working group at Double Bay, Sydney.

I am speaking to the Woollahra Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) Working group. I am told you are the governance structure for implementing your DIAP. You meet four times a year to update from across the various sections of the council.

The purpose of my presentation is to assist council staff who have been delegated actions in the new DIAP (2022-2026) to gain a better understanding of the DIAP and its purpose and to assist them to share any of their progress and successes on the current 22/23 DIAP actions.

In all of the disability law and information I have been exposed to in the past few years on the Disability Council of NSW, my favourite by far is the following, from the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines (updated to November 2022) at page 10 under the heading "Lived experience". It says:

- People with disability, and peak organisations representing people with disability, need to be involved in all stages of the development, implementation, and monitoring of agencies' DIAPs. This includes respecting the lived experience of people with disability, empowering people with disability to influence the direction of their lives and encouraging full participation to enable the identification of barriers and propose solutions. Section 12 of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) (the **DI Act**) mandates this during consultation.
- Public authorities must maximise opportunities for participation of all people with disability – both staff and members of the community – at all stages of the consultation process.

As a person with a lived experience of deafness, I appreciate that little attention (and respect) when these important planning and implementation events occur. It's also nice to have it mandated by law.

My Own Lived Experience

For myself, I have a hearing impairment in both ears. It is congenital. It is sensorineural hearing loss. I am in the severe range of hearing loss. One audiologist says it's about a 70% loss in both ears (whatever that means). It is getting worse, but at the same rate that all our hearing is getting worse as we age.

I am often told that I am just not listening. I am sometimes told I am stupid.

Most times, only one of those things is correct.

In truth, I always hear what I can (and when I can) and, in my experience, stupidity is no bar to a fulfilling career in the law.

I was not diagnosed until I was 7 years of age at primary school. This was surprising, since half my family and my extended family were born deaf. I was given two hearing aids. The teacher made me pass them both around the classroom so the other students could see what they were.

I have worn dozens and dozens of hearing aids since. Some were in the ear and some were behind the ear.

My kind of hearing loss (which used to be called nerve deafness – as opposed to conductive deafness) has other practical deficits as well.

There are things that I simply cannot hear at all, no matter what the situation.

In speech, when I do hear what is said, the vowel sounds can be heard okay, but the consonants are often heard wrong.

This is because the vowels sound are on the lower frequencies and the consonants are in the higher frequencies. This means, in practice, that I often hear wrong. It never ceases to amaze me some of the silly things that are said to me (because I have heard them wrong). Because of this, I need to lip-read all the time or rely on captions if available so as to ensure what I am hearing is correct.

Hearing aids only amplify this understanding problem. I still need to lip-read while wearing them (and while paying attention).

Often, it takes a few seconds after I have heard something for me to work out what was in fact said. I go through a constellation of possibilities to ascertain the likely correct word. Sometimes this is done in less than a second. There's probably a confused or blank look on my face while I do this, which is itself sometimes confusing to the person speaking. I am also sometimes trying to work out if I can safely just respond with "okay" to whatever was said and get away with it (this time, and yet again).

One other problem with hearing aids is that they destroy the ear's natural capacity to collect sounds and inform the listener from where the direction of that the sound is coming.

With hearing aids, I have almost no sense of direction. I have never had it.

Also, many hearing aid wearers, including me, suffer from tinnitus. It is a particularly cruel side effect for some to have silence replaced by constant noise, even when you take out your hearing aids.

I wore two analogue hearing aids for most of my life. They were made up of a microphone, and amplifier and a speaker. Basically, they were a miniature home stereo system that sat in or behind your ears.

They were loud and the sound was harsh and never comfortable.

I have never been able to use a telephone like normal people. I simply do not hear sufficient sound through the earpiece. There are some phones available that have increased volume or loop coils (that work with the hearing aid's T-switch) or good speaker functions with a volume control. It is hard to find the right one. They are usually made and tested and calibrated by hearing people. I found one phone that worked well and I took it from

workplace to workplace for many years. I used it at the High Court of Australia for 2 years when I worked there as a senior legal research officer.

When I became a solicitor and it came time for me to appear in court, I was still wearing analogue hearing aids. I would turn them up full volume at times in order to ensure I did not miss anything. Often, I wore them at full volume for many hours at a time, just to get through a full day's hearing. I wore them so loud that I often tested my pain threshold and the mere rustling of paper in court would physically hurt me. It gave me headaches.

I was fitted with new digital hearing aids in about 1998.

They significantly improved my ability to hear and understand in court. They had the same basic components as the old analogue aids – microphone amplifier and speaker, but some significant computer power in between.

They were a radical change in hearing. I heard moving water and rain for the first time. I heard the rustle of clothing on people's bodies for the first time. I heard breathing for the first time. I sat in the car and I said "What is that ticking sound" only to be told it was my indicator which (I was told) always made that sound. While it was all wondrous, I also thought "How can you hearing people stand to hear all this unnecessary noise all the time?"

I have had about 7 or 8 pairs of digital hearing aids since then.

Each time, the technology has improved, and I am hearing new and different things. But I still need to lip-read.

The digital aids came with a "streamer" device which hooks on your clothes and plays music and allows you to receive, talk to and end mobile phone calls. That was very handy. It works by wireless or, nowadays, Bluetooth. It also plays the phone's music or audiobooks directly into your hearing aids.

The digital hearing instruments I now wear are state of the art behind-the-ear style hearing aids called "*Oticon More I*" made by Oticon, which are 100% digital and fully automatic.

Digital hearing aids generally have two microprocessors, and they convert analogue sound to a digital signal and split the sound into two streams. The first processor increases the consonant sounds and the second decreases the vowel sounds, and it is converted back to analogue sound, amplified and the gain is adjusted depending on the volume level in the area 1,000 times per second.

The new model I now wear has the ability to actually search for and focus in on human speech and further reduce background noise. The technology is improving every year.

I now walk down the street and I can hear what people are saying all around me for the first time in my life. It's a little unnerving, frankly. Who wants to hear all that?

Until 2005, I positively resisted mentioning my hearing loss to anyone unless I had no choice.

When appearing in court, for example, from 2005, I commenced routinely contacting the judge's associate just before a hearing to ask them to inform (or remind) the judge hearing the matter that I am deaf and that I simply want the judge to be aware of that fact (and to do nothing about it). I was prompted to do this when I read in the newspaper that a District

Court judge had declared a mistrial in a criminal matter upon him believing that one of the counsel appearing before him could not hear (it was not me). From then, I erred on the side of caution.

I did not normally mention the fact to my opposing counsel and, in Court, only the judge is aware of my disability.

I had to explain it all to any junior barrister appearing in court with me. They had to write notes to me during the proceedings instead of leaning over and whispering (which I could not hear). The upside is that I do not hear my opponent at the other end of the Bar table griping or whining about what I am submitting to the court. There are no distractions.

For many years, I have utilised the fantastic infra-red and FM systems available to all provided by the NSW Attorney-General's Department (in State Courts and Tribunals) and access the hearing loops installed in many courts by the Federal Court. When I am in court now, it may be a little obvious to all that I must have some disability because of the additional and noticeable equipment I must wear. Then again, there are so many gadgets around, perhaps they think I am linked to my computer by a wireless connection and I am taking my emails in court. Really, they look like cow bells around my neck.

As a result of this new equipment, in court, I no longer depend in part on lip-reading and I can take better notes of the proceedings and the evidence for the first time. I am significantly less stressed at the end of each hearing day. As a backup, I also have a small portable battery operated Sennheiser FM system which I can set up myself anywhere quickly. It is 40 years old and it is very reliable. I call this "*Plan B*".

I personally lobbied the State and Federal courts and tribunals for many years to have them install hearing assistive devices. There was some significant resistance in some quarters. Sometimes, the wrong system was installed, and I had to resort to Plan B in court or in a tribunal. The main problems (which have always existed and exist to this day) include, not testing the equipment, or batteries left to run dry or the wrong cabling or no cables at all. When it is all present and working, the sound level is not turned up sufficiently or calibrated properly. Sometimes it just cuts out. Sometimes the sound comes in and out and in again. Often it just stops.

Just last week, the hearing loop stopped working on day two of a trial. Then it started again for 15 minutes. Then it stopped. This went on for half an hour and I gave up and relied on my hearing aids alone.

Captions have been very important to the deaf community for the last 20 years or so.

Sometimes in court, captions are offered in an audio-visual hearing, sometimes in WebEx or Microsoft Teams or in Zoom. You usually have to ask the host that captions be enabled. Unfortunately, there is no human being doing the typing. They are automatically generated, but they are better than nothing. Delay or drag can spoil things.

Captioning of movies and TV shows is also essential. It never ceases to amaze me the number of such shows that are not captioned in Australia. I have had to write a few letters of complaint in the past, seeking to have captions enabled on news related programs.

The Role of the Disability Council NSW

The Disability Council NSW (the ‘Council’) is a statutory body that provides the Minister for Families and Communities, and Disability Services with advice on matters that affect people with disability in NSW, as well as their families and carers.

The Council was initially established under the *Community Welfare Act 1987* (NSW). Subsequently, the Council was re-established under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) (**DI Act**) with very little change to its functions. There were some substantial amendments to that Act that commenced in 2022 by the *Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022* (NSW). The Council consists of a diverse group of up to 12 people with lived experience of disability and/or expertise in disability issues.

Council members

Council comprises at least eight and no more than 12 persons as prescribed under section 16 of the Act. Members are appointed by the NSW Governor as individuals for up to four years and are eligible for re-appointment. The Act requires that the majority of the members must be people with disability (section 16(3)). The Council comprises:

- Jane Spring (Chair)
- Associate Professor Jill Duncan (Deputy Chair)
- Gail Le Bransky PSM
- Julie Charlton
- Caroline Cuddihy
- Emily I’Oons
- David Raphael
- Mark Robinson SC
- Kelly Cox
- Jodie Hoger
- Matt Liddle

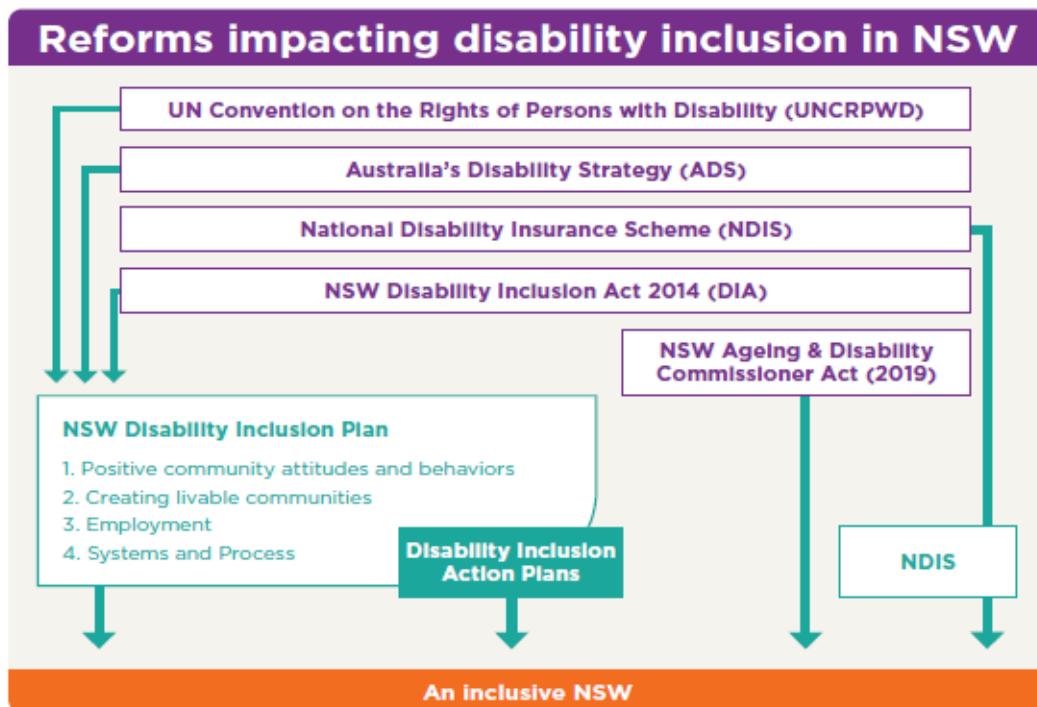
Member profiles are available [online](https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/advisory-councils/disability-council-nsw/about-the-disability-council/council-member-profiles.html) (https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/advisory-councils/disability-council-nsw/about-the-disability-council/council-member-profiles.html).

The Council’s responsibilities

The Council's main responsibilities under the [Disability Inclusion Act 2014 \(NSW\)](#) are to:

- **Monitor** the implementation of government policy;
- **Advise** the Minister on emerging issues relating to people with disability, and about the content and implementation of the State Disability Inclusion Plan and Disability Inclusion Action Plans
- **Advise** public authorities about the content and implementation of Disability Inclusion Action Plans (public authorities include government departments and local councils and some other bodies listed in reg. 5 [Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014](#) such as the State Library)

- **Promote** the inclusion of people with disability in the community and promote community awareness of matters concerning the interests of people with disability and their families
- **Consult** with similar councils and bodies, and people with disability
- **Conduct** research about matters relating to people with disability.



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

The [UNCRPD](#), was ratified by Australia in 2008. It acknowledges that people with disability have the same human rights as those without disability. The social model of disability outlined in the UNCRPD, provides that people with disability are not disabled by their impairment but by the barriers in the community that prevent them gaining equal access to information, services, transport, housing, education, training, employment, and social opportunities.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

At a national level, [Australia's Disability Strategy](#) is a ten year plan that calls on all Australians to ensure people with disability can participate as equal members of society.

The Strategy's vision is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community.

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability
- guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability

- drive mainstream services and systems so as to improve outcomes for people with disability
- engage, inform and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

The national Strategy has seven outcome areas:

- **Employment and Financial Security** - Outcome: People with disability have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives
- **Inclusive Homes and Communities** - Outcome: People with disability live in inclusive, accessible and well-designed homes and communities
- **Safety, Rights and Justice** - Outcome: The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected, and people with disability feel safe and enjoy equality before the law
- **Personal and Community Support** - Outcome: People with disability have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and engage in their communities
- **Education and Learning** - Outcome: People with disability achieve their full potential through education and learning
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Outcome: People with disability attain the highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives
- **Community Attitudes** - Outcome: Community attitudes support equality, inclusion and participation in society for people with disability

There are a number of accompanying documents to this strategy that are available including a [Roadmap](#), [Outcomes Framework](#), [Engagement Plan](#) and [Evaluation Good Practice Guide Checklist](#).

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is an independent statutory agency responsible for implementing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The National Disability Insurance Scheme was established under the [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 \(Cth\) \(NDIS Act\)](#).

The NDIS moved away from the previous system of providing block funding to various agencies and community organisations and gives funding directly to persons with disability. It provides reasonable and necessary funding to people with a permanent and significant disability (intellectual, physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial disability) under the age of 65 to access the supports and services they need to live and enjoy their life.

The NDIS funds a range of supports and services, which may include education, employment, social participation, independence, living arrangements, and health and wellbeing.

Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)

The [Disability Inclusion Act 2014](#) (NSW) enshrines inclusion as a right for all people with disability, especially in regard to their participation in social and economic life.

The Act promotes the inclusion and participation of people with disability in the community in a number of ways, including by requiring the development and making of a State Disability Plan, requiring State government bodies to prepare Disability Inclusion Action Plans, and providing for the Disability Council NSW to advise the Minister (and others) on matters affecting people with disability.

In 2021 the Act was reviewed with significant input from the Disability Council, and the [Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022](#) (NSW) was made in 2022. The amending Act implemented recommendations made in the Report of the Statutory Review of the Act, which was tabled in Parliament on 20 November 2020. The amending Act required that the State Disability Inclusion Plan and Disability Inclusion Actions Plans are made available in one or more formats accessible to people with disability and that they are to be remade, rather than just reviewed, every four years.

NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and Action Plan

The Act mandates the development of a State-wide Disability Inclusion Plan.

The [NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025](#) (DIP) was launched on 19 November 2021 by the State Government.

The four-year plan built on the work the NSW Government has undertaken to create more accessible and inclusive communities and provides the blueprint for increasing the social and economic participation of people with disability across NSW. It aligns with the Australian National Disability Strategy and NSW's obligations under the UNCRPD.

The plan has four focus areas that set out how the NSW Government proposes to improve the lives of people with disability. The focus areas are:

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

The [NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021 - 2025](#) supports the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan. It sets out actions under the four focus areas of the plan.

Focus Area One: Positive community attitudes and behaviours

Aim: To build community awareness of the rights and capabilities of people with disability, and to support the development of positive attitudes and behaviour towards people with disability.

Focus Area Two: Creating liveable communities

Aim: To increase participation of people with disability in all aspects of community life, through targeted approaches to address barriers in housing, learning, transport, health, social and cultural engagement and wellbeing.

Focus Area Three: Supporting access to meaningful employment

Aim: To increase the number of people with disability in meaningful employment, thereby enabling people with disability to plan for their future, and exercise choice and control, and increase their economic security.

Focus Area Four: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems

Aim: To ensure that people with disability can make informed choices about available services and to easily and efficiently access mainstream government services and other opportunities in the community.

The Disability Council has an expanded role under section 17 of the Act (as amended in 2022) to **advise** the Minister about the content and implementation of the State Disability Inclusion Plan and Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

The Role of Disability Inclusion Action Plans

Disability Inclusion Action Plans play an important role in fully including people with disability in our society. From the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines (updated to November 2022) at page 19, at [3.2.4], they:

- provide a public statement of the commitment to accessibility and inclusion among public authorities promoting equal rights for all;
- communicate the vision for inclusion across public authorities, for staff, stakeholders and the broader community;
- put the principles outlined in the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan into practice across public authorities;
- outline specific actions to facilitate access to mainstream services for people with disability, potentially with some level of adaptation or adjustment;
- are a vehicle to engage with the internal and external disability community to bring to life real solutions for better inclusion;
- include assessment and monitoring of actions within each plan.

The Guidelines documents outlines a suggested structure that might be used for Disability Inclusion Action Plan (at page 25 on). It also includes a step-by-step approach to assist public authorities plan the DIAP (at page 27 on).

Public Authorities' Disability Inclusion Action Plans

Under the [Disability Inclusion Act 2014 \(NSW\)](#), all NSW government departments, some other government agencies and all local councils are required to develop their own [Disability Inclusion Action Plan](#) (DIAP).

As with the NSW DIP and DIAP, the Council has a role in advising public authorities about the content and implementation of disability inclusion action plans. This includes supporting

public authorities and other organisations to develop, govern, implement, monitor and evaluate their DIAPs (section 17(1)(c) of the Act).

The Disability Council:

- provides generic advice on disability inclusion planning;
- attends consultations on DIAPs where possible;
- provides links to information and resources that will assist public authorities to develop their DIAP;
- provides a [checklist](#) for public authorities to self-assess their DIAP for compatibility with the Disability Inclusion Act and best practice;
- receives DIAPs from all public authorities (as it is required to do under section 12 of the Disability Inclusion Act) and keep a register of all DIAPs on its website;
- provides a tool for feedback on each public authority's DIAP on the [Register of DIAPs page](#) of the Disability Council NSW website;
- advises the Minister about the content and implementation of DIAPs.

Additional information about the Council's role is available [here](https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/advisory-councils/disability-council-nsw/about-the-disability-council.html) (<https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/advisory-councils/disability-council-nsw/about-the-disability-council.html>).

NSW government structure

NSW Government departments, agencies and organisations are arranged into ten groups, called clusters.

- Premier and Cabinet
- Treasury
- Regional NSW
- Enterprise, Investment and Trade
- Health
- Education
- Transport
- Customer Service
- Planning and Environment
- **Stronger Communities**

In the Stronger Communities Cluster, [there is](#):

- [Department of Communities and Justice](#)
 - Strategy, Policy and Commissioning division
 - Housing, Homelessness and Disability directorate
 - Disability Reform Group

○ Disability Inclusion

Minister: [The Hon. Kate Washington MLA](#)

She is the Minister for Families and Communities and Minister for Disability Inclusion

As defined in the [Disability Inclusion Act 2014 \(NSW\)](#) the primary purpose of the Council is to provide the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services with independent advice on matters that affect people with disability in NSW, as well as their families and carers.

Role of the Council's secretariat

The Council is funded and resourced by the NSW Government through the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and is supported by a secretariat team within DCJ.

Key stakeholders in the Council's Work

The Council regularly engages with (in meetings, conferences and in correspondence) disability peaks, service providers and advocacy groups on joint advocacy, submissions to government inquiries and collaborative initiatives. These organisations include, but are not limited to:

National

- National Disability Services
- Australian Network on Disability
- Disabled People's Organisation Australia
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- Vision Australia
- Blind Citizens Australia
- Deafblind Australia
- Spinal Cord Injuries Australia
- Deaf Australia
- Council for Intellectual Disability
- First Peoples Disability Network
- IDEAS
- Autism Spectrum Australia
- Summer Foundation

NSW

- Physical Disability Council of NSW
- People with Disability Australia (NSW)
- Muscular Dystrophy NSW
- Guillian Barre Syndrome Association of NSW Inc.
- Amputees NSW
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association

- One Door Mental Health
- Autism Advisory and Support Service

External representation by the Council

In 2021, the Disability Council NSW was represented on the following external bodies:

- Transport for NSW Accessible Transport Advisory Committee (ATAC)
- Ministry of Health Disability and COVID-19 Community of Practice meetings
- Department of Communities and Justice NSW Disability Stakeholder Forum
- Department of Education Disability (Strategy) Reference Group
- NSW Education Standards Authority Disability Education Forum
- National Disability Insurance Agency Community Update
- Greater Sydney Commission Women’s Safety Charter
- Disability Employment Network Chairs Meeting
- Transport for NSW Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme External Stakeholder Working Group
- Physical Disability Council NSW Interagency Policy Working Group

Council members may also attend ad hoc meetings and consultations on behalf of the Council.

Following attendance at an external meeting or event, Council members provides the Council with feedback, along with the minutes where available. These documents are shared to other Council members.

Mode of Council Operation

The Council members meet about six days per year. Individual members appear on committees and with other organisations all the time and report back to Council.

The Minister often attends Council meetings to discuss policy developments or to hear from the Council members.

The Council has published its own Disability Council NSW Plan 2022 – 2024.

It is essentially a policy action plan.

Our five “pillars” of activity in that time are:

- Accessible communities
- Ensuring the voice of people with disability is heard
- Employment
- Justice and rights
- Housing.

I have responsibility for the Justice and Rights pillar (with one other member).

People with disabilities face multiple barriers in accessing justice, including courts and tribunals and the prison system.

Some barriers are practical (such as physical barriers in old buildings; no hearing loops) while some relate to the quality of support provided to people with disability in the justice system. This leads to people with disability, in particular people with intellectual disability, being over-represented in prisons.

This is in part a symptom of a broader failure to ensure the legal rights and human rights of all people, including people with disability. These barriers exist not just in accessing justice, but they travel along the justice pathway. People with disability in prisons, on remand and those subject to control or supervision orders have particular needs that are not always identified or properly accommodated.

The Council's work does not end. Its members are very busy.

New problems and issues and goals are always emerging.

If you have any questions that I cannot answer, please contact me or the Disability Council Secretariat on disabilitycouncil@facfs.nsw.gov.au.

Disability Inclusion Action Planning

See the following important resources:

- [Overview of Disability Inclusion Action Planning](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines](#)
- DIAP Progress Reporting Guidelines – Attached

The DCJ web site (overview) provides:

“Disability Inclusion Planning (DIP) is one way governments, public authorities and all organisations can reduce and remove barriers for people with disability and foster a more accessible and inclusive community. Disability Inclusion Planning is about making a plan that outlines the intention and actions that the NSW government departments and agencies will take to remove barriers in access to Government information services and employment as well as to foster the promotion of the rights of people with disability.

In February 2015, the Minister for Disability Services released the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (DIP). In November 2021, a new NSW DIP (2021-2025) was released. The DIP outlines how the NSW Government will create a more inclusive community that supports people with disability to achieve their full potential.”

It also says that under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW), all NSW Government Departments, some other government agencies and all Local Councils (collectively referred to as “public authorities”) are required to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). Close to 150 DIAPs have been developed.

Also, all public authorities are required by section 12 of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) to give a copy of their DIAP to the Disability Council to enable the Disability Council to fulfil its role under the Disability Inclusion Act.

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is responsible for providing a framework for governance, evaluation and reporting on DIAPs, and for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on actions under the DIP.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines (updated to November 2022) (link above) was launched by Kate Washington, the Minister for Families and Communities and Minister for Disability Inclusion.

It is 55 pages long and it is designed to assist all public authorities in identifying key areas where change can and must happen, as part of their disability inclusion action planning.

The current timeframes for DIAPs are set out at page 8 – For local councils under the DI Act local councils must:

- have new (remade) DIAPs by the end of 30 November 2023

The following DIAP review will be due 1 July 2025, with new plans due by 1 July 2026.

Woollahra Council

- [Woollahra Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan \(DIAP\) adopted 27 June 2022.](#)
- [NSW Public Authorities' Disability Inclusion Action Plans –Report on progress 2021-22 dated August 2023](#)

The NSW Public Authorities' Report on progress document provides an analysis of the progress of public authorities during 2021-22 and, in accordance with the DI Act, it is tabled to both Houses of Parliament by the Minister for Disability Inclusion.

The Government's report card on the Woollahra Council is set out from page 312 of the progress document.

Extracts (p 312): Woollahra Council Progress Report 2021-2022

Building positive attitudes

- The Preschool has a high educator to child ratio and ordinarily employs a permanent full-time Inclusion Support Teacher who facilitates reflective practice to address any inclusion barriers.
- There is an Event Management document template that includes accessibility (continuous paths of travel, accessible parking, accessible venues / locations / toilets / parking, inclusive promotional material (language and imagery).
- Council delivered a two-day accredited Mental Health First Aid Training Course for members from community organisations.
- 4 EEO sessions delivered at Induction with 39 staff. 100% of staff sitting on interview panels undertook training prior to participating in interviews.
- Mental Health and Disability Awareness training requirements met as required. Conducted Mental Health Awareness Training for all staff with 253 staff having attended (64%). Training in designing dementia friendly environments provided as required.

Creating liveable communities

- Developed a policy and procedures for Council organising for bins to be brought out for those unable to.

- Council's website features a range of accessible amenities and parks and playgrounds.
- Social media posts promoting accessible facilities are scheduled throughout the calendar year. In the last six months' stories promoting the accessibility of the new Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf have been published.
- Accessibility is listed on the Woollahra Council Website including Woollahra Libraries being fully accessible to people with disabilities. There is also access via the online library. The accessible venues include Woollahra Council Chambers, Woollahra Library at Double Bay, Paddington Library, Watsons Bay Library, Cooper Park Community Hall, Cross St, Studio 1, EJ Ward Paddington Community Centre, Rose Bay Cottage, Sherbrooke Hall, The Bay Room, The Gunyah, and The Studio at The Drill Hall.
- During this reporting period Council developed a new three year funding agreement with Holdsworth commencing in 1 July 2022.
- The Seniors Week 2022 brochure promoted a monthly bus service to Woollahra Library at Double Bay, placing waste bins out for weekly collection and mowing grass verges. This is targeted for those having difficulties due to age, ill health, hardship or disability.
- The Inclusion (Disability, Aged & Carers) Advisory Committee, key local disability service providers and the wider community were consulted when developing the DIAP 2022 to 2026.
- Due to COVID-19 programs and events were held via Webinar which enabled a more inclusive audience.
- Council's five-year footpath renewal program will also assist in determining areas that require improvements as we continue to roll-out reconstructed footpaths.
- Throughout FY2021-2022, Council implemented 15 new kerb ramps across the Municipality. Council's Engineers have advocated for the NSW Government to upgrade public transport infrastructure. Council has advocated for improved access for mobility impaired people at Edgecliff Station and an accessible ramp via New McClean Street has been established, as well as a lift within the centre.

Supporting access to meaningful employment

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of opportunities via Job Access (parent organisation).
- Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy endorsed and communicated at all levels.
- All hiring managers have undertaken EEO training.
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy implemented. Adverts include a statement encouraging diversity and inclusion. Variety of options offered to enable access.
- After Council participation in AccessAbility Day in FY 2019- 2020, Council remains open to collaborating with local Disability Employment Services (DES) providers and offering tailored job experience to people with a disability.

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

- Updated Council website to include accessibility features of Council's venues and facilities Review Council's website against standard WCAG 2.0
- Reviewed Customer Service Charter to ensure commitment to assisting all customers and directing customers to the appropriate service if it is not provided by Council is complete.
- Customer design projects have been run which put the customer at the centre of future decisions and technological enhancements.
- Testing the usability of the Library What's On large print guide is complete.

- Continue to allow registration for events and activities through a range of accessible options is ongoing. Events can be booked by phone, in person at our Customer Service Centre or online.

The End