

Disability Inclusion Action Planning NSW Local Government - Policy Update

Minister for Disability Services, Hon John Ajaka MLC



In 2014, I was very proud to guide the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* through the NSW Parliament. This Act sets out the NSW Government's commitment to upholding the rights of people with disability and to ensuring that they enjoy equal opportunities to participate in social, economic and community life.

We have developed a NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and Disability Inclusion Action Plans for all NSW Government clusters. It is now the job of local councils to undertake Disability Inclusion Action Planning.

Local government plays a critical role in the building of strong vibrant and inclusive communities. I have asked my Department to support local councils with guidance and resources to aid in the planning process and to help each council in developing their own local plans by 1 July 2017.

Through concerted action across all levels of government we can improve access and inclusion of government services for people with disability in NSW.



Minister for Local Government, Hon Paul Toole MP



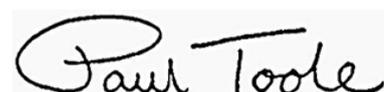
Since 2010, councils have worked to consolidate their community planning processes into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

As the population ages the number of us with disability will increase. Planning for disability and building liveable communities is central to the role of local government.

The Office of Local Government, Local Government NSW and the Department of Family and Community Services have collaborated to develop guidelines and resources to support councils to meet their legislative requirements. All councils will need to undertake disability inclusion action planning by 1 July 2017, and resources are available to support this process.

This planning provides a great opportunity for councils to engage with their community, to identify innovative initiatives and involve the whole community in developing positive and constructive solutions. It also presents an opportunity for councils to collaborate and share their experiences in this area.

Disability inclusion is everybody's business and local councils have a role to play in leading new conversations and actions on improving access and inclusion.



What do councils have to do?

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* requires that local councils develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans. Each council in NSW must have a Disability Inclusion Action Plan in place by 1 July 2017, regardless of whether the council is a new entity created through the recent mergers, or if a merger is pending.

At a minimum each plan **must**:

- be developed in consultation with people with disability (e.g. through implementation of Community Engagement Strategies)
- respond to the themes of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan
- improve access and inclusion to local government services for people with disability.

The Act provides example measures that might be included in plans such as:

- supporting employment of people with disability (e.g. in Workforce Management Strategy)
- encouraging and creating opportunities for people with disability to access the full range of services and activities available in the community
- accommodating the specific needs of people with disability
- improving access to information, buildings, events and facilities (e.g. in Asset Management Strategies and plans).

Once adopted, councils must provide a copy to the Disability Council NSW and make the plan publicly available to their residents.

Councils with ordinary elections in September 2016

For these councils, the Disability Inclusion Action Planning process will align with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework timetable. Disability Inclusion Action Planning strategies, actions and resource allocations should be incorporated as part of the Community Engagement Strategy, Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy by 1 July 2017.

Councils with deferred ordinary elections in September 2017

These councils should develop, expand or update a stand-alone Disability Inclusion Action Plan(s) by 1 July 2017. The strategies, actions and allocation of resources in these plans should be incorporated into each council's Community Engagement Strategy, Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy following the election.

Support to develop plans and more information

Support is being provided by LGNSW to assist councils with the planning process.

Guidelines and other resources have already been developed and are available here:

LGNSW: <http://www.lgnsw.org.au/policy/disability>

FACS: <http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/reforms/developing-the-nsw-disability-inclusion-plan/disability-inclusion-action-plans>

If you require additional information or support with planning please contact:

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