

5 May 2025

At the conclusion of the Cultural, Creative and Nightlife Committee

Equity and Housing Committee

Agenda

- 1. Confirmation of Minutes**
- 2. Statement of Ethical Obligations and Disclosures of Interest**
- 3. Public Exhibition - Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025-2029**

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As part of our democratic process, the City invites members of the community to speak directly to Councillors during Committee meetings about items on the agenda.

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To enable the Committee to hear a wide range of views and concerns within the limited time available, we encourage people interested in speaking at Committee to:

1. Register to speak by calling Secretariat on 9265 9702 or emailing secretariat@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au before 10.00am on the day of the meeting.
2. Check the recommendation in the Committee report before speaking, as it may address your concerns so that you just need to indicate your support for the recommendation.
3. Note that there is a three minute time limit for each speaker (with a warning bell at two minutes) and prepare your presentation to cover your major points within that time.
4. Avoid repeating what previous speakers have said and focus on issues and information that the Committee may not already know.
5. If there is a large number of people interested in the same item as you, try to nominate three representatives to speak on your behalf and to indicate how many people they are representing.

Committee meetings can continue until very late, particularly when there is a long agenda and a large number of speakers. This impacts on speakers who have to wait until very late, as well as City staff and Councillors who are required to remain focused and alert until very late. At the start of each Committee meeting, the Committee Chair may reorder agenda items so that those items with speakers can be dealt with first.

Committee reports are available at www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Item 1.
Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the following meetings of the Equity and Housing Committee are submitted for confirmation:

Meeting of 9 December 2024

Item 2.**Statement of Ethical Obligations**

In accordance with section 233A of the Local Government Act 1993, the Lord Mayor and Councillors are bound by the Oath or Affirmation of Office made at the start of the Council term to undertake their civic duties in the best interests of the people of the City of Sydney and the City of Sydney Council and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act, to the best of their ability and judgement.

Disclosures of Interest

Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, the City of Sydney Code of Meeting Practice and the City of Sydney Code of Conduct, Councillors are required to disclose and manage both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any matter on the agenda for this meeting.

In both cases, the nature of the interest must be disclosed.

This includes receipt of reportable political donations over the previous four years.

Item 3.

Public Exhibition - Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-29

File No: X109038

Summary

Under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, the City of Sydney is required to develop a disability inclusion action plan in line with the 4-year integrated planning and reporting cycle. The City's draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029 (the Plan) will be the City of Sydney's sixth disability action plan and must be in place by 1 July 2025.

The plan was developed through consultation with over 350 people with disability, their families and carers, disability service providers and disability representative organisations, the City of Sydney's Inclusive City disability employee network and Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel. The Engagement Report is included as Attachment B.

Public exhibition of the draft plan will provide a further opportunity for comment on the plan. Feedback received from public exhibition will be incorporated into the final plan before it is presented to Council for adoption in June 2025.

The draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029 outlines how we plan to make our city more inclusive and accessible by continuing to remove barriers, protecting the rights of people with disability, and promoting the value of diversity and inclusion across the community.

The draft plan includes actions under 4 key directions set by the NSW Government:

- (a) positive community attitudes and behaviours;
- (b) liveable communities;
- (c) meaningful employment; and
- (d) systems and processes.

Progress on the implementation of the plan will be reported annually to the Minister for Families and Communities and Disability Inclusion, the NSW Disability Council and to Council in line with the City of Sydney's annual reporting process. At the end of the 4-year period the City of Sydney will review the broader impacts of the plan and identify any new priorities that need to be considered to continue to deliver on the long-term vision.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the ongoing contribution of the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel in development and implementation of the City of Sydney's Inclusion (disability) action plans;
- (B) Council approve the draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for public exhibition for 28 days;
- (C) Council note that the draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029, including any recommended changes, will be reported to Council for consideration following the exhibition period;
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial amendments for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to the exhibition of the draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029; and
- (E) Council note the engagement report summarising consultation for the development of the Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029, as shown at Attachment B to the subject report

Attachments

Attachment A. Draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-29

Attachment B. Engagement Report - Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-29

Background

1. According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics report, 5.5 million (21.4%) Australians have with a disability, and 11.9% of all Australians living in households are carers. In addition, 22% of Australians have a mental health condition, according to the most recent Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing (NSMHW).
2. The likelihood of experiencing disability increases as we age, with nearly one in 2 people over the age of 65 living with some form of disability. These statistics reveal that disability is part of the human experience and that most people will, at some point in their lives, experience some form of disability, a lived experience of a mental health condition, or be a carer.
3. The City of Sydney has a responsibility to ensure that our city is inclusive and accessible for all. Inclusive cities are easy to get around, they provide people with disability with opportunities for participation in the diverse social, cultural life of the city and access to meaningful employment opportunities. An inclusive city benefits everyone, not just people with disability.
4. On 3 December 2014, the NSW Government introduced the Disability Inclusion Act 2014, followed by the NSW Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022. This legislation aims to better recognise the human rights of people with disability and mandates local councils to develop disability inclusion action plans to be reviewed and remade every 4 years.
5. The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires that councils report on implementation of their plan in their Annual Report and forward a copy to the Minister Families and Communities and Disability Inclusion and the NSW Disability Council by 1 July each year. These plans must:
 - (a) outline how councils will deliver on four areas of action
 - (b) be developed in consultation with people with disability
 - (c) be reviewed every 4 years and remade
6. Over the last 4 years, through implementation of the current Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2021-2025 (the Plan), the City of Sydney has continued to address priorities identified by our communities, including addressing physical barriers in the built environment to ensure that everyone is able to access streets, parks, playgrounds and open spaces.
7. We have upgraded footpaths, built new access ramps, and opened new inclusive and community facilities. We have also continued to improve access for people with disability to information and services, programs and events. The draft plan continues to build on these strengths, whilst also harnessing opportunities to address emerging issues within our community.
8. Community expectation levels have continued to grow since the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) review and the Final Report for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

9. The City of Sydney continues to review and change the way we do business to ensure our practices are inclusive for everyone, including people with intersectional identities, and those with non-visible disabilities.
10. The draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029 is the City of Sydney's sixth plan. The first Action Plan for People with Disabilities in 2002 primarily focused on physical disability and access in the physical environment.
11. The City of Sydney's second plan, which covered the period from 2007 to 2011 expanded in scope to include other important aspects of inclusion to promote participation by people with a disability.
12. The third plan (2014-2017) was developed in consultation with the City of Sydney's Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel (the panel). It aimed to build on the successes of previous plans by continuing to embed inclusion and access as core considerations across all council services and processes and to deliver meaningful outcomes for people with disability and their families and carers.
13. Implementation of the plan resulted in substantial and ongoing improvements in the accessibility of public spaces and the development of inclusive programming and accessible information across services.
14. The fourth plan (2017-2021), developed in consultation with people with disability and the panel, included practical steps to embed inclusion across the organisation. A key focus of this plan was to provide greater access to our built environment including City of Sydney parks, streets, playgrounds and facilities.
15. The fifth, and current plan (2021-25), continues our commitment to addressing barriers for people with disability. This includes through continuing to provide a range of inclusive programs, services and events, implementing improvements in public spaces and facilities, and providing accessible and inclusive communications, decision-making and engagement opportunities. In addition, to working to increase understanding of barriers faced by people with non-visible disabilities and working to improve our recruitment and retention practices.
16. The City of Sydney's Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel has provided ongoing advice during development of this draft plan. The panel will continue to play a critical role in monitoring the implementation of the 2025-2029 plan, once adopted.
17. In line with requirements under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022, we have used an extensive range of engagement approaches in developing the plan, capturing the feedback and ideas of over 350 people through:
 - (a) an online survey promoted on the City of Sydney's Sydney Your Say webpage from 20 August to 17 September 2024. There were 158 submissions received through the web page and 2 via an Easy Read version of the survey
 - (b) five focus groups with people with lived experience of disability during August to October 2024. A total of 53 people attended. Each session was delivered in partnership with specialist disability organisations and were peer-facilitated by a person with disability. These included a focus group each for:
 - (i) people with intellectual disability, in collaboration with Council for Intellectual Disability

- (ii) people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability, in collaboration with Sydney Queer and Disability Community Group (SQuAD)
 - (iii) people with disability from multicultural backgrounds, in collaboration with Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA), Ethnic Community Services Co-operative (ECSC) and Settlement Services International (SSI)
 - (iv) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, in collaboration with First Peoples Disability Network Australia (FDPN)
 - (v) people who are neurodivergent, in collaboration with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
- (c) an additional focus group with 12 representatives from disability service providers who are members of the City of Sydney and Eastern Sydney Ageing and Disability Interagency network
- (d) a roundtable workshop attended by 90 people, which included people with disability, family members and carers, disability service providers and disability representative organisations, and our employees. Members of the City of Sydney's Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel, and members of the City of Sydney's Inclusive City disability employee network peer-facilitated table-based workshops
- (e) multiple, in-person pop up engagements at R U OK Day, Wear it Purple and Lunar Moon festival events at our community centres
- (f) feedback via phone or email. Two submissions were received via email.
18. A summary of key feedback and suggestions raised during the consultation period have been captured are included within the Engagement Report (Attachment B).
19. The draft plan includes 29 actions under 4 key directions that address barriers for people with disability across a range of key areas. Under this plan the City of Sydney will:
- (a) continue to provide a range of inclusive programs, services and events; implement access improvements in public spaces and facilities, and provide accessible and inclusive communications, decision-making and engagement opportunities with a greater focus on intersectionality and non-visible disabilities
 - (b) address key findings from the Disability Royal Commission
 - (c) continue to invest in our people to recruit and retain employees with disability, with a strategic approach from entry level to leadership, and continue to develop a culture of diversity and inclusion
 - (d) develop disaster preparedness and climate adaptation initiatives that empower people with disability to be prepared for and respond to emergencies and disasters

20. The new plan incorporates feedback gathered through the engagement process, key findings from the Disability Royal Commission, suggestions by the City of Sydney's Inclusion (disability) Advisory Panel, and Resolutions of Council. These include commitments to:
- (a) report through the plan and our 10-year forward program of specific timelines for the delivery of accessible streets and public places
 - (b) consult with peak bodies and with people with disability to provide expert advice on the review of our local housing strategy, including the requirement for accessible and adaptable housing in the Sydney Development Control Plan
 - (c) review relevant policies to ensure City of Sydney services don't procure from, create, fund or participate, or award new grants for, organisations that participate in segregated services or employment, or engage in restrictive practices, including Australian disability enterprises (ADEs) and/or any organisations that provide sub-minimum wages
 - (d) work to empower communities to identify, report and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability through programs, training, resources and advocacy along with provision of information about how and where to report
 - (e) deliver programs, training and advocacy to aid the prevention and response to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability ensure the City of Sydney's learning and development programs continue to increase awareness of opportunities to include people with disability, with a focus on intersectionality and people with diverse disabilities
 - (f) continue to collaborate with local businesses and organisations to build their capacity to be more inclusive and accessible
 - (g) continue to prioritise the use of positive authentic videos, images and stories of people with diverse disabilities for use in publications, digital platforms and media channels including those about people with a severe disability and people with intersectional identities
 - (h) continue to provide equal access to our information and services, promote accessibility features of our facilities and open spaces and develop and produce marketing and communication strategies to raise awareness and ensure increased autonomy and access. This includes creating a dedicated landing page on the City of Sydney website to increase information available to people with disability
 - (i) continue to produce and encourage major events in line with our recently reviewed Inclusive and Accessibility Events Guidelines
 - (j) review the City of Sydney's current wayfinding pylon flag and finger signs and braille and tactile signs, and develop recommendations for consideration in the signage asset renewal process
 - (k) advocate for more effective mechanisms for effective enforcement of relevant disability legislation and standards including a dedicated Minister for Disability, a department for disability, equality and inclusion and an Australian Disability Rights Act to further realise the human rights of people with disability

- (l) focus on removing systemic barriers to employment through applying a strategic approach towards recruitment, retention and development of employees with disability, from entry level to leadership and continue to review and inform relevant City of Sydney processes and procedures to increase the number of employees with disability, including an aim to have 5% of our workforce identifying as people with disability by 2029
 - (m) investigate opportunities for additional data capture and measurement around how we record dollar spend and number of suppliers that are disability-led
 - (n) strengthen our procurement practices by building relationships with disability-led organisations and businesses and investigate pathways to further support disability-led businesses we engage, and identify and remove any barriers within the procurement process
 - (o) identify opportunities for collaborating with the Disability Employment Centre of Excellence, supporting disability-led businesses and organisations and employment of people with disability
 - (p) investigate the possibility of collaborating with other councils on a sector-wide approach to procurement that supports disability-led businesses
21. In addition, the City of Sydney has a 10-year forward program of public domain renewal and upgrades projects committed in the Resourcing Strategy, thereby providing specific timelines for the delivery of accessible streets and public places.
22. Renewal and upgrade of the public domain (streets and public spaces) is guided by our Inclusive and Accessible Public Domain Policy and guidelines. The City of Sydney reports regularly to Council and the community via the Inclusion (disability) Action Plan annual report and delivery program progress reports on:
- number of pedestrian ramps we install/upgrade each year
 - area of footway we renew each year
 - progress on lighting improvement programs
 - increased numbers of disability parking spaces
 - timing of delivery of major projects improving the public domain
23. The City of Sydney has proposed increasing the requirement for accessible and adaptable housing in the Sydney Development Control Plan to 100% Silver performance levels against the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines for all development and 15% Platinum and for larger new residential developments. This proposal has been on public exhibition and submissions are being considered. It will be reported back to Council for consideration later this year.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan

24. The City of Sydney's draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029 has been designed to align with the four directions established in the NSW Disability Action Plan and to build on the progress made by previous plans.

Strategic Alignment - A City for All - Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

25. This plan aligns with the City of Sydney's long-term vision for a just, inclusive and sustainable Sydney which is embodied in the Social Sustainability Policy and Action Plan - A City for All. The plan supports delivery on our commitments with A City for All, in particular the principles that "Sydney is a just city that respects human rights and dignity" and that "Sydney is a safe and accessible city for people of all ages and abilities".

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

26. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 1 – Responsible governance and stewardship - People with disability are supported to participate in decision-making at the City of Sydney.
 - (b) Direction 5 - A City for Walking, Cycling and Public Transport - Accessible streetscapes and infrastructure to enable people with disability to navigate our city.
 - (c) Direction 6 – An Equitable and Inclusive City – Everyone can participate, prosper and reach their full potential in a city that is fair and just, including people with disability.
 - (d) Direction 7 - Resilient and Diverse Communities - We are committed to building resilience and ensuring social justice and equity for all, including people with disability.
 - (e) Direction 8 - A Thriving Cultural and Creative Life - People with disability have opportunities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from cultural and creative life within the city.
 - (f) Direction 10 - Housing for All - People with disability have access to high quality, affordable and diverse housing types.

Organisational Impact

27. The City of Sydney has responsibilities under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 to provide equitable access to its facilities, infrastructure and services for people with disability. We have responsibilities under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 to develop a disability inclusion action plan that addresses barriers to inclusive participation faced by people with disability.
28. The draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025-2029 includes practical steps the City of Sydney will take to address barriers for people with disability to ensure inclusive participation in city life, access to mainstream services and meaningful employment.

29. These actions have been designed to build on our ongoing commitment to inclusion, the successes of previous plans, and harness emerging opportunities, with the aim of ensuring inclusion access and are core considerations across all City of Sydney services and facilities.
30. The actions are deliverable within existing staffing and operational budgets or will be delivered through future planned capital works projects, procurement contracts and agreements.

Risks

31. Any identified risks arising from the adoption of the plan are within the City of Sydney's risk appetite, which states:
 - (a) We make decisions that align with our corporate objectives, policies and strategies and are committed to conducting our activities in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations and relevant industry standard and;
 - (b) We acknowledge that some financial risks may be necessary to achieve our goals, particularly when investing in new initiatives that align with our strategic objectives. We carefully evaluate financial options and risks and consider the potential impact on our financial position, cash flow, and overall stability and; .
 - (c) We acknowledge the diverse expectations of our stakeholders, including the community, ratepayers, regulatory bodies and elected officials. Our risk appetite considers stakeholder expectations and seeks to align infrastructure management practices with their needs, while maintaining a responsible and sustainable approach.
32. Specific to deadlines for adoption of the plan, if the Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-2029 is not endorsed by 1 July 2025 the City of Sydney will not meet its legislative requirements under the Disability Inclusion Act 2014.

Social / Cultural / Community

33. This plan's purpose is to foster the development of an inclusive and accessible city for everyone. The delivery of actions within the plan will work towards people with disability who live, work in or visit the city experiencing more equitable opportunities for social and economic inclusion.
34. Inclusive cities benefit everyone, not just people with disability. By implementing key actions within this plan and continuing to build a city that is easy to get around, we provide equitable opportunities for participation in the diverse social, cultural life of the city and access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Economic

35. The draft plan contains actions to improve access to the public domain and participation in events run by the City of Sydney. The plan also includes actions to support businesses in the city, particularly those within the hospitality and retail sectors, to be more inclusive and accessible to people with disability. Improving access in these ways encourages a wider diversity of people to come to the city and therefore opens up potential market opportunities for businesses.

Financial Implications

36. The proposed actions in the draft Inclusion (disability) Action Plan 2025-29 will be delivered within the resourcing levels included in the draft 2025/26 operational and capital works budgets and future year forward estimates, subject to Council approval. These resourcing levels are consistent with previous iterations of the City of Sydney's budgets.

Relevant Legislation

37. Local Government Act 1993.
38. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).
39. Disability Inclusion Act 2014 and Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022.
40. Carers Recognition Act 2010.
41. Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.
42. Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987 (Cth).

Public Consultation

43. The plan incorporates extensive consultation with people with disability and their carers, and other people with lived experience of disability, as noted in the subject report. Further consultation will be sought during the proposed period of public exhibition.
44. During the public exhibition period, the draft plan will be open for comment on the City of Sydney's Sydney Your Say webpage. It will be published in a range of accessible formats including:
 - (a) accessible PDF
 - (b) large print
 - (c) Easy Read.
45. The draft plan will also be circulated to key disability sector organisations and people that participated in the consultation process for comment. These include organisations representing people with physical disability, people with intellectual disability, people who are neurodivergent, people with disability who are from multicultural backgrounds, and people of diverse sexualities and genders, amongst others.

EMMA RIGNEY

Executive Director City Life

Jayne Gan, Social Policy Officer - Access and Inclusion

Attachment A

Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025-2029
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2025-2029

Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan

The City of Sydney acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation
as the Traditional Custodians of our local area

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The City of Sydney
acknowledges the Gadigal of the
Eora Nation as the Traditional
Custodians of our local area.

We acknowledge their continued
care and protection for the lands
and waters of this place since
time immemorial.

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Image: Table-based workshop with participant speaking Auslan at the co-design roundtable for the inclusion (disability) action plan. Image: Margaret Sevenjhazi / City of Sydney

Lord Mayor's Message



The City of Sydney's worked together with members of the community in the development of our inclusion (disability) action plan 2025–29. While the plan is a legislative requirement under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 for local governments, we consider it a guiding tool to fulfil our ongoing commitment to advancing participation and inclusion of everyone in Sydney, including people with disability.

This plan aligns within Council's broader policies and objectives and long-term vision to support the realisation of human rights of all people, and to improve access and inclusion as a part of our commitment towards strengthening the wellbeing and resilience of our diverse community.

In this plan we will continue to work with our community to strengthen our accessibility of services, facilities and open spaces to provide for a more liveable community. We will focus on providing people with disability opportunities for equitable participation through programs, services, and events. We will commit towards a strategic approach to provide more meaningful employment for people with disability – from entry level to leadership. We will collaborate and look for opportunities to co-design to build a strong, resilient, equitable and sustainable city in partnership with the diverse disability community – to provide a city where everyone is welcome, and everyone belongs.

Over the past 4 years we have continued to build on the success of our previous plans and harness new opportunities and learnings to advance the inclusion of people with disability, including people with non-visible disabilities. Our next steps, involves reflecting and highlighting the diversity of disability, and how people with intersectional identities contribute towards the rich tapestry of our community.

This plan will look to empower people with disabilities towards greater social justice and inclusion. It will respond to changing and increasing expectations of our community and look to recognise and advocate for key recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

I am proud of what we have achieved so far, but there is more work to be done – with people with disability leading the way.

Clover Moore AO
Lord Mayor of Sydney

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clover Moore." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Message from the CEO



The City of Sydney recognises and respects the value of diversity and the important contributions people with disability make towards creating a great city, inclusive of all.

We engaged with our local community, our staff and stakeholders to capture community feedback through a survey, roundtable and focus groups, to collaborate towards making responsive actions together for this plan.

The voices of people with lived experience of disability, carers, service providers and disability peak bodies are highly valued, and have all helped shape next steps for the city to champion inclusion.

We are proud of the work we have done so far to improve access and inclusion, in creating accessible spaces and facilities, producing inclusive events, providing meaningful employment and creating more equitable opportunities for inclusive participation. As we progress on this journey to improve the outcomes and help realise the rights of people with disability, we have heard the disability community's mantra of 'nothing about us, without us' and have been mindful to engage in meaningful collaboration to develop actions within this plan.

In the spirit of advocating fiercely for social justice, this plan which builds upon the progress we have made so far over previous years and sets a collaborative agenda to amplify equity, autonomy and inclusion.

This plan is a living strategy that guides us to focus our efforts on building a more inclusive and accessible place for all by improving community attitudes and behaviour, removing barriers to access spaces, facilities and events, strengthening internal systems and processes and increasing meaningful employment of people with disability within the city.

Congratulations and thank you to our community, the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel and city employees for their work so far and for advocating for inclusion of everyone.

Monica Barone PSM
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. M. Barone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statement

This is Gadigal Country. Gadigal people have cared for and nurtured this place for thousands of generations. When the British set up an outpost on these lands, it had profound impacts on Gadigal people and their culture. Sydney is now home to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples descended from nations all over the country.

We acknowledge the extraordinary resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures, despite the ongoing impacts of colonisation. While we celebrate what has survived, we must speak plainly of what has been harmed. And while we embrace the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures to contemporary Australian identity, we also understand they need to be supported to heal and revitalise.

We consulted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City of Sydney area to inform this inclusion disability action plan and this consultation will continue. The focus group with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability, in partnership with the First Peoples Disability Network, was an integral part of our community engagement process. We wanted to ensure their voices were influential in developing responsive actions in this plan. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more than twice as likely to have disability – they endure numerous disadvantages, experience intergenerational trauma, face many barriers affecting health and wellbeing, and experience greater rates of discrimination.

We're committed to listening to, working with and elevating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability to create a welcoming and inclusive city that celebrates the world's oldest living cultures.

Inclusion (disability) advisory panel

The Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel provides strategic, expert and impartial advice on how we develop, implement and review our policies, strategies and plans. The panel of 12 independent members bring a diverse range of expertise to advance the inclusion of people with disability.

The panel will help set the pathway for the City of Sydney's contribution on improvements to policy, process and the public domain to support people with disability. This includes providing:

- feedback and advice to aid in the development and implementation of the City of Sydney's inclusion (disability) action plan
- advice across all areas relevant to people with disability
- strategic advice relating to the inclusion and accessibility of the City of Sydney's infrastructure, facilities, events, services, programs, systems and information for people with disability
- feedback on submissions we may make relating to state and federal government policy and legislation
- advice on how to identify issues that are relevant to people with disability
- advocacy on behalf of people with disability for increased visibility and awareness of the needs of people with disability.

The City of Sydney acknowledges and recognises that the voice and contribution of people and communities with diverse lived experience of disability, both past and present, are essential in realising an inclusive society.

Why we're doing this

Our ongoing commitment to making the city truly inclusive and welcoming is embodied in our sixth inclusion (disability) action plan.

This plan aligns with our long-term vision of an inclusive city and meets the legislative requirements of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* and the *Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022*.

It includes a series of actions designed to actively address barriers faced by people with disability. It builds on the success of our previous plans and makes the most of new and emerging opportunities.

This plan has been developed through consultation with people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and disability representative organisations, our disability employee network and the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.

Disability – a part of human diversity

Disability is part of the human experience. About 1 in 5 Australians has a disability, which increases to more than 50% of Australians over the age of 65¹. Around 80% of disabilities are acquired and 80% of the 5.5 million people with disability in Australia have one or more non-visible disabilities².

Everybody's lives are somehow touched by disability, whether it's temporary or permanent, or as a carer. Disability is a natural part of human diversity and must be respected and supported in all its forms³. People with disability have the same, fundamental human rights as everyone else in society, which are protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* defines disability as including:

“A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, that in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

This law recognises disability in terms of the barriers created by society, not by an individual's specific condition or medical diagnosis. It promotes inclusion of people with disability to enrich community life for everyone.

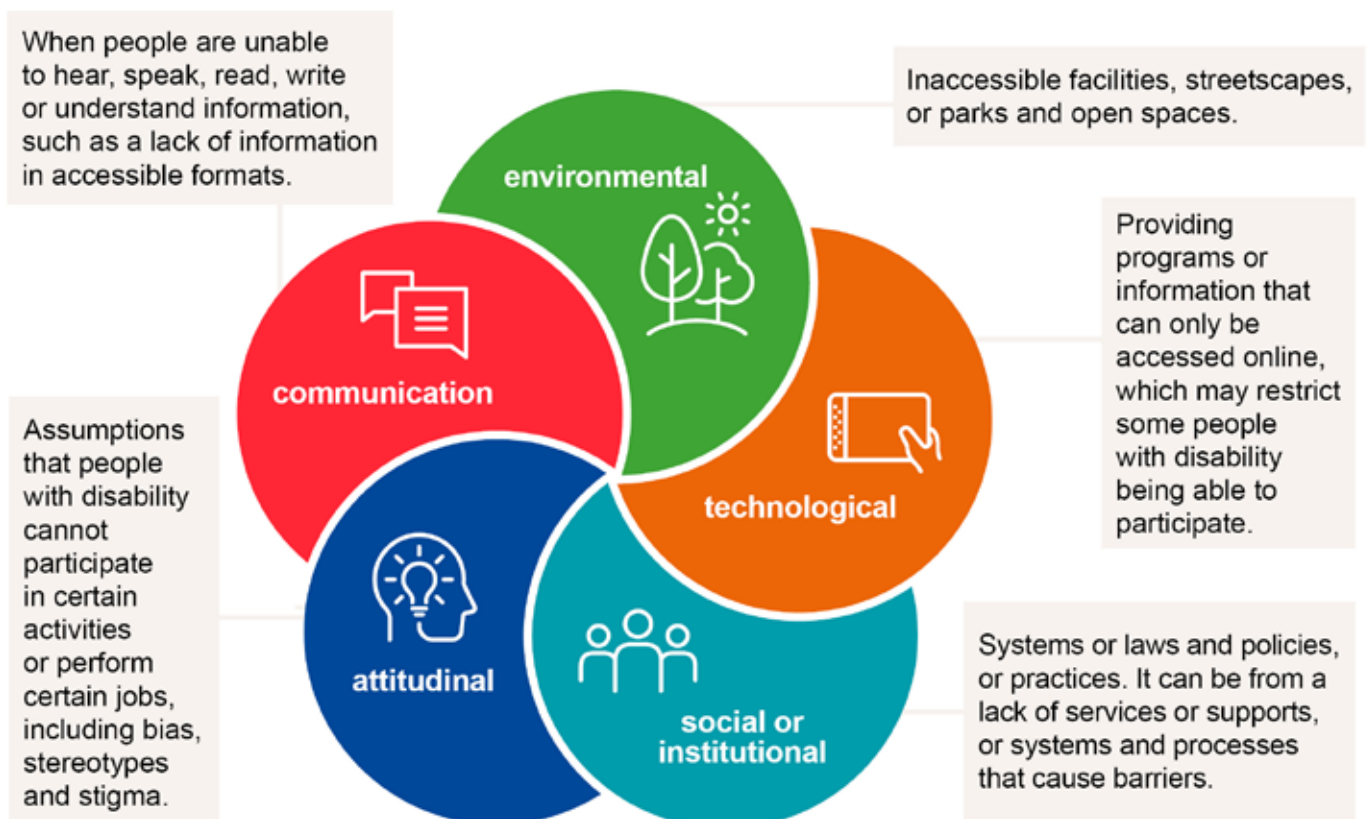
Social model of disability

The City of Sydney recognises the 'social model of disability'. This model views 'disability' that results from the interaction between people with disability and an environment filled with barriers.

The social model perspective does not deny the reality of disability, nor its impact on the individual, rather it seeks to change society to be more inclusive⁴. When these barriers are removed, most people with disability will have equitable opportunities for social and economic inclusion, and greater independence and dignity.

The City of Sydney recognises there is an underlying social responsibility to remove barriers from our services and employment opportunities and the infrastructure and public spaces we manage. We also recognise our role in both protecting and promoting the rights of people with disability and in fostering the value of diversity and inclusion across our communities.

The City of Sydney recognises the 'social model of 'disability'. This model views 'disability' that results from the interaction between people with disability and an environment filled with barriers. These barriers may include:



Role of this plan

This inclusion (disability) action plan sets the framework and priorities for:

- meeting our responsibilities under the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* and *Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022*, the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010*
- identifying barriers to inclusion and developing strategies and actions to respond and address those barriers
- continuously improving inclusion and access for people with disability and empowering disability-led change where possible
- continuing ongoing engagement with people with disability and identifying opportunities to collaborate and co-design at every stage of this plan
- achieving a strong, resilient and equitable city for everyone, including people with disability and those with caring responsibilities, in line with our social sustainability policy and action plan.

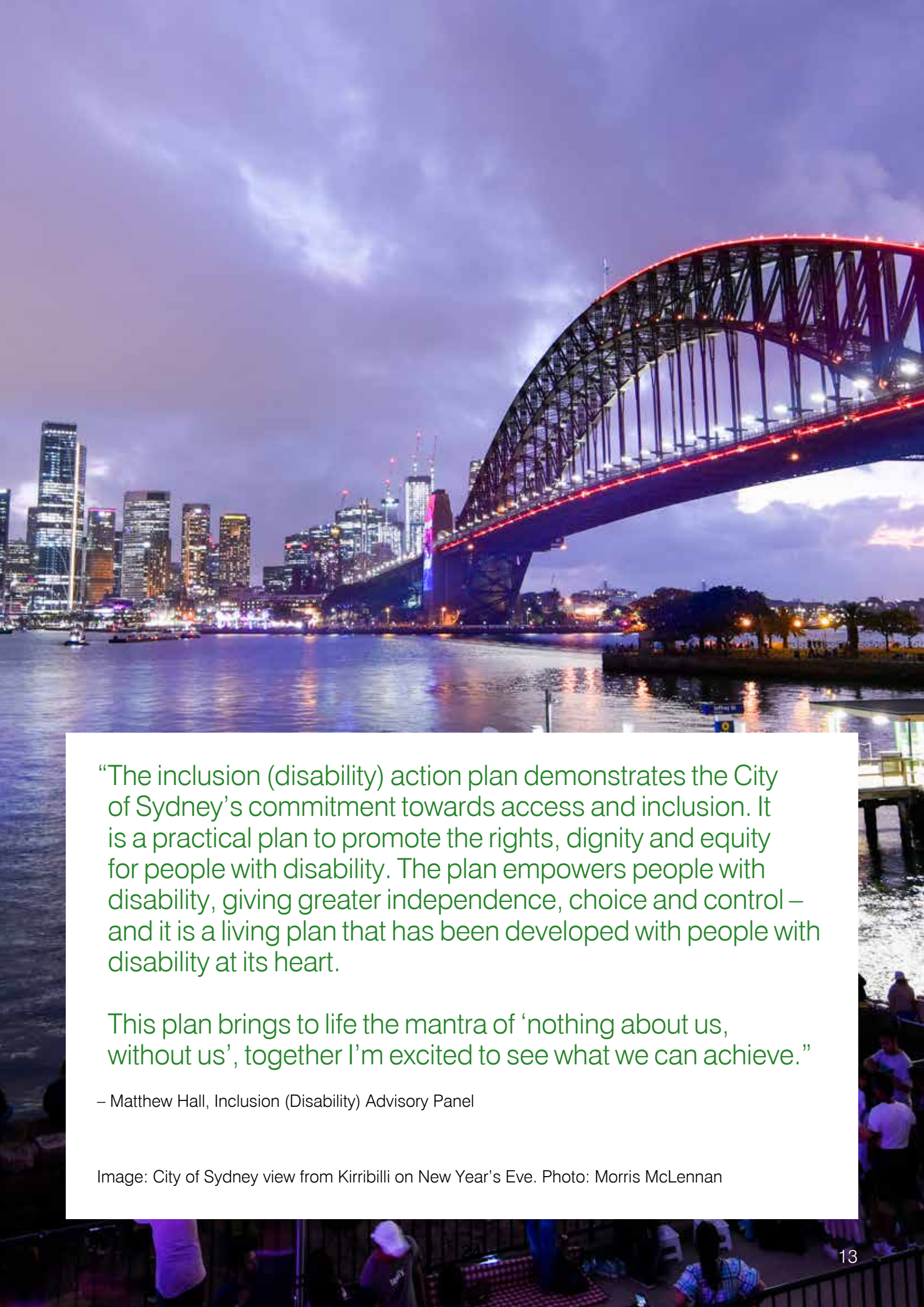
Four key directions

This action plan focuses on 4 key outcome areas⁵:

- develop positive **community attitudes and behaviours** towards people with disability through community awareness and education
- create more **liveable communities** for people with disability through improving the environment and services
- achieve more **meaningful employment** for people with disability through inclusive employment practices and education
- provide more equitable access to mainstream services for people with disability through better **systems and processes**, and access to information.



Image: People with disability share their lived experience as a panel at the co-design roundtable for the new inclusion (disability) action plan. Photo: Margaret Sevenjhazi / City of Sydney



“The inclusion (disability) action plan demonstrates the City of Sydney’s commitment towards access and inclusion. It is a practical plan to promote the rights, dignity and equity for people with disability. The plan empowers people with disability, giving greater independence, choice and control – and it is a living plan that has been developed with people with disability at its heart.

This plan brings to life the mantra of ‘nothing about us, without us’, together I’m excited to see what we can achieve.”

– Matthew Hall, Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel

Image: City of Sydney view from Kirribilli on New Year’s Eve. Photo: Morris McLennan

Defining disability and the importance of language

Language is a powerful tool we can use to raise awareness and create safe, respectful and welcoming spaces. Language is also constantly evolving. As people's lived experiences change, it's important our language also changes.

When we use the term disability, we include people with mental health conditions or psychosocial disability, people who are neurodivergent, and people with long-term or chronic health conditions. We also recognise that disability can be short term or permanent and that it can be visible and non-visible.

We recognise that both person first language (people with disability) and identity-first language (disabled person) are both used in Australia. We take responsibility for respectful and responsive communication with people with disability. This plan uses person first language. When we know an individual prefers identity-first language or terms we may use those, for example d/Deaf or Autistic.

Disability is part of being human and is integral to the human experience.



Image: Woman at Ron Williams Community Centre
Photo: Chris Southwood

The case for inclusion

Inclusion benefits everyone and is a universal human right. Inclusion means feeling welcome, valued, respected and included, with equal opportunities to fully participate in social, economic and civic life.

Inclusion also provides for greater choice and control and is central to equality. It reduces disadvantage, isolation and discrimination, and is the foundation of a connected and cohesive society⁶. Inclusion has positive impacts across all aspects of life, including health, wellbeing, education and employment. These impacts are felt beyond the individual, with families and the broader community all being enriched by an inclusive society⁷.

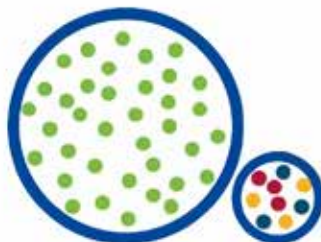
Inclusive communities benefit everyone by:

- **Improving Australia's economy – worth \$12.7 billion a year:** through enhancing living standards, increasing productivity in the workplace and improving employment and health outcomes⁸.
- **Supporting business:** for every \$1 businesses spend on better access there is a \$13 return on investment, according to Monash University.
- **Boosting productivity and innovation:** employees with disability keep their jobs longer, take fewer sick days and bring fewer staff related business costs⁹.

Diagram representing **exclusion, segregation, integration and inclusion**



Exclusion



Segregation



Integration



Inclusion

- **Promoting physical access and universal design:** enhancing accessibility benefits people with disability and older people, and parents with prams. With an ageing population of 16% of Australians aged over 65 years¹⁰, universal design approaches that consider the needs of everyone are important. This allows people to age in place with equitable community participation. Universal design benefits everyone, with well-designed and intuitive spaces and services.
- **Increasing a sense of belonging in the community:** a liveable community is a place where people can live, learn, work, play, feel safe, belong, connect with others and grow old. Making a community liveable includes physical access to improve how we connect, giving people the chance to participate and make social connections¹¹.
- **Reducing social isolation and loneliness:** people with disability experience social isolation more than twice the rate of people without disability¹². The World Health Organization has declared loneliness is as bad for your health as smoking, making it a global public health concern that highlights the importance of maintaining social connections¹³.



Image: Table-based workshop with 8 participants at the co-design roundtable for the new inclusion (disability) action plan. Photo: Margaret Sevenjhazi / City of Sydney

Understanding diversity and respecting intersectionality

People with disability living, working in and visiting the City of Sydney local area have a diverse range of backgrounds, needs and aspirations. We understand that diverse groups may have unique lived experience and recognise that some groups face more disadvantage and inequality.

The interaction between multiple forms of inequality is known as 'intersectionality'¹⁴. Intersectionality recognises the complex way that many forms of discrimination and disadvantage can overlap, which may increase the impact of inequality.

The term 'double disadvantage' is often used when considering intersectionality and disability¹⁵. It refers to the discrimination someone may experience by being part of 2 or more traditionally marginalised or disadvantaged groups due to ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic position, age or other aspects of identity¹⁶.

This may include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people with disability from multicultural backgrounds
- women
- children and young people
- older people (over 65 years)
- people of diverse sexualities and genders and intersex people
- people experiencing homelessness
- refugees or asylum seekers.

“Driving intersectionality is a shift away from people fitting systems towards systems fitting people. It holds a promise that systems must work for everyone so systems can do their jobs best, while also serving as a reminder that when you design for the edge, you design for all”.

– Giancarlo de Vera, Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel

It's important to be aware that different cultures have varying attitudes towards disability, which may lead to shame and stigma. For this reason, some people may hide their disability or be reluctant to speak about it¹⁷.

We recognise there are shifting complexities and interactions between people's multiple identities. These must be considered to better understand how they influence a person's experiences¹⁸.



Image: Participants at the focus group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability as part of the inclusion (disability) action plan consultation. Photo: Margaret Sevenjhazi / City of Sydney

Policy and legislative context

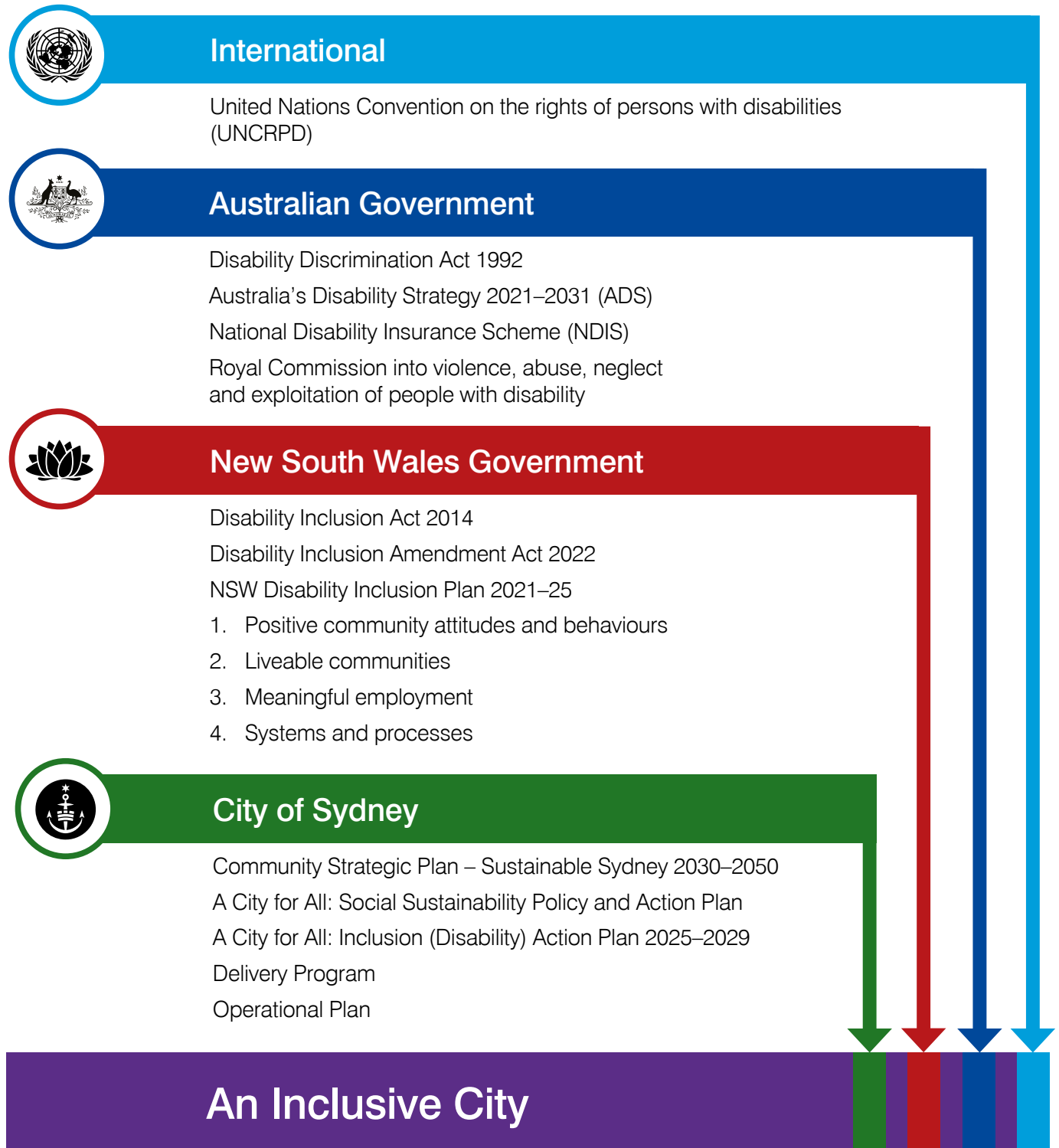


Figure 2: Diagram showing the relationship between international conventions, federal and state legislation and City of Sydney strategies, including the inclusion (disability) action plan

Policy context

Since 1992 the commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* has made discrimination illegal on the basis of disability. In 2008 the Australian Government committed to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including the obligation:

“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 dignity¹⁹.”

This signalled a commitment by all levels of government in Australia to eradicate barriers faced by people with disability and greater recognition of their human rights.

UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and its optional protocol

UNCRPD 50 Articles

Adopted 13 December 2006



Figure 3: Diagram showing the key articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Australia's disability strategy

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 is a national framework all Australian governments have signed up to. It sets out a plan for continuing to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia over 10 years.

The strategy aims to ensure the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are included in Australian policies and programs affecting people with disability, their families and carers²⁰.

The strategy's vision is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential as equal members of the community²¹.

To achieve the strategy's vision, there are 7 outcome areas to be addressed:

1. Employment and financial security
2. Inclusive homes and communities
3. Safety, rights and justice
4. Personal and community support
5. Education and learning
6. Health and wellbeing
7. Community attitudes

The strategy will be achieved through several targeted action plans aligned with the outcome areas.

National disability insurance scheme

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a disability support system focused on the individual needs and choices of people with disability. It provides funding directly to individuals. Eligible people with permanent disabilities are funded for approved supports to complete daily life activities under NDIS participant plans.

The NDIS was reviewed and from October 2024 there are new rules, including a list of NDIS supports that can be funded. The NDIS has recently updated several guidelines to support the implementation of the new laws.

The NDIS review made 26 recommendations and 139 supporting actions. Notably, the review identified a lack of accessible and affordable foundational supports for the 1 in 5 people with disability who aren't eligible for NDIS support and need to be supported through community based and mainstream services. The Australian Government consulted the community on what foundational supports work and meet the needs of people with disability in 2024. A summary report from consultations is expected to be published in 2025²².

Royal commission into violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was set up in April 2019 in response to community concern about widespread reports of violence and neglect, and abuse and exploitation of people with disability. The commission held 32 public hearings, 1,785 private sessions and received 7,944 submissions from April 2019 to September 2023. Almost 10,000 people shared their lived experiences.

In September 2023 the commission gave its final report to the Australian Government, which included 222 recommendations on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices that support people with disability.

The inquiry found that people with disability experience much higher rates of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation than people without disability.

The recommendations in the final report focused on:

- preventing and better protecting people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- realising the human rights of people with disability
- promoting a more inclusive society that enables autonomy and access for people with disability.

inclusion (disability) action plan

To date the Australian Government has accepted 13 of the 222 recommendations. Many disability advocates²³ have urged stronger government commitment to the commission's findings²⁴, including:

- the recommendation for a dedicated minister for disability
- a department of disability equality and inclusion
- an Australian Disability Rights Act to further realise the human rights of people with disability.

Ensuring an inclusive society is the responsibility of the whole of Australia. The City of Sydney has consulted with our Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel and widely across the city to ensure the commission's recommendations and all feedback have been considered in developing this plan. We've identified several actions for implementation in line with this plan to address these recommendations and feedback. These include ensuring we:

- Do not procure from, create, fund or award new grants for organisations that participate in segregated services or employment, or engage in restrictive practices, such as supporting Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE). The City of Sydney is also committed to not supporting

ADE's or any organisations or groups that undertake the practices of paying people with disability a subminimum wage. Under this new plan we will procure from and support disability-led organisations that advocate open employment and fair pay.

- Continue to prioritise the use of authentic videos, images and stories of people with diverse disabilities for use in publications, digital platforms and media channels. There is also a focus on raising awareness and understanding of intersectionality in the new plan.
- Work to empower the community to identify, report and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability through programs, training, resources and advocacy.
- Focus on removing systemic barriers to employment through applying a strategic approach towards recruitment, retention and development of employees with disability, from entry level to leadership. We aim to have 5% of our workforce identifying as people with disability by 2029. We recognise the work we'll need to carry out to create greater cultural safety and the systems that need to be in place to enable us to achieve this target and will apply them during the 4-year life of this plan.



Image: Woman on a laptop at Surry Hills Library / Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Disability inclusion legislation

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* has the following objectives:

- People with disability should have the same human rights as other members of the community and that governments and communities have a responsibility to facilitate the exercise of those rights.
- To promote the independence and social and economic inclusion of people with disability within the community.
- To provide people with disability safeguards in relation to the delivery of their supports and services.

In line with the requirements of the Act, all councils in NSW must develop a disability inclusion action plan. The *Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022* requires plans to be reviewed every 4 years and remade in consultation with people with disability at all stages of development, implementation and evaluation. The NSW Government provides guidelines for local councils that outline requirements and best-practices considerations, which have been applied in the development of this plan²⁵.

National autism strategy

The National Autism Strategy 2025–2031 has been developed through a co-design process with Autistic people and sets out the vision for a safe and inclusive society where all Autistic people are supported and empowered to thrive in all aspects of life, in line with international human rights. The goal of the strategy is to improve the quality of life for all Autistic people in a way that is meaningful to them.

The strategy is a framework for improving outcomes for all Autistic people. It focuses on actions and enabling change in 4 key outcome areas:

1. Social inclusion
2. Economic inclusion
3. Diagnosis, services and supports
4. Health and mental health (through the *national roadmap to improve the health and mental health of Autistic people*).

The strategy details 22 high level commitments to drive inclusion, better supports and greater representation of Autistic people²⁶, and will be supported by the *National Autism Strategy First Action Plan 2025–2026*. Completing the actions will contribute to achieving the outcomes highlighted as a high priority by the Autistic community and lays the foundations for future long-term reform.

National carer strategy

Every day 3 million Australians care for someone in their lives, such as a family member, a neighbour or a friend. The *National Carer Strategy 2024–2034* creates a national agenda to support Australia's unpaid carers. The strategy was designed and created with carers and is a framework to guide how we can improve support for carers now and into the future. It's a positive step towards improving awareness of carers including:

- their roles
- the impacts of supporting others
- availability of carer supports and services.

The strategy recognises the need for services provided across federal, state and territory governments to be easier to navigate. It also recognises the need for all levels of government to collaborate with carer support partners to develop action plans to help drive change²⁷.

NSW disability action plan

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021–2025* builds on the work the NSW Government has carried out to create more accessible and inclusive communities. It provides the outline for increasing the social and economic participation of people with disability across NSW. The plan sets out 4 focus areas to improve the lives of people with disability:

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 principles of this plan are followed by all local councils and NSW Government agencies in their disability inclusion action plans²⁸.

City of Sydney context

Sustainable Sydney

Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision expresses the community's vision and our commitment to the sustainable development of Sydney to 2050.

The community's vision is for greater resilience, where social, business, cultural and physical connections help us withstand adversity, adapt to change, and reach our full potential. It advocates a green, global and connected city:

- **Green** – We support a sustainable future where everyone in the city does their part to respond to the climate emergency and contributes to improving environmental conditions on the planet.
- **Global** – We support our city being a leader in our region for just and sustainable growth, creativity and innovation. It has a thriving 24-hour economy and opportunities for all.
- **Connected** – We have social, business, cultural and physical connections within the city that allow us to reach our full potential and adapt to changes and withstand adversity. It means people look out for one another and feel safe.

Building on the vision of our communities for the future, it includes guiding principles and 10 directions for 2050. The strategy has 10 targets to measure progress and 10 transformative project ideas to illustrate how the vision for a future Sydney can be achieved²⁹.

The community strategic plan sets out how we will deliver Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050.

Social sustainability policy and action plan

The City of Sydney's social sustainability policy and action plan 2018–2028, outlines our vision for a socially just and inclusive city, and a socially sustainable Sydney. We've identified 4 strategic directions for a socially just and resilient Sydney, which form the basis of the action plan:

- an **inclusive** city – social justice and opportunity
- a **connected** city – diverse, cohesive communities
- a **liveable** city – quality places and spaces
- an **engaged** city – good governance and active participation.

In October 2024 we published the mid-point review of the action plan. People with disability have been identified as a key priority community that we'll continue to focus on with our engagement and social sustainability programs and strategies in the remaining 5 years of the plan.

Related City of Sydney strategies and action plans

- Access strategy and action plan
- Housing for all: local housing strategy
- Economic development strategy
- Environmental strategy
- Cultural strategy
- 'A city for walking' strategy and action plan
- Resilience strategy
- Wayfinding strategy
- Community engagement strategy and community participation plan
- Resourcing strategy
- Community safety action plan
- People strategy
- EEO, diversity and inclusion action plan

Disability in Australia

1 in 5 Australians
has a disability

5.5 million people



 **52%** of people **aged 65 and over** have a disability, as disability increases with age

 **80%** of people with disability have a **non-visible disability**

 **1 in 6** people with disability experienced **discrimination in the past year**

 **52%** of people with disability **have jobs** compared to 84% without a disability

 **9 in 10** school aged children with disability go to a **mainstream school**

 **1 in 8** Australians **provide unpaid care** to people with disability and older people, among 3 million carers in Australia in 2022

 **8%** of Australians have a **profound or severe disability**

 **1 in 5** people has a **mental health condition**

 **1 in 2** people with disability (aged 15+) **experienced violence**

 **38%** of people **living in poverty** have a disability

 **1 in 4** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has a **disability**

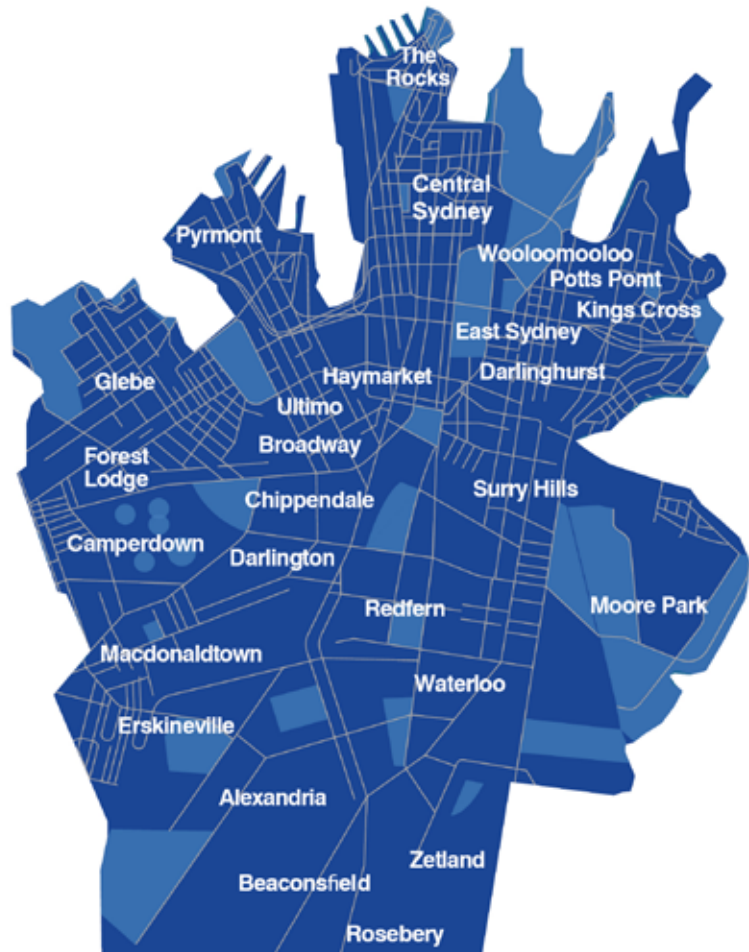
 **25%** **183,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** peoples has a disability

Not all Australians are eligible to receive funding under the National Disability Insurance Scheme
(in 2023 there were 466,000 active NDIS participants)

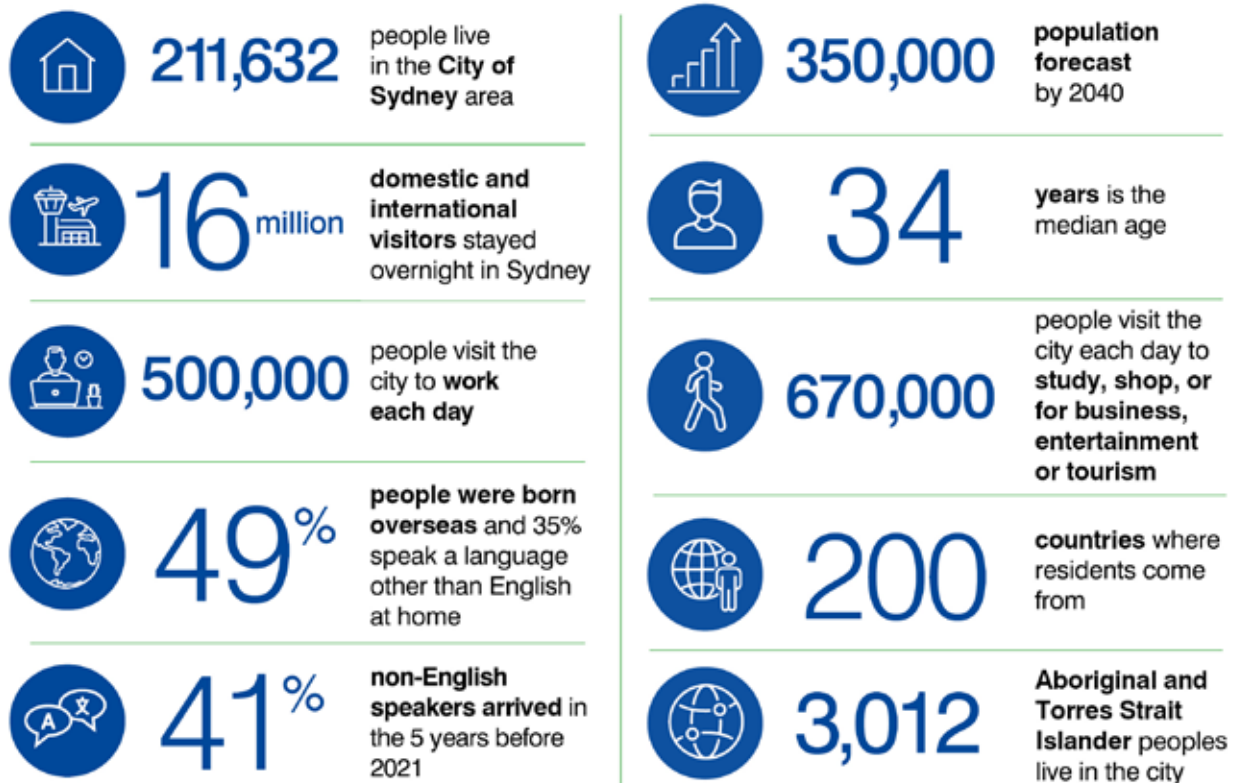
Community profile

The City of Sydney local area is made up of diverse community groups. As one of Australia's leading global cities we strive to provide an accessible and socially connected city that embraces diversity.

We continue to focus on values of equity and social justice to achieve social sustainability. This plan aims to put people with disability at its heart to create opportunities for everyone to thrive.



2021 Census



Disability in the City of Sydney area



5,812 people with disability
(2.7% of the population)



24% have one or more long-term health conditions, with the most common condition mental health



8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability



3% of non-English speaking people with disability



12,719 carers provide unpaid assistance
(6.5% of the population aged over 15 years)



13% do some form of voluntary work



37% of people with disability worked full time, 44.3% part-time, 12% were unemployed



14% are couples with children, 24% couples without children and 15% one parent families



39% own their home, 19% rent and 38% in social housing



40% live alone
(2,014 people)

Community wellbeing survey

7 domains of satisfaction for people with disability

1,014 survey respondents were people with disability. Of these, 776 respondents say they have a mental health condition.



Almost twice as many people with disability are unsatisfied with their life, when compared to people without disability.



People with a physical, sensory, cognitive or developmental disability **had a lower personal wellbeing index** (53.8) than the City of Sydney average (64.9).



Over 3 in 5 people (63%) with disability **reported they faced discrimination** in the past year.



62% agree most people **can be trusted**



46% see neighbours **not at all**, or are unsure



92% are willing to **help neighbours**



50% rate mental health as **poor or fair**



54% feel they can **get help** from neighbours



54% limited spending money on **social activities and entertainment**

Key achievements

These key highlights were achieved under the 4 focus areas in the inclusion (disability) action plan 2021–2025.

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

- 1,125 employees completed mandatory inclusion (disability) awareness training
- More than 400 employees completed specialist disability training on accessibility and inclusion
- More than 76,000 views of impactful videos highlighting International Day of People with Disability
- Captured diverse images of people with disability for communications projects.

Liveable communities

- Created 9,000m² more car-free space in the city centre by pedestrianising George Street south
- Updated our planning controls to provide for more accessible and adaptable housing
- Welcomed attendees at more than 800 social inclusion and connection programs
- Hosted the good access is good for business event highlighting how access and inclusion improvements make good business sense.

Meaningful employment

- Implemented a candidate-led recruitment process and tailored supports for employees with disability
- Recognised as an inclusive employer by the Diversity Council of Australia
- Accredited as a disability confident recruiter by the Australian Disability Network
- Winner of the Local Government NSW Diversity and Inclusion Award for employee networks, including Inclusive City disability network.

Systems and processes

- Reviewed the grants and sponsorships program to be more inclusive of people with disability
- Empowered people with disability to have a say by producing a guide to council decision making on the City of Sydney website
- Encouraged digital literacy by providing 300 new public access computers with a range of accessibility features
- Provided advocacy training for young people with disability.

Developing this plan

Review

We began to develop this plan by reviewing the progress made on the previous inclusion (disability) action plan 2021–2025, with key achievements reported to Council. We looked at what we've achieved, what we learned and what we could improve.

- **Positive attitudes and behaviours:** we've achieved much towards improving access and inclusion, in particular raising awareness and visibility of disability to challenge stigma and stereotypes and change community attitudes. This was highlighted with more than 800 accessible and inclusive community programs and events over the past 3 years. Next steps identified include a focus on showcasing the diversity of disability with people with intersectional identities.
- **Liveable communities:** Australia faces a housing crisis, and it's creating higher rates of housing stress for people with disability³⁰. We've been proactive in addressing changes to planning controls to provide for more adaptable and affordable housing. We've also demonstrated leadership and consistent commitment with the improvement of physical accessibility in public spaces. There is a need to have access audits on key facilities and spaces, along with allocating capital works budgets to provide for continuous improvement.

- **Meaningful employment:** We've done much to provide for best practice, such as applying flexible working arrangements with outcome focused roles and developing a candidate-led recruitment system. We've learnt that a more strategic approach towards increasing employment and development opportunities is needed, along with continued promotion of an inclusive workplace culture to provide more meaningful employment.
- **Systems and processes:** We've developed a series of policies and guidelines to enhance access and inclusion and mandated their use by employees. Greater promotion and consistent application are needed to further impact change.

Celebrating neurodiversity

“Neurodiversity is:

- a state of nature to be respected
- an analytical tool for examining social issues
- an argument for the conservation and facilitation of human diversity”.

Judy Singer³¹

Every human has a unique nervous system with a unique combination of abilities and needs. Neurodiversity is a strengths-based approach that highlights and acknowledges differences in the way their brain works to interpret, process and learn information, and that this diversity is a good thing for society³². Neurodiversity is sometimes broken into 2 groups – those who are neurotypical and those who are neurodivergent.

People who may call themselves neurodivergent include people with Autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, Tourette syndrome, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, intellectual disability, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), synaesthesia and acquired brain injury³³. A 2020 study estimates 1 in 5 (15–20%) of the global population is neurodivergent³⁴.

People who are neurodivergent may not identify as having disability³⁵. We celebrate diversity in the many ways people experience and interact with the world around them. We recognise we have a role to educate and challenge assumptions, bias and stereotypes, towards embracing the many strengths of people who are neurodivergent³⁶.

Engaging with people with disability

Community engagement with people with disability is essential to developing a responsive inclusion (disability) action plan³⁷. We respect the diversity of lived experience and collaborated with more than 350 people with disability, their families and carers, disability service providers and disability representative organisations. This provided us with opportunities to listen and co-design actions in this plan.

By appreciating an intersectional and targeted approach towards engagement, from 20 August to 9 October 2024, we carried out a series of engagement activities to assist with developing this plan. The engagement activities aimed to understand the complexity of issues and barriers facing people with disability, while ensuring cultural safety and accessibility to empower co-design of solutions.

Our consultation webpage provided people with the opportunity to complete an online survey, provide comments by email or post, or complete a printed survey and drop it off at one of our libraries, community centres or neighbourhood and customer service centres. We received 160 survey responses.

We aimed to ensure representation of our diverse communities by conducting 5 focus groups with 53 participants in total. The focus groups included:

- people with intellectual disability
- people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability
- people with disability from multicultural backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability
- people who are neurodivergent.

An extra focus group was held for disability service providers, and we carried out in-person and pop-up engagements with 53 participants. We also worked with the Australian Disability Network on a half day roundtable workshop with 90 participants, including people with disability, support organisations and City of Sydney employees. The roundtable was set up to empower co-design of responsive actions for this new plan.

What stakeholders told us



Image: Screenshot of the video showing portraits of 5 Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel members for International Day of People with Disability in 2023. The video received more than 76,000 views.

Attitudes towards disability are slowly improving, along with more people feeling welcome and included, yet over **84%** of survey participants **experienced discrimination**.

Women, people of diverse sexualities and genders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from multicultural backgrounds experience higher rates and multiple forms of discrimination.

“People with disability want a seat at the table – we can help lead change!”

– Megan Spindler-Smith, deputy CEO PWDA

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

Discrimination and negative attitudes towards disability are still widely experienced. Change is needed to ensure people with disability feel included and welcomed in the community, especially those with intersectional experiences of disability.

Promoting more positive images and stories of people with a diverse range of disabilities, including those with non-visible disabilities and their contributions to the community and workplaces, will help to challenge stigma and discrimination.

People said that attitudes will change for the better through community education campaigns, by embedding co-design principles and promoting continuous engagement, and empowering disability-led advocacy.

Loneliness and social isolation are increasing³⁸, with 1 in 6 Australians reporting they experience loneliness³⁹. Of the people with disability surveyed for this plan **45% reported ‘always’ or ‘often’ feeling lonely**, along with more than a third of family members or carers.

The City of Sydney has embedded access and inclusion to make disability and mental health a part of everyday programming, encouraging community connections and greater social inclusion.

“The greatest barrier for people with disability is attitudes – negative stereotypes, stigma and discrimination are everyday challenges that must be overcome for inclusion”.

Liveable communities

People told us about ways we can continue to improve the physical accessibility of the city. This included conducting accessibility audits, maintaining the accessible path of travel on our footpaths and providing quiet spaces at facilities, parks and events. It also included improving wayfinding and signs to ensure people with disability can access the community to live, work and visit with dignity and independence.

In a city facing a housing⁴⁰ and cost-of-living crisis⁴¹, people said more advocacy is needed to support people with disability doing it tough, to be able to meet their day-to-day needs. Creating more opportunities for community connections can be achieved through innovative place-making and promotion of a wide-range of accessible and inclusive programs and services.

Helping people with disability plan for and respond to emergencies and disasters, along with preventing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability were also seen as priorities for new actions in the plan.



Image: People playing badminton at the adults unleashed – activate inclusion sports day at Perry Park Recreation Centre, Alexandria. Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Meaningful employment

Less than half (44%) of survey respondents with disability for this plan **are in paid employment**. Research shows that Australians aged 15 to 64 with disability are twice as likely to be underemployed⁴².

Employment brings economic security, independence, improved health and wellbeing, and social inclusion⁴³.

“Through strategic partnerships, together we can amplify efforts to help shift attitudes and create a movement for change that sees employees with disability as the true asset they are.”

– Siobhan Tierney, Australian Human Rights Commission – Equality at Work

We were told that the City of Sydney can play a greater role in creating and promoting employment opportunities for people with disability. Next steps suggested demonstrating leadership and commitment towards creating disability inclusion by promoting meaningful employment from entry-level through to leadership.

Taking advantage of partnerships to support meaningful employment and educating the community on the many benefits people with disability bring to a workplace were proposed as practical next steps.



Image: City of Sydney employees Ari, Matt and Frazer smiling for the photo. Photo: Tanisha Lafitani / City of Sydney

Systems and processes

More than a third of people with disability want more opportunities to **‘have a say on issues important’** to them. More work can be done to provide safe, inclusive and accessible opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers to have a say.

People also told us that access to information remains important with social media, newsletters and the website being their top sources for information. As a priority we should continually improve our digital accessibility and look at new and emerging technologies and opportunities to enhance our services for the community. They also told us there needs to be more opportunities to have a say on issues that are important, and the need to embed co-design principles into processes so that people with disability are involved in all stages of planning, implementing and evaluating.

“The Inclusive City employee network is growing, and the network’s disability-led action plan will drive the City of Sydney to be more inclusive of employees with disability.”

– Chair, Inclusive City employee network 2025

How consultation informed this plan

The ideas put forward during consultation for the plan were assessed and refined into key actions across 4 focus areas. The companion document to this plan, the [community engagement report – inclusion \(disability\) action plan 2025–2029](#), details the feedback we received throughout the consultation. A peer-led roundtable, along with engagement with the Inclusive City employee network provided opportunities for the co-design of actions within the plan.

Those actions where the City of Sydney has direct control or influence to achieve outcomes were prioritised for inclusion in this plan. Opportunities for the City of Sydney to demonstrate leadership and commitment were also assessed with consideration of relevant Resolutions of Council, as well as advocacy opportunities for outcomes from the key recommendations from the [Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](#)⁴⁴ and [National Disability Insurance Scheme review](#)⁴⁵.

This plan includes some new actions which address emerging issues identified by the community. While others are existing actions from the previous plan, which have been updated and carried forward to reflect the next stage of implementation.



Image: Image: Woman who is using a wheelchair at the disability sports day at Perry Park, Alexandria
Photo: Chris Southwood

Commitment to ongoing engagement and co-design

We're committed to engaging with people with disability in our communities and our workforce in planning, implementing and reviewing this plan. We'll continue to:

- provide inclusive and accessible community engagement activities and promote them to the disability community
- engage with disability peak and advocacy groups and services on a range of access and inclusion initiatives and issues
- consult and co-design with the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel on key issues
- consult and co-design with the Inclusive City employee network and employees with caring responsibilities.

People with disability can provide feedback and suggestions over the life of the plan in the following ways:

- Comment about the progress of the plan by email to inclusiondisability@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or by contacting the social policy team on 02 9265 9333.
- Contact us through the [National Relay Service](#) and give the City of Sydney's phone number – 02 9265 9333.
- Contact us through the free [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) which can help you talk to us in your own language. Call 131 450 and give the City of Sydney's phone number – 02 9265 9333.



Image: People with disability from multicultural backgrounds participate in a focus group to provide feedback to help develop the inclusion (disability) action plan 2025–2029. Photo: Phoebe Pratt / City of Sydney

Vision and principles

The following vision and guiding principles were crafted from the co-design process by considering the suggestions put forward at the roundtable workshops.

Together we aim to drive social change and equity for people with disability. We will do this by promoting and protecting the inherent rights, dignity and voices of people with disability, and creating a more inclusive, accessible, resilient and diverse city for all.

Guiding principles



Figure 4. Inclusive City of Sydney at the centre, surrounded by the guiding principles

Focus area 1:

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

Context

The City of Sydney's ongoing engagement with people with disability has revealed that attitudes are slowly changing for the better, but more can be done to increase visibility of disability.

Negative attitudes have significant impacts on every part of people's lives and are a major concern for people with disability. This includes disability-based discrimination and social exclusion, which in turn impact people's health and wellbeing.

A national study shows that although attitudes are improving, there is still much to be done. This begins with sharing lived experience and community education to increase disability confidence and co-designing targeted campaigns in the workplace and community⁴⁶. There's an ongoing need for the City of Sydney to continue to make disability 'mainstream' by sharing more images and stories and through impactful community education.

While it's important to identify specific actions to assist in the development of positive attitudes and behaviours, the actions under the other 3 strategic directions will also contribute to developing inclusive attitudes.

"The City of Sydney can drive social change through powerful communications promoting and celebrating the diversity of people with disabilities."

– Charlie Zada, Sydney Queer and Disabled Community Group

"It's hard for people who have a disability, whether it's visible or non-visible to feel respected when people don't engage with them in the workplace or in the community."

People need to know that even though we have a disability, look at the things we can do and things we can achieve when we're given the chance! So focus on getting to know the person and supporting them to try something new. We have great qualities that may surprise you – because we are all unique."

– Audrey O'Connor, IncludeAbility Ambassador



Image: Two people discuss 'pet peeves' around disability and how people can be more inclusive for International Day of People with Disability 2024. Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

What we've done so far

We continue to provide a program of disability inclusion training to build employee awareness and competency in disability inclusion. Key components include:

- mandatory inclusion (disability) awareness and diversity and inclusion training for new employees
- mental health training on topics such as approaching an employee you are concerned about, mental health first aid, managing psychosocial hazards in the workplace, building resilience at work and workplace wellbeing
- role-based specialist disability training and making the most of opportunities to regularly share diverse lived experience.

We've contributed to more positive community attitudes towards people with disability through:

- inclusive and engaging programs across our community centres, libraries and leisure and aquatic centres by integrating disability inclusion into everyday programming
- using our media channels, publications, events and grants and sponsorship program to magnify the voice and stories of people with disability.

Image: People in the garden at
the opening of Green Square
library and plaza, Zetland
Photo: Adam Hollingworth



What you told us

Through the City of Sydney website from 20 August to 17 September 2024, we surveyed people with disability, their family members and carers. We asked how they would rate current attitudes towards people with disability in the community.

When asked, just over 1 in 5 (21%) people with disability said they felt attitudes were positive, while 1 in 3 (33%) reported negative attitudes. Among family members and carers, businesses, disability peak bodies and service providers a similar trend was reflected. Women, people from multicultural backgrounds and people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability were more likely to say that people's attitudes towards disability were negative. Also, 2 in 5 people with disability reported they do not feel welcome and included in the City of Sydney area, and 84% reported experiencing discrimination.

People in the focus groups told us we can address negative attitudes by showcasing the contributions of people with a diverse range of disabilities and provide opportunities to **“celebrate that diversity means we are all different, and that’s what makes us the same”**.

Some of their ideas included:

- Greater visibility, representation and positive images and stories of people with disability in our communications, media and publications.
- Publicly support the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower and promote awareness of non-visible disabilities.
- More staff training on disability-inclusive language, intersectionality and diverse disabilities to challenge stigma, stereotypes and promote greater understanding in the community.



Image: Two people seated talking at the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people with disability focus group. Photo: Margaret Sevenhazi / City of Sydney

What we'll do next

1. Continue to implement a program of disability inclusion training for all City of Sydney employees to ensure they're capable and competent to support community members, colleagues and employees with disability, with a greater focus on intersectionality and non-visible disability.

Provide specialist disability training to upskill key employees across the organisation. Key areas of focus include inclusive and accessible communications, inclusive built environments, accessible and inclusive services and events.

2. Provide programs that foster positive community attitudes towards people with diverse disabilities, in particular people with non-visible disabilities, people with mental health conditions, people with an intersectional experience of disability and carers.
3. Continue to enhance the visibility of people with disability in our communications, by using images and stories that showcase and celebrate the diversity of disability, in particular people with non-visible disabilities and intersectional experiences of disability.



Image: Person peer-facilitating a focus group for people with disability from multicultural backgrounds.
Photo: Phoebe Pratt / City of Sydney

Case study

We encourage all grant recipients through our grants and sponsorship program to plan inclusive and accessible events for audience members and/or artists with disability. In 2023/24 we funded 55 creative projects that produced more than 1,333 events which catered for audiences with disability. Most events were held in accessible venues or provided online/live streaming options to address physical barriers. Other projects took further steps to be inclusive and accessible, including providing audio description and Auslan interpretation. These combined projects engaged 128 artists with disability and 38 people with disability in creative activity.

Highlights include Sydney Festival 2024, which presented 148 events seen by almost half a million people. A total of 148 performances were produced with 62 accessible performances that presented 8 artists with disability.

Sydney Fringe presented more than 80 artists with disability, mostly through its Limitless shows. One show 'Jazz or A Bucket of Blood' was shortlisted for 3 Fringe award categories and won the Fringe World Tour Ready Award and the San Diego International Fringe Award.

Our support for inclusive creative programs is in line with our [cultural strategy 2025–2035](#), which supports creative grant applicants that maximise accessibility and inclusion, while promoting a diverse creative workforce.



Image: Eliza Hull featuring Roya the Destroya – Sydney Festival. Photo: Victor Frankowski

Focus area 2:

Liveable communities

Liveable communities are places where people can live, learn, work and play, feel safe, belong, connect with others and grow old. Making a community liveable includes physical access and improving the way we connect, giving people the chance to participate and make social connections.

The City of Sydney has a role to play to ensure everyone can:

- access our streets, parks, playgrounds and open spaces
- participate in events and cultural programs
- access and participate at our facilities, including libraries, community centres and leisure centres

- access retail, hospitality and leisure services
- access appropriate and affordable housing.

It's important to note that not all these areas will be addressed in this plan. They're reflected as priorities in other City of Sydney strategies and action plans.

We're not solely responsible for addressing issues across all these areas and will need to collaborate with other organisations and levels of government. This plan will focus on access and inclusion at our services and facilities, and will also identify opportunities for partnership, collaboration and advocacy.

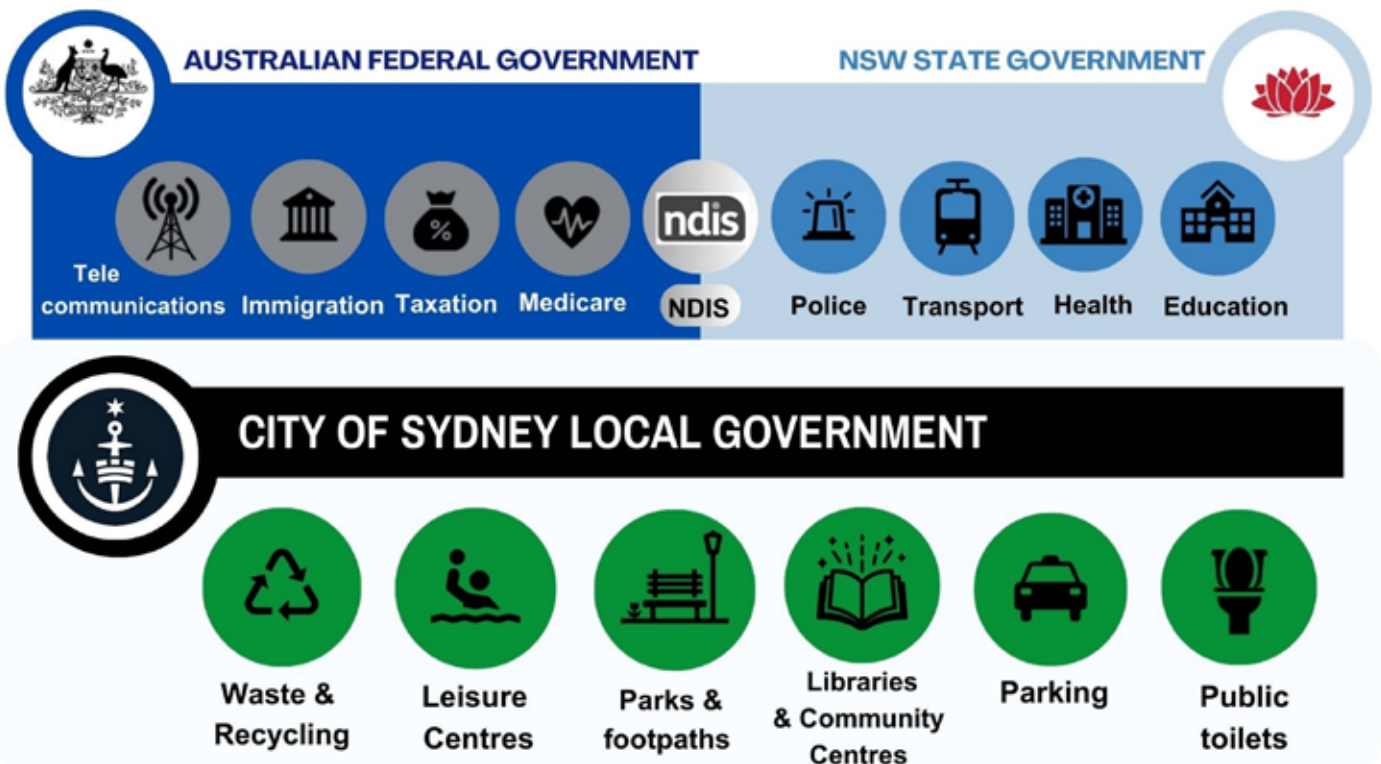


Image: Infographic demonstrating Australian Government and NSW Government responsibilities alongside City of Sydney responsibilities for local services and facilities

Context

The City of Sydney aims to connect residents, workers, visitors and tourists with a rich and vibrant city life – among more than one million daily city users⁴⁷. We're committed to social sustainability that will make our city a fairer place where people feel healthier, welcome, included, and connected now and in the future. We want to strengthen our communities to improve equity, quality of life and resilience⁴⁸.

Unfortunately, there are still barriers that exist which prevent people with disability fully participating in city life, with over a third of Australians with disability avoiding situations due to disability⁴⁹. Responding to our 2023 community wellbeing survey, City of Sydney residents identifying as a person with disability mentioned difficulties accessing:

- venues (26%)
- transport (42%)
- barriers to communication (7%)
- cost of activities impacting participation (53%)
- shortage of suitable programs impacting participation (61%)
- difficulty finding information (53%)⁵⁰.

Liveability is the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life. These include the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities⁵¹.

An inclusive and accessible public domain is the foundation of a liveable community. It's the critical link between accessible public transport, services, facilities and opportunities for social and economic inclusion. The City of Sydney has done much to create a liveable city by improving the public domain, buildings and community facilities, parks pools and gardens, streets and cycleways and public art⁵².

Public places in cities should encourage people to connect, whether as part of their daily lives or for large events. These places are important for forming social connections and go on to influence a person's quality of life and wellbeing⁵³.

“Opportunities for placemaking that promote accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities needs to be integrated throughout the early stages of planning and design. This can be achieved through close consultation and collaboration with people with disability throughout the process.”

– Charles Hung, Inclusion (disability) advisory panel

Public domain

The City of Sydney is responsible for the design, maintenance and management of many public spaces in our area. So we have a responsibility to ensure these spaces are accessible and allow everyone equal opportunity to participate.

People with disability reported that they still experience barriers in our public domain. These include difficulties with lack of accessible footpaths, navigation and wayfinding, access to accessible drop-off and parking and public transport, and difficulty accessing lifts, public toilets and places to rest along their journey⁵⁴.

Events, cultural activities and tourism

Social, recreational and cultural activities are an important part of city life, so it's important everyone, including people with disability can participate.

The City of Sydney offers a diverse range of major events, from Sydney New Year's Eve, Sydney Lunar Festival and Art & About, to small-scale local community activities. We also support major events and festivals through our grants and sponsorship program and we encourage inclusive and accessible events in line with our [guidelines](#).

Events often attract tourists from across the world. In the year to September 2024, the Sydney tourism region hosted 37.1 million visitors from Australia and overseas, spending more than \$26.7 billion⁵⁵, while 23 million people made day trips into Sydney⁵⁶. The estimated total value of domestic travel by people with accessibility needs in the June quarter 2023 alone was \$6.8 billion (21% of total domestic tourism spend in that quarter). This demonstrates that providing accessible tourism is profitable and makes good business sense⁵⁷.

Accessing business in the city

Sydney is Australia's premier destination for shopping and the experience of consumers in the city centre is a key attribute of our global city status. The retail sector is also the foundation of our village main streets that attract many visitors to the City of Sydney area.

Sydney is home to more than 22,000 businesses, providing more than 520,000 jobs and generating more than \$142 billion in economic output each year. The city has around 8,000 businesses in the food and drink, retail and personal services, and tourist, cultural and leisure sectors⁵⁸. We support activation through our Sydney Streets program, which transforms the city's beloved neighbourhood high streets with local festivals of food and drink, retail and free entertainment. We aim to provide public spaces for people by encouraging connection through outdoor dining, and we upskill local business through our innovation programs.

The City of Sydney can play a role in supporting small business to become more accessible and inclusive and highlight those leading the way.

Housing

A sustainable global city must offer a mix of housing to meet the needs of a diverse population, including people with disability. By 2036, 56,000 more dwellings are expected to be built with more than 80% of people living in apartments⁵⁹. As more people live in higher density developments, more focus is needed to encourage greater diversity and choice of housing that is fit-for purpose and addresses the social and cultural needs of specific groups, including accessibility for people with disability.

The City of Sydney Housing for All: Local housing strategy aims to provide for more adaptable and affordable housing. Accessible and adaptable housing enables people with disability and older people to live with independence and dignity, and age in place.

People with disability are more likely to be renting (32%) and in social and public housing (41%)⁶⁰. Given the increasing prevalence of disability with an ageing population, an estimated 60% of homes will, at some point, be occupied by a person with disability or injury, and 90% will have a visitor with disability or injury⁶¹. Few homes are designed to directly suit or be adaptable to the needs of people with disability, with 44% of survey respondents for this plan unsatisfied that their housing meets their needs⁶².

Related strategies and guidelines

- Social sustainability policy and action plan
- Cultural strategy and action plan
- Economic development strategy
- Housing for all: local housing strategy
- Inclusive and accessible event guidelines
- Inclusive and accessible public domain policy and guidelines
- Access strategy and action plan
- Resilience strategy
- 'A city for walking' strategy and action plan
- Wayfinding strategy

What we've done so far

Over the past few years the City of Sydney has achieved several actions which have contributed to a more liveable community for people with disability. Highlights include:

- Continued investment in our pedestrian access program to upgrade footpaths, install kerb ramps, and pedestrian and traffic calming measures to improve accessibility and safety across the City of Sydney area.
- Supporting people with disability to better navigate their way across the local area and prepare for visits to our facilities with greater independence by providing enhanced accessibility information.
- Updating our accessibility map to include key features such as community facilities, parks, playgrounds, taxi ranks, mobility parking spaces and construction hazards.
- Upgrading parks and playgrounds throughout the City of Sydney area to include inclusive design principles for people with sensory and cognitive disability.
- Updating our planning controls to increase the amount of universally designed housing, including achieving 100% silver and 15% platinum housing under the Liveable Housing Guidelines.
- Producing inclusive and accessible events and promoting greater accessibility in event planning through our grants and sponsorship program.



Image: Children on a basket swing playing at Ross Street playground / Photo: Renee Nowytarger

Case study – Good access is good for business

In 2023 and 2024 we hosted 2 business breakfasts at Sydney Town Hall. Both events highlighted the clear business case for access and inclusion. By creating a better experience for customers and employees, it improves diversity and inclusion and the business bottom line.

More than 5.5 million people, or one in 5 Australians experience disability. Businesses that make it easier to buy products and services by improving access and inclusion have twice as much selling power⁶³.

A lively panel discussion of shared lived experience of disability took place, raising awareness and understanding of disability. We introduced Zero Barriers, who shared simple actions that businesses can take to improve customer service, the physical environment and approaches to communication to be more welcoming of people with disability.

“Physical accessibility is important, but changing attitudes is more – showing businesses that access and inclusion does more than just remove barriers to inclusion, it helps boost their bottom line.”

– Paul Nunnari, Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel



Image: Keynote speaker Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher at the Good access is good for business breakfast in 2023. Photo: Kirsten Woodward / City of Sydney

What you told us

We asked people with disability how satisfied they are with City of Sydney facilities, spaces and services. We also asked them to rate the accessibility of different aspects under our control and influence, such as accessible drop-off, footpaths, parking, facilities and services, local events and businesses.

When asked how the City of Sydney could improve liveability people identified these priority issues:

- Footpath accessibility needs improvement to make it easier to get around independently by removing trip hazards, ensuring non-slippery surfaces, appropriate kerb ramps or continuous footpath treatments.
- Accessibility audits of key facilities, along with a program of works for improvements will provide for greater access for all.
- There is an ongoing need to provide more accessible parking and drop-off.
- Improved inclusion can be achieved through playground design considering Everyone Can Play guidelines: 'Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay?'.
- Ongoing engagement is needed with people with disability to identify barriers in the built environment and solutions to improve access and inclusion.
- Quiet spaces and times would assist people with sensory or cognitive disability accessing the city.
- Better wayfinding and signs can assist people with diverse disabilities to navigate Central Sydney with greater ease.
- Ongoing advocacy for more adaptable and affordable housing is needed, along with more specialist disability accommodation to allow people to age in place.
- More inclusive programs and events are needed, along with targeted promotion of accessibility features to assist people with disability to pre-plan and participate.
- The City of Sydney can advocate for greater government commitment to implement key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, along with promoting programs to prevent and respond to abuse of people with disability.
- People with disability need to be empowered to be prepared and plan for and respond to disasters and emergencies.
- People with disability told us they still experience issues on a regular basis when trying to access local businesses. The City of Sydney can play a leadership role to encourage businesses to improve access and inclusion to boost their business bottom line.

Highest satisfaction



Libraries
59%



Venues for hire
46%



Aquatic centres
45%



Parks and reserves
43%



Customer service
41%



Community centres
40%

Lowest satisfaction



Accessible drop-off areas
73%



Footpaths
63%



Mobility parking
62%



Public toilets
62%



City of Sydney events
48%



Businesses
42%

What we'll do next

4. Continue to improve the accessibility of streets, footpaths, parks and open places through renewal programs, upgrades and new capital works projects in line with the inclusive and accessible public domain policy and guidelines.
5. Continue to improve access to information about our facilities and open spaces to assist people with disability.
6. Advocate to other government agencies and landowners to provide more accessible adult change facilities and investigate installation opportunities in the City of Sydney area.
7. Explore opportunities to provide designated quiet spaces and quiet times, places for sensory seeking and places for respite in our facilities, including parks and playgrounds.
8. Provide charging points for mobility devices in some of our facilities.
9. Continue to explore and implement strategies to increase access to on-street and off-street accessible parking and drop-off points in the City of Sydney area.
10. Where they're not already in place, identify and install the most appropriate hearing augmentation systems to be used across our facilities and venues.
11. Continue to collaborate with local businesses and organisations to build their capacity to be more inclusive and accessible.
12. Consult with peak bodies and with people with disability to provide expert advice on the review of our local housing strategy.
13. Continue to produce a range of inclusive community, learning, sport and recreation programs and major events that ensure equitable access and participation for people with disability. This includes a greater focus on intersectionality and participation by carers.
14. Continue to provide programming that empowers people to manage their stressors and social and emotional wellbeing.
15. Continue to produce and encourage major events in line with the inclusive and accessible event guidelines.
16. Continue to promote participation of artists with disability and audience members with disability in arts programs through the cultural strategy.
17. Continue to produce programs, training and advocacy for the prevention and response to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.
18. Develop disaster preparedness and climate adaptation initiatives that empower people with disability to be prepared for and respond to emergencies and disasters.



Image: A woman with disability who is a wheelchair user, travels to meet her taxi after participating in the inclusion (disability) action plan focus group at Town Hall House. Photo: Phoebe Pratt / City of Sydney

Focus area 3:

Meaningful employment

Context

People with disability and carers have valuable contributions to make to the workforce who bring a range of diverse perspectives, skills and experience. There are also many benefits for both businesses and employees with disability.

Business benefits include increased workforce diversity, enhanced productivity and morale⁶⁴. There is growing evidence that businesses that embrace best practice for employing and supporting more people with disability in their workforce outperform their peers⁶⁵. Employee benefits include economic security, a sense of purpose, better health and wellbeing, and improved quality of life. Employees with disability have more job satisfaction and are 4 times more likely to stay longer⁶⁶.

The City of Sydney is committed to providing everyone with equitable opportunities for employment and career progression. We also proactively address barriers to meaningful employment for people with disability and carers. We do this in collaboration with employees with disability by recognising them as the experts in their own life and the unique set of qualities and strengths they bring.

In 2023, 2.4% of employees in the City of Sydney's workforce identified as a person with disability. We're aiming for employees with disability to represent 5% of our workforce by 2029. To do this, we'll focus on improving disability data collection and building cultural safety for people with disability to feel more comfortable about disclosing their disability.

City of Sydney people strategy

We're committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace free of discrimination with a 'people first' culture that supports employees to be their best selves.

We recognise that diverse and inclusive workplaces perform better and are more innovative. Inclusive workplaces foster greater collaboration, engagement and employee wellbeing⁶⁷.

Employees have consistently told us the City of Sydney has many strengths as an employer. People feel safe at work, connected to their teams and supported with the information, tools and resources to perform their roles.

We continue to provide flexible working arrangements for employees, accommodating individual circumstances and carer needs. Our workplace arrangements support diversity and finds ways for everyone to belong. We'll ensure we apply a strategic approach towards integrating the relevant actions from this plan into our next people strategy. This will ensure we consider and empower employees with disability from entry-level to leadership roles.

We recognise that promoting workplace equity, diversity and inclusion is more than a legislative requirement – it's essential to our success.

We comply with the *Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987* and are an equal opportunity employer committed to providing a safe working environment for everyone. We seek to reflect our diverse communities and provide them with confidence that people from all backgrounds can have fair access to work opportunities at the City of Sydney.

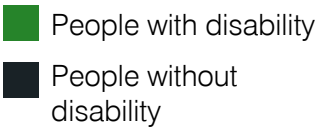
We're committed to creating a workplace culture where diversity and inclusion is valued – one where employees trust they'll be treated fairly, feel respected and empowered to produce the best outcomes for the communities they serve. We foster a culture of diversity, inclusion and belonging – in caring for our city, creating a future for all.

The Australian Human Rights Commission reports people with disability experience several barriers in gaining employment. These include a lack of available jobs, difficulty accessing information about jobs in the recruitment process, trouble accessing skills training and education, and career development opportunities once in a job. They also experience challenges acquiring flexible work arrangements and workplace optimisation (reasonable adjustments) to support them to meet their job requirements⁶⁸.

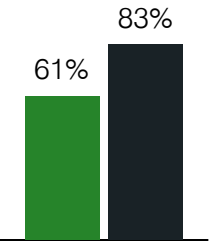
Related strategies

- People strategy
- EEO, diversity and inclusion action plan

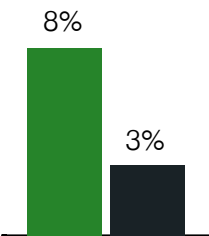
In Australia, employment rates for people with disability are slowly improving, but they're still significantly lower than those without disability across all sectors.



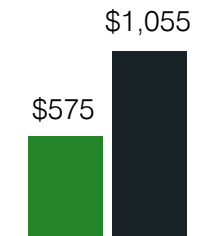
	People with disability	People without disability
Employment rates 2022	61%	83%
Full time	33%	58%
Part time	63%	33%
Unemployed	8%	3%
Average weekly earning	\$575	\$1,055



Employment rates has **remained unchanged for more than 20 years.**⁶⁸



People with disability are **more than twice as likely to be unemployed.**⁶⁹



People without disability **earned more than twice the amount** as people with disability.⁷⁰



Image: Mother and daughter reading together at Green Square Library, Zetland / Photo: Adam Hollingworth

Carers

While many carers are unable to work full-time or at all because of the demands of their caring role, others do work, and struggle to maintain a work-life balance.

In 2022 there were **3 million carers** in Australia, with around 1 in 8 Australians providing unpaid care to people with disability and older people. Almost 2 in 5 carers (39%) have a disability themselves, and primary carers were less likely to be employed (65%)⁶⁹.

The City of Sydney's EEO, diversity and inclusion action plan recognises the important role of carers in our communities. It also recognises that providing ongoing personal care, support and assistance for someone with disability or an older person, can impact all aspects of a person's life⁷⁰.

We're committed to our obligations under the *Carers Recognition Act 2010* by enabling workplace flexibility, policies, training and awareness raising, and providing accessible information.

What we've done so far

- Achieved accreditation for 3 years as a disability confident recruiter by the Australian Disability Network, following our review and assessment of all our systems and processes to ensure inclusive recruitment.
- Continued to provide flexible working arrangement for employees, accommodating individual circumstances and carer needs, including access to care and cultural leave.
- Continued to provide mandatory inclusion (disability) awareness and diversity and inclusion training, as well as mental health training and role-specific specialist disability training.
- Set up partnerships with disability recruitment organisations and the Australian Human Rights Commission's IncludeAbility program to support entry level internships and pilot programs, including ongoing support to transition to permanent employment.
- Updated our purpose and values, which emphasise inclusion while acknowledging the importance of diverse perspectives to create a sense of belonging for everyone.
- Guided employees to practice inclusion through embedding principles into our employee and leadership frameworks and providing opportunities to recognise access and inclusion through employee awards.
- Hosted events celebrating International Day of People with Disability, R U OK Day, and Carers Week, to raise awareness, reduce stigma and promote inclusion in the workplace.

Case study: Winner of the Local Government Excellence Award for Diversity and Inclusion

The NSW Local Government Excellence Awards acknowledge exceptional accomplishments in local government across NSW. The awards celebrate the success and milestones of industry leaders and emerging talents.

In 2023 the City of Sydney won the organisational diversity and inclusion award. The award recognises meaningful support of diversity and inclusion and fostering a sense of belonging for everyone through internal processes and practices. The award acknowledges councils that demonstrate understanding and respect for their communities and embrace the rich dimensions of diversity in their workplaces.

The City of Sydney's nomination for the award highlighted our:

- events celebrating diverse cultures and targeted campaigns raising awareness of barriers and challenges impacting employees from diverse backgrounds
- work to build a more inclusive workplace culture demonstrated by the results of the Diversity Council Australia's inclusive employer index survey

- enhanced employee engagement, reflected in the significant growth of employee network memberships, including increased participation in working groups progressing diversity and inclusion initiatives.

“I joined the Inclusive City employee advisory group because I think it's important that senior managers are leading the way in advocating and demonstrating. Many of us will have team members with non-visible disabilities and all of us have people who need support from time to time. Listening and learning from others is very important to me.”

- Kirsten Woodward, Executive Manager Social City



Image: Representatives from the City of Sydney's employee networks outside Sydney Town Hall with CEO Monica Barone, celebrating the Local Government NSW award for employee networks.

Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

What you told us

We asked what we can do to improve access to meaningful employment for people with disability and/or people with caring responsibilities. We also asked what the City of Sydney could do to better support more people with disability in the local workforce.

Less than half (44%) of survey respondents for this plan were in paid employment. Rates of unemployment are higher for people from multicultural backgrounds (52%), people of diverse sexualities and genders (65%), and those with 2 or more disabilities (69%). Of family or carers, 71% are in paid employment.

People we consulted made several comments and suggestions on the recruitment and retention of employees with disability, which are addressed in this new plan, including:

- Provide more part-time roles and continue to offer flexible work arrangements.
- Train managers and employees on access and inclusion, including during the recruitment process.
- Make sure the application and hiring process is flexible and can accommodate various access requirements.
- Make sure there is a strategic approach towards disability employment, from entry level to leadership, co-designed with employees with disability.
- Set targets for employment of people with disability and create identified roles for people with disability.
- Partner and work with disability employment services and peak bodies to provide candidate-led disability employment opportunities, and support employees into permanent roles.
- Promote the compelling business case for disability employment to business and community to challenge stigma, bias and stereotypes.
- Advocate for and support pay equity and open, inclusive employment for people with disability.
- Partner to promote best-practice employment through participation in communities of practice.
- Embed reasonable workplace adjustments as the norm, providing flexibility to ensure employees are supported to retain jobs.

- Provide the Inclusive City employee network and mentoring and peer-support opportunities for employees with disability to build capacity and offer supports.
- Provide diverse training and development opportunities and embed diversity and inclusion into leadership programs and positions to empower people with disability to lead change.
- Provide information and training on disability advocacy and disability rights.
- Implement strategies to make employees feel culturally safe disclosing their disability, best practice disability data and encourage open conversations between managers and employees.
- Ensure accessible workplaces by carrying out access audits and an improvement program.
- Continue to foster a culture of trust and strengths-based ways of working to encourage a diverse and inclusive culture.

People with disability can give organisations and businesses a **competitive advantage** as they have different ways of navigating, solving problems, challenging assumptions and thinking 'outside the box'.

What we'll do next

19. Build the capacity of managers and employees to foster an inclusive workplace through training and induction programs.
20. Develop a more strategic approach for the City of Sydney to be inclusive of employees with disability, from entry level to leadership.
21. Promote employment, volunteering and development opportunities for people with disability and carers.
22. Continue to create opportunities to engage employees with disability and allies of people with disability as advocates and champions of change.
23. Strengthen procurement practices by building relationships with disability-led organisations and businesses and promoting their use across the City of Sydney.

“There are a lot of misconceptions about people with disability. Given that my disability is invisible, others won’t understand my disability at all and some might see me as an unskilled worker.

They will think I don’t fit in or that I’m less productive than people that don’t have a disability, which is not true in my case”.

– Ari Nassiokass, Inclusive City network member



Image: People dancing at Sydney streets Pyrmont / Photo: Katherine Griffiths

Focus area 4:

Systems and processes

Context

A common issue for people with disability is difficulty navigating systems and processes to access local government services.

These services include customer service requests like paying rates, providing feedback and making complaints, applying for a grant or sponsorship, finding out about City of Sydney facilities, programs and events, and participating in council decision-making processes.

Access to information is a powerful tool for participation and engagement of all people. Information and communications are accessible if people with disability can use and understand them in a way that suits their needs⁷¹. Access to information supports independence, choice and control. Dignity and the right and freedom to make decisions, control their life and make choices are essential to a more inclusive society that supports the independence of people with disability⁷².

In recent years new information and communication technologies has seen the potential to enhance access for people with disability. This includes the ability to create social connections and access information more readily using the internet. But it can also contribute to creating barriers, with the emergence of the 'digital divide'. Some people with disability have low internet usage or do not use it at all, highlighting the importance of keeping a range of ways for people to contact the City of Sydney including digital, over the phone and in-

person assistance⁷³. It also means the increase of alternative formats has improved access to information for everyone, by recognising different people need information in different ways.

It's important that people with disability are engaged and involved in decision making on matters that are important to them. Through partnering with peak disability advocacy agencies and providing information on disability rights and advocacy for people with disability, we can empower greater peer-led change in the community and workplace.

This plan recognises our responsibility to continually review and change the way we do business to ensure people with disability have equitable access to information and services and can have their say on matters that affect them.

Digital and print accessibility

Our digital and print accessibility policy aims to provide equitable access to information and services for all by ensuring the content and functionality of our digital platforms and printed materials comply with accessibility standards. Equal access to information and services is required by law under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

We continue to ensure our digital platforms are accessible for everyone in line with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 \(WCAG 2.2\)](#), developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The guidelines set an improved level of accessibility, to cater to the needs of a constantly evolving and increasingly dynamic web environment.

The policy and guidelines address accessibility considerations such as font types and sizes, use of appropriate colour contrast, and use of headings and alternative text to ensure printed and online documents are accessible.

Engaging people with disability

Residents, workers and visitors have an important role in public participation. Our community engagement strategy and community participation plan aims to give people a voice in decision-making that affects their lives.

People with disability are important contributors and play an important role in providing advice in community matters, both as a community and as individuals with unique perspectives. We understand the importance of consultation at different stages for facilities, spaces, programs, services and events. We look for opportunities to engage people with disability in co-design or co-production to learn and to build capacity⁷⁴. Our disability inclusive community engagement guidelines assist employees to provide inclusive engagement opportunities with people with disability.

Related strategies

- [Community Engagement Strategy and Community Participation Plan](#)
- Digital and print accessibility policy

What we've done so far

Over the past 4 years, we've continued to improve systems and processes to ensure greater access for people with disability. Highlights include:

- The digital and print accessibility policy was reviewed and updated, and the accompanying guidelines for inclusive and accessible materials were developed to provide best practice advice for producing and procuring inclusive and accessible communications.
- More than 300 public access devices were made available at our libraries, community centres and early education centres. These include screen readers, screen magnifier, large print keyboards, trackballs and the ability to change language settings.

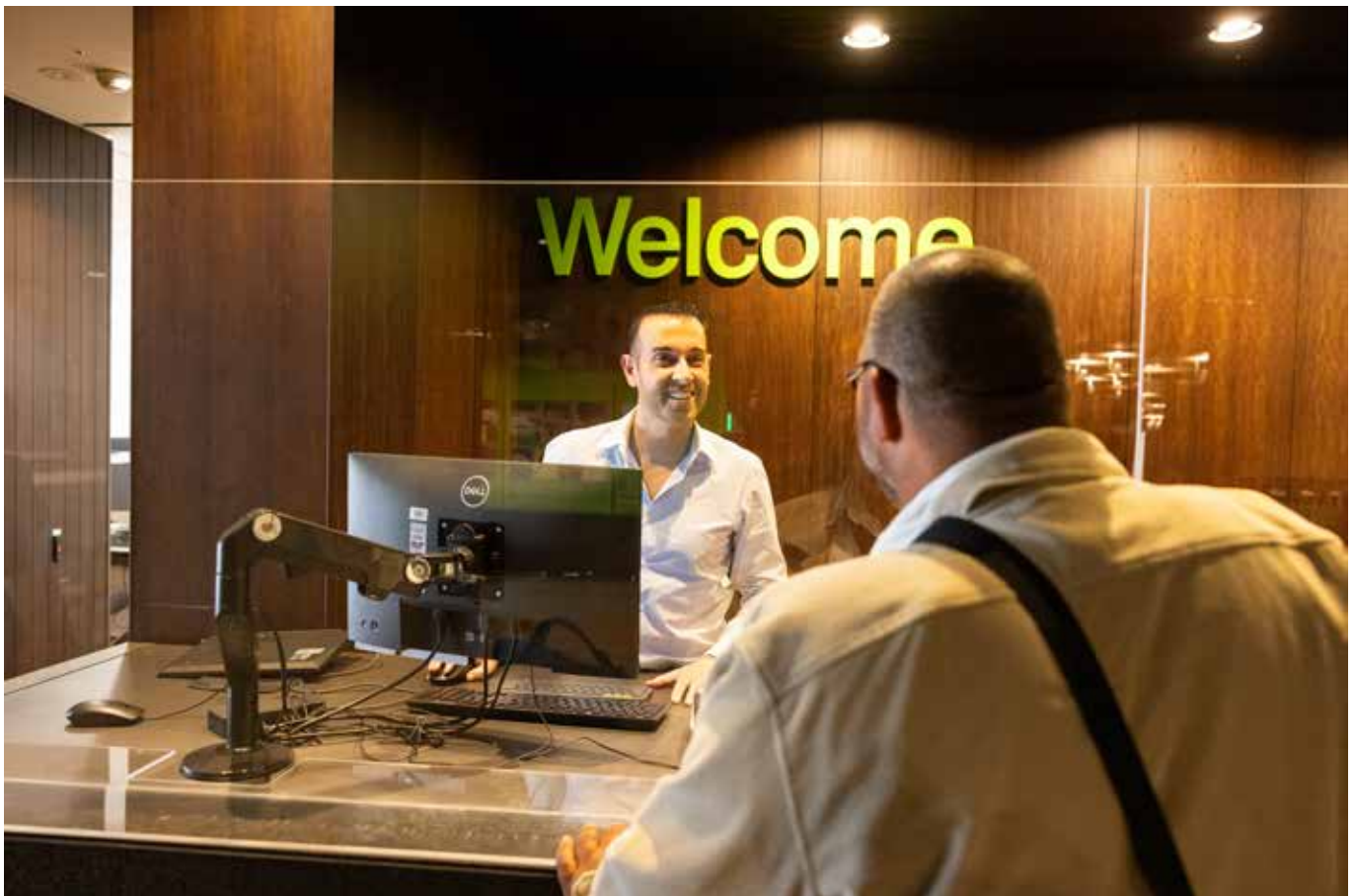


Image: Man visits customer service desk at Town Hall House. Photo: Phoebe Pratt / City of Sydney

- Our What's On website provides event organisers the ability to add access features and disability inclusive tags to their event listings to assist people with disability to plan and attend more inclusive events. Visitors to the website can search for events using the access features or tag.
- An accessible guide to decision making at council was produced to ensure people with disability are informed and can actively take part in Council decision-making processes.
- An Easy Read version of our community engagement strategy was produced, to ensure more people can get involved and have a say on issues important to them.
- We continued to consult with the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel to provide advice on strategies, projects and programs to ensure they're accessible and inclusive.
- We added wifi in all our facilities and we're adding new audio-visual equipment in our community centres.
- Provided the updated inclusive and accessible event guidelines to all event organisers and grant recipients seeking to produce events and festivals in the City of Sydney area to enhance access and inclusion across a diverse range of events.
- Reviewed our grants application process and forms to ensure greater accessibility in consultation with the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.

When we asked if there are **enough opportunities to have a say on issues that are important**, **39%** of people with disability **agreed**, while **35% disagreed**.

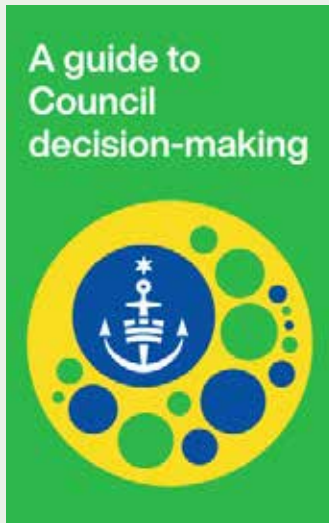
People with disability need to be engaged to help design and review services, programs, events and communications strategies to ensure that the needs of people with disability are considered. There is a need to embed more opportunities to co-design or co-produce.

What you told us

We asked how people with disability, family members and carers about their experiences accessing our services, programs and information. Feedback included:

- Digital accessibility remains a priority with survey respondents accessing City of Sydney information through social media (49%), What's On Sydney (47%), City of Sydney website (44%) and newsletters (31%).
- Targeted promotion of inclusive services, events and programs to the disability community with accessibility information provided to enable people to pre-plan and participate.
- Improved accessibility will allow for more people with disability to apply for grants and sponsorships, along with greater promotion and awareness for the disability community.
- Providing more information and communications in alternative formats will enable people to be informed, engaged and allow for more choice and control.
- There is an ongoing need to provide a range of customer services and information, including in print, by phone and in-person.
- Make sure customer service employees are available to assist people with disability to navigate information and complex processes so people are 'not lost in the system'.
- A centralised disability landing page with links to relevant services, programs and events would assist people with disability to remain informed and engaged.
- Strategic partnerships to build self-advocacy skills and support to empower people with disability to participate in decision making and help lead change is needed.
- Support greater digital literacy and capacity building and explore new and emerging technologies and how they can benefit people with disability, such as artificial intelligence.

Case study – A guide to Council decision-making



We produced an accessible guide to Council decision making to ensure people with disability are informed and can actively take part in Council decision-making processes.

The guide is presented as a webpage, with a PDF version that can be printed on request at community centres and customer and neighbourhood service centres.

It explains the types of activities used to enable direct public participation and how people can get involved. The page has an index of participation channels with links to relevant pages on the City of Sydney website, creating a clear guide to all the different opportunities for involvement in decision making processes.

The Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel was consulted during the early stages of development and feedback from the panel was extremely positive:

“On the whole, the content is full of useful information; I learned a lot, reading it! I believe it is informative to all people, including those with a disability.”

“I wasn’t aware of all the different ways we can participate with the City of Sydney. I love that everyone gets a chance to speak during Council committee meetings.”

Further resources will be added to the guide under the next plan, including resources in Easy Read, infographics and social stories.

What we’ll do next

24. Continue to identify and implement strategies, resources and capacity building to inform people with disability about how they can be involved in Council decision-making.
25. Continue to actively engage people with disability in Council decision-making processes, including through the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.
26. Continue to provide equal access to our information and services by ensuring our websites and printed materials adhere to our digital and print accessibility policy.
27. Investigate opportunities to further improve the customer service experience for people with disability.
28. Develop and produce marketing and communication strategies to raise awareness of our events, programs, and services among people with disability.
29. In consultation with people with disability review grants processes and practices to identify and remove barriers to people with disability applying for grants.

People walking outside of Darling Square library
Photo: Katherine Griffiths



Actions

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
City of Sydney employees are disability aware and confident. They have access to specialist training and development opportunities to create inclusive built environments and ensure our communications and services are accessible and inclusive of people with disability. Employees will have the skills to meet requirements under the commonwealth <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> and the NSW <i>Disability Inclusion Act 2014</i> and provide services that consider inclusion, not just compliance.	1. Continue to implement a program of disability inclusion training for all City of Sydney employees to ensure they are capable and competent to support community members, colleagues and employees with disability, with a greater focus on intersectionality and non-visible disability. Provide specialist disability training to upskill key employees across the organisation. Key areas of focus include inclusive and accessible communications, inclusive built environments, accessible and inclusive services and events.	Number and percentage of new employees who have completed disability inclusion training, diversity and inclusion training, and Hidden Disabilities Sunflower training. Number of staff who have completed relevant specialist training. Number/percentage of staff who reported they felt the workplace supported and encouraged inclusion and diversity.	People and Culture: Learning and Development	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.2 Our city is a place where people are welcomed, included and connected.

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Positive community attitudes towards people with disability and mental health conditions are enhanced through City of Sydney programs that foster greater awareness, understanding and respect.	2. Provide programs that foster positive community attitudes towards people with diverse disabilities, in particular people with non-visible disabilities, people with mental health conditions, people with an intersectional experience of disability and carers.	Number of programs produced that aim to foster positive community attitudes towards people with disability, people with non-visible disabilities, people with mental health conditions and carers. Percentage of people who attended City of Sydney events and reported increased understanding and awareness of the importance of social inclusion.	City Greening and Leisure: Aquatic and Leisure Services Creative City: Cultural Programs and Services Social City: Social Programs and City Spaces	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.2 Our city is a place where people are welcomed, included and connected.
Positive community attitudes towards people with disability and mental health conditions are promoted through the City of Sydney's digital and print platforms.	3. Continue to enhance the visibility of people with disability in our communications, through use of images and stories that showcase and celebrate the diversity of disability, in particular people with non-visible disabilities and intersectional experiences of disability.	Number of new images that include people with disability added to our image library for use in communications. Number/percentage of images tagged 'disability' in the image library.	Strategic Development and Engagement: City Communications	Ongoing	

Liveable communities

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Streets, parks, footpaths and open spaces in the City of Sydney area are accessible and inclusive. The design, maintenance and management of infrastructure and places enables people with disability to travel through the city with dignity and independence and brings people together.	4. Continue to improve the accessibility of streets, footpaths, parks and open places through renewal programs, upgrades and new capital projects in compliance with the Inclusive and accessible public domain policy and guidelines.	Funds spent on access and inclusion. Square metres of footpath upgraded or installed. Number of new kerb ramps / continuous footpath treatments. Number of accessible playgrounds and parks.	City Access and Transport City Design City Projects City Greening and Leisure City Infrastructure and Traffic Operations Property Services	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 4.1 The city's liveability will be enhanced through well planned and designed development.
	5. Continue to improve access to information about our facilities and open spaces to assist people with disability.	Number of updates to the City of Sydney accessibility map. Number of page views on the City of Sydney accessibility map each year. Feedback on accuracy of map and access information on the City of Sydney website.	City Greening & Leisure City Spaces Property Services Social Policy	Ongoing	
	6. Advocate to other government agencies and landowners to provide more accessible adult change facilities and investigate opportunities to install these in the City of Sydney area.	Number of accessible adult change facilities installed in the City of Sydney area.	City Greening and Leisure City Projects Social Policy	Ongoing	

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Streets, parks, footpaths and open spaces in the City of Sydney area are accessible and inclusive. The design, maintenance and management of infrastructure and places enables people with disability to travel through the city with dignity and independence and brings people together.	7. Explore opportunities to provide designated quiet spaces and quiet times, places for sensory seeking and places for respite in City of Sydney facilities, including parks and playgrounds.	Number of quiet space/sensory seeking places provided in existing or new City of Sydney facilities or parks. Number of quiet spaces and quiet times provided in City of Sydney facilities. Narrative about what this means for accessibility and people with disability.	City Greening and Leisure City Spaces Property Services	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 4.1 The city's liveability will be enhanced through well planned and designed development.
	8. Provide charging points for mobility devices in some of our facilities.	Number of charging points installed in community facilities.	City Greening and Leisure City Projects and Properties City Spaces	Ongoing	
	9. Continue to explore and implement strategies to increase access to on-street and off-street accessible parking and drop-off points in the City of Sydney area.	Number of new mobility parking spaces. Number of spaces within 200m of key social infrastructure. Number of new kerb ramps installed in no parking zones.	City Access and Transport. City Infrastructure and Traffic Operations. Social Policy	Ongoing	

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Accessible City of Sydney community facilities and venues provide the foundation of inclusive participation.	10. Where they're not already in place, identify and install the most appropriate hearing augmentation systems to be used across our facilities and venues.	Number of hearing augmentation systems installed.	City Spaces Property Services	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 7.2 Everyone has equitable and affordable access to community and cultural facilities and programs, supporting social connection and wellbeing.
Businesses in the City of Sydney area are more accessible and inclusive to people with disability.	11. Continue to collaborate with local businesses and organisations to build their capacity to be more inclusive and accessible.	Number of programs, activities, campaigns or resources to build the capacity of City of Sydney businesses to be more inclusive and accessible. Number and funding of grants.	City Business Grants and Sponsorships Social Policy	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.3 Everyone benefits from equitable economic growth and has financial security.
More housing in the City of Sydney area is accessible and adaptable. It will meet the needs of people with disability and support people to age in place.	12. Consult with peak bodies and people with disability to provide expert advice on the review of the City of Sydney local housing strategy.	Number of advocacy. Number and funding of grants.	Strategic Planning	2026–2027	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 10.3 An increased supply of affordable housing supports diverse communities and the economy.

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Opportunities for inclusive participation are available at City of Sydney facilities, and people with disability can easily identify opportunities that meet their preferences.	13. Continue to produce a range of inclusive community, learning, sport and recreation programs and major events that ensure equitable access and participation for people with disability. This includes a greater focus on intersectionality and participation by carers.	Number of inclusive and accessible programs produced (online and face-to-face). Number of attendees at inclusive and accessible events. Number of disability-inclusive events presented by City of Sydney tagged on What's On. Number of City of Sydney presented events listed on What's On with at least one accessibility feature. Qualitative report: highlight best practice examples from programs.	Creative City Social Programs City Spaces Social Policy City Communications Grants and Sponsorships	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city. 7.2 Everyone has equitable and affordable access to community and cultural facilities and programs, supporting social connection and wellbeing.
	14. Continue to provide programming that empowers people to manage their stressors and social and emotional wellbeing.	Number of events/programs produced to manage stressors and social and emotional wellbeing. Number of attendees at inclusive and accessible events. Qualitative report: highlight best practice examples from programs.	City Greening and Leisure City Spaces	Ongoing	

inclusion (disability) action plan

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Major events in the City of Sydney area are accessible, inclusive and encourage greater participation of people with disability.	15. Continue to produce and encourage major events in line with the inclusive and accessible event guidelines.	Number of major events that comply with the inclusive and accessible event guidelines. Number of events staff received training. Qualitative report: Major events implementing best practice.	Creative City: Major Events and Festivals	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 3.3 Creativity and culture is embedded in the fabric of the city. 8.1 We value our cultural life and champion our creative industries.
People with disability have equitable opportunities to participate in cultural life and events in the city.	16. Continue to promote participation of artists with disability and audience members with disability in arts programs through implementation of the cultural strategy.	Number of inclusive and accessible events/programs. Number of artists with disability employed. Number of programs that supported audience members with disability.	Creative City	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city. 8.4 Sydney's cultural life reflects the diversity of our communities.
The community is empowered to identify, report and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.	17. Continue to produce programs, training and advocacy for the prevention and response to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.	Number of resources or programs. Number of employees/ community members received training. Number of advocacy undertaken.	Safe City Social Policy	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 7.5 People feel safe in the city.

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
Emergency planning and management, and disaster risk reduction at the City of Sydney is disability inclusive. People with disability are empowered to actively participate in shaping inclusive emergency strategies and disaster preparedness.	18. Develop disaster preparedness and climate adaptation initiatives that empower people with disability to be prepared for and respond to emergencies and disasters.	Number of people with disability and service providers undertaken training. Number of climate change / disaster preparedness initiatives undertaken. Percentage of satisfied people with disability for person-centred emergency planning.	Sustainability and Resilience Security and Emergency Management Social Policy Social Programs	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 7.3 Infrastructure, services and communities are prepared for and can withstand the impacts of acute shocks and chronic stresses and emergency situations 7.5 People feel safe in the city.

Meaningful employment

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
The City of Sydney builds on its organisational capability for disability inclusion.	19. Build the capacity of managers and employees to foster an inclusive workplace through training and induction programs.	Number/percentage of employees who reported they felt the workplace supported and encouraged inclusion and diversity. Number/percentage of managers/employees that have undertaken disability training. Percentage of participant satisfaction with training.	Learning and Development	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city. 6.3 Everyone benefits from equitable economic growth and has financial security.
The City of Sydney builds on its organisational capability for disability inclusion, to recruit and retain more employees with disability.	20. Develop a more strategic approach for the City of Sydney to be inclusive of employees with disability, from entry level to leadership.	Number/percentage of employees with disability. Number of entry level internship, traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities offered each year. Number/percentage of employees with disability completed leadership program. Number/percentage increase in employees with disability who are in leadership positions. Number/percentage of employees who reported they felt the workplace supported and encouraged inclusion and diversity.	People and Culture Recruitment Learning and Development	Ongoing	

inclusion (disability) action plan

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
The City of Sydney builds local capability for disability inclusion.	21. Promote employment, volunteering and development opportunities for people with disability and carers.	Number of access and inclusion initiatives promoted to businesses and community organisations. Number of training provided. Number of volunteering opportunities promoted that are disability inclusive.	People and Culture City Business Social Policy	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city. 6.3 Everyone benefits from equitable economic growth and has financial security.
Build an inclusive workplace culture where employees with disability are valued and respected.	22. Continue to create opportunities to engage employees with disability and allies of people with disability as advocates and champions of change.	Number/percentage of employees who reported they felt the workplace supported and encouraged inclusion and diversity. Median length of tenure of employees with disability compared to employees without disability.	People and Culture	Ongoing	
The City of Sydney's procurement policies and practices improve open employment outcomes for people with disability, and support disability-led businesses in the local area.	23. Strengthen procurement practices by building relationships with disability-led organisations and businesses and promoting their use across the City of Sydney.	Number of suppliers of disability-led organisations and businesses. Funds spent on disability-led organisations and businesses.	Procurement	2026–2027	

Systems and processes

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
People with disability are informed, consulted and actively participate in Council decision-making processes.	24. Continue to identify and implement strategies, resources and capacity building to inform people with disability about how they can be involved in Council decision making.	Number of guidelines distributed or downloaded. Number of resources. Number training provided. Percentage of people with disability who feel they can have a say on issues that are important to them.	City Engagement City Communications Social Policy	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.4 Communities are engaged and actively participate in the governance of their city.
	25. Continue to actively engage people with disability in Council decision-making processes including through the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.	Number of initiatives, projects and/or strategies where consultation was undertaken with the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.	Social Policy	Ongoing	7.6 Communities are empowered to lead the change they want to see in the city.
City information is accessible to people with disability.	26. Continue to provide equal access to our information and services by ensuring our websites and printed materials adhere to our digital and print accessibility policy.	Number of employees who completed training. Number of downloads of the digital and print accessibility policy and guidelines for inclusive and accessible materials. Qualitative report: on action taken to improve access to information that is accessible to people with disability.	Learning and Development City Communications Social Policy	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.5 Communities have the skills, tools and access to technology to engage and participate in a digital life.

inclusion (disability) action plan

Outcomes / Objectives	Actions: What we'll do	Measures	Responsibility	Timing	Community Strategic Plan Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050
City of Sydney customer service is accessible to people with disability.	27. Investigate opportunities to further improve the customer service experience for people with disability.	Qualitative report on engagement feedback, enhancements implemented, and improvement of customer service satisfaction ratings.	Customer Service	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.2 Everyone feels welcome and included in the city.
People with disability are informed of Inclusive and accessible City events, programs and services available to them.	28. Develop and produce marketing and communication strategies to raise awareness of our events, programs and services among people with disability.	Qualitative report: on the marketing and communication strategies used to attract more people with disability to participate in events, programs and services.	City Communications	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 7.2 Everyone has equitable and affordable access to community and cultural facilities and programs, supporting social connection and wellbeing
People with disability are able to access and apply for City of Sydney grants and sponsorships.	29. In consultation with people with disability review the City of Sydney's grants processes and practices to identify and remove barriers to people with disability applying for grants.	Number/funding of disability-related grants. Number of communications. Number of recommendations implemented.	Grants and Sponsorship	Ongoing	Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision objective: 6.5 Communities have the skills, tools and access to technology to engage and participate in a digital life.

Implementation and governance

Implementation

The projects identified in this action plan have been prioritised according to the feedback from our engagement with people with disability, the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel and the resources and capacity of the City of Sydney.

Indicative timeframes for projects to begin have been identified as part of the planning process. Some actions identified as ongoing will be actioned and reported each year. Start dates for projects will be confirmed each year as they're further developed, and budgets and resources are allocated and integrated as part of the annual business planning process.

Monitoring progress

We'll regularly measure and report against the actions in this plan.

This plan is based on the findings of ongoing research and engagement. But the environment in which we provide services is dynamic and the nature of projects and priorities may change. Identified projects may not be required and new opportunities and priorities may emerge.

Regular monitoring and annual progress reports will consider:

- the quality and success of implementation to date
- modification of strategies as required to achieve specific objectives of the plan.

Governance

The implementation of the inclusion (disability) action plan 2025–2029 will be overseen by the executive sponsor responsible for driving a culture of inclusion across the organisation and an internal working group, comprised of employees from across several City of Sydney business units.

Relevant business units will be required to report on progress of implementing actions every 6 months as part of their regular business reporting. This will inform the regular working group meetings, biannual status reports and annual progress reports.

Progress and outcomes will be reported each year as part of the City of Sydney's annual report. A copy will be provided to the NSW Minister for Families and Communities and Disability Inclusion and the NSW Disability Council as required under the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* and *NSW Disability Inclusion Amendment Act 2022*.

Ongoing consultation

Ensuring people with disability participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plan is essential to make sure we're headed towards success.

The Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel will be consulted on the implementation, progress and evaluation of the plan. The annual progress report will be discussed with the panel.

Where appropriate and feasible to relevant actions in the plan, we'll also consult with other groups representing people with disability.

The annual report will be made publicly available online.

Accessibility

The City of Sydney is committed to providing information in accessible formats. We'll ensure this plan is made publicly available in the following alternative formats:

- Accessible PDF
- Easy Read
- Large Print



Image: People clapping at an Auslan poetry slam at Green Square library / Photo: Jane Williams

Measuring success

Overview

The actions in this plan aim to create a more inclusive and accessible city.

Inclusion of people with disability in the City of Sydney area will be influenced by factors outside of the actions set out in this action plan. These include factors such as Australian economic and employment conditions, new and emerging technologies, and the attitudes and actions of individuals, business owners and community groups and service providers in the City of Sydney local area.

The City of Sydney has 2 distinct roles in measuring the success of the action plan:

- **outcome measures:** from participants in our programs to understand how the programs are achieving their intended outcomes
- **impact measures:** for access and inclusion for people with disability in our survey that informs this plan every 4 years, and their perception of quality of life from our community wellbeing indicators report every 3 to 4 years.

The action tables above include:

- **outcomes:** these are our desired objectives
- **measures:** indicate how much or how well we've achieved the action.

Measuring impact

It's important we measure the impact of our actions and report on this progress to our communities.

We'll prepare an annual progress report for the Minister for Families and Communities and Disability Inclusion and the NSW Disability Council.

The report will use progress measures identified in the action tables. This report is published on our website and progress is reported each year to the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel.

Monitoring outcomes

It's important to monitor outcomes and broad trends in our communities and use this information to review and influence future priorities and actions. We'll use the results of the community wellbeing survey, along with the inclusion (disability) action plan survey to inform the next plan to measure impact and trends, and identify barriers, needs and community assets.

The City of Sydney will monitor the impact of our actions against the long-term outcomes as part of the review process at the end of the 4-year planning cycle.

The below indicator framework outlines how we'll use relevant population level indicators to monitor outcomes at the end of the 4-year timeframe.

Outcome indicator framework

Desired outcomes	Population level indicator	Indicator source
Direction 1 – Positive community attitudes and behaviours		
Positive community attitudes towards people with disability and mental health conditions are enhanced through City of Sydney programs that foster greater awareness, understanding and respect.	– Percentage experiencing positive community attitudes. – Percentage of people with disability who feel welcome and included.	– Inclusion (disability) action plan consultation in 2029 – Community wellbeing indicators
Positive community attitudes towards people with disability and mental health conditions are promoted through the City of Sydney's digital and print platforms.	– Percentage who report feeling part of the community and trust and believe when needed they can get help from their neighbours.	– Community wellbeing indicators
Direction 2 – The creation of more liveable communities for people with disability		
Streets, parks, footpaths and open spaces in the City of Sydney area are accessible and inclusive. The design, maintenance and management of infrastructure and places enables people with disability to travel through the city with dignity and independence and brings people together.	– Percentage of people with disability who report city streets, parks, footpaths, open spaces and facilities are accessible. – Percentage of City of Sydney residents satisfied with access to parks and open space, and sporting or recreational opportunities. – Annual investment on acquiring, developing and enhancing infrastructure and assets in the City of Sydney area.	– Inclusion (disability) action plan consultation in 2029 – Community strategic plan annual report – Australian Bureau of Statistics Census
Accessible City of Sydney community facilities and venues provide the foundation of inclusive participation.	– Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability who report satisfaction with access to the City of Sydney's recreational facilities, community halls/venues and community centres, and libraries.	– Inclusion (disability) action plan consultation in 2029 – Community wellbeing indicators

Desired outcomes	Population level indicator	Indicator source
Direction 2 – The creation of more liveable communities for people with disability (continued)		
Opportunities for inclusive participation are available at City of Sydney facilities and people with disability can easily identify opportunities that meet their preferences.	– Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability participating in programs, activities and events. – Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability who report satisfaction with the number and quality of arts and cultural events such as festivals, performances and exhibitions in the City of Sydney local area.	– Inclusion (disability) action plan consultation in 2029 – Community wellbeing indicators – Community strategic plan annual report
Direction 3 – Meaningful employment		
The City of Sydney builds on its organisational capability for disability inclusion to recruit and retain more employees with disability.	– Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability being employed aged 15+ years. – Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability reporting underemployment. – Percentage of people with disability reported as part of the City of Sydney workforce.	– Inclusion (disability) action plan consultation in 2029 – Community wellbeing indicators – Australian Bureau of Statistics Census
Direction 4 – More equitable access to mainstream services through better systems and processes		
People with disability are informed, consulted and actively participate in Council decision-making processes.	– Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability reporting opportunities to have a say on issues that are important to them.	– Inclusion (disability) action plan consultation in 2029 – Community wellbeing indicators
People with disability are informed of inclusive and accessible City of Sydney events, programs and services available to them.	– Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability reporting satisfaction with accessibility and inclusion of events. – Percentage of people with disability compared to people without disability reporting access to arts and cultural events in their area.	– Inclusion (disability) action plan consultation in 2029 – Community wellbeing indicators

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Attachment B

Engagement Report - Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025-2029
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Community engagement report – inclusion (disability) action plan 2025–2029

Stage 1



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Executive summary

We want to make Sydney a truly inclusive and welcoming city and champion the rights of people with disability, through engagements to inform the next Inclusion (disability) action plan 2025–29.

We've consulted with more than 350 people with disability, their families and carers, service providers and disability representative organisations.

This report details what we heard from focus groups, a co-design roundtable, a survey and other engagement activities. Their feedback will inform our next steps and priorities in developing our next inclusion (disability) action plan. Key insights are highlighted under the plan's 4 focus areas.

1. Positive community attitudes and behaviours

- Discrimination and negative attitudes towards disability are still widely experienced. Change is needed to ensure people with disability feel included and welcomed in the community, especially those with intersectional experiences of disability.
- Promoting more positive images and stories of people with a diverse range of disabilities, and their contributions to the community and workplaces, will challenge stigma and discrimination.
- Attitudes will change for the better by embedding co-design principles, promoting continuous improvement and disability-led advocacy.

2. Liveable communities

- Accessibility is paramount for liveability, enabling dignity and independence. It's important to continue prioritising accessibility of streets, footpaths, parks, facilities and open spaces, with a dedicated budget and opportunities for people with disability to have a say on works.
- Safe and welcoming places are needed to enable people with a diverse range of disabilities to come together and connect, share and advocate.
- By co-designing programs and events, the City of Sydney can create more equitable participation and reduce social isolation and loneliness.
- Collaboration with businesses is required to support them to improve access and inclusion to increase profitability, diversify their customer base and enhance their reputation.
- Providing greater affordable and accessible housing and easing the cost-of-living crisis for people doing it tough will help support people with disability experiencing financial stress.
- Helping people with disability prepare and plan for emergencies, along with supporting measures to address reporting of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation to improve safety.

3. Meaningful employment

- Demonstrate commitment and leadership by developing a disability workforce strategy in consultation with people with disability, to increase meaningful employment from entry-level to leadership, with clear targets and measurable outcomes.
- Build workforce capability through a strategic and targeted learning and development program.
- Influence greater employment for people with disability by facilitating community training, education and resources that promote the business case for a diverse and inclusive workforce.

4. Systems and processes

- Accessible information and communication are important, including providing information in alternative formats, ensuring digital accessibility and providing in-person support.
- Ongoing sector support and development is needed, along with a centralised hub of access, inclusion and disability information, and options to report accessibility issues in the City of Sydney local area.

Overview

Why we're doing this

The City of Sydney is committed to making Sydney more accessible and inclusive. This includes strategies to ensure our services, programs and events are inclusive for everyone.

The [inclusion \(disability\) action plan 2021–2025](#) aligns with our long-term vision of an inclusive city for all. It includes 29 actions designed to actively address barriers faced by people with disability. The actions build on the success of previous plans and embrace new and emerging opportunities.

Our current plan is due to finish on 30 June 2025 and we're developing our new plan for 2025–2029. In our new plan we'll respond to emerging issues and provide opportunities for co-designing solutions to enhance access and inclusion and promote the rights of people with disability.

Engagement purpose

We wanted to:

- understand barriers to access and inclusion in the City of Sydney local area, as well as strengths and opportunities to promote the rights of people with disability
 - gather feedback and ideas to enhance access and inclusion under the 4 legislated areas of the inclusion (disability) action plan – positive community attitudes and behaviours, liveable communities, meaningful employment, and systems and processes
 - co-design responsive actions with people with lived experience of disability, their families and carers, disability service providers and disability representative organisations.
-

Engagement summary

From 20 August to 9 October 2024, we invited feedback on developing our new inclusion (disability) action plan.

The Sydney Your Say webpage provided people with the opportunity to complete an online survey, provide comments by email or post, or complete a printed survey and drop it off at one of our libraries, community centres or customer service centres.

We aimed to ensure representation of our diverse communities across 5 focus groups:

- people with intellectual disability
- people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability
- people with disability from multicultural backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability
- people who are neurodivergent.

An extra focus group was held for disability service providers, and we carried out in-person, pop-up engagements.

We also worked with the Australian Disability Network on a half day roundtable workshop that was set up to empower co-design of responsive actions for the new plan.

Engagement accessibility

- Sydney Your Say survey was translated into Easy Read and 5 community languages
- Easy Read materials were provided for focus group with people with intellectual disability
- Presentations in plain language and definitions were provided a week in advance
- Live captioning of online focus groups, co-design roundtable and multicultural focus group
- Auslan interpreters were provided at the co-design roundtable
- Accessible presentations were shared with participants with low vision in advance
- Accessible venues were used, including a quiet space for the co-design roundtable

Engagement outcomes

We received 160 survey responses, 158 online and 2 printed, and 2 emails with written feedback. The Sydney Your Say webpage was visited 2,911 times.

Our focus groups with diverse communities included 53 participants. Outcomes along with key themes and insights are contained in attachments E to I. A disability service provider focus group included 12 participants, with neighbouring councils. The summary report is in attachment J.

We carried out in-person, pop-up engagements at R U OK Day events, Wear it Purple and Lunar Moon festival at community centres. Outcomes are detailed in Attachment K.

A roundtable workshop of 90 people co-designed new actions for the plan. These included people with disability, family members and carers, disability service providers and representative organisations, and our employees (including members of our disability employee network).



Image: Table-based workshop with 8 participants co-designing actions for the new plan. Photo by Margaret Sevenjhazi.

Sydney Your Say – key findings

Survey demographics

From a total of 160 survey responses, we received 82 from people with disability, 55 from family members or carers and 18 from disability service providers, peak bodies or businesses.

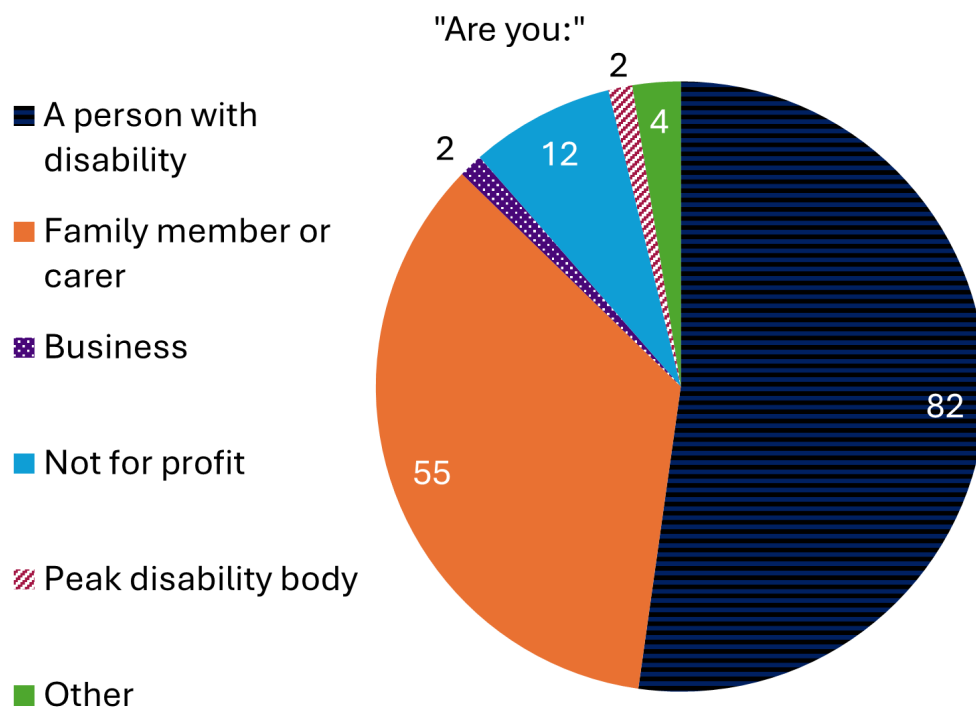


Figure 1: A pie chart containing survey respondent profiles, reflecting the figures written above.

Respondents with disability included around 33% from multicultural backgrounds, more than 32% from people of diverse sexualities and genders, and more than half (55%) from people with 2 or more disabilities.

There was wide variety in age groups, with more than half aged over 40 (58%), and 23% over 60 years.

Respondents with disability – demographic groups

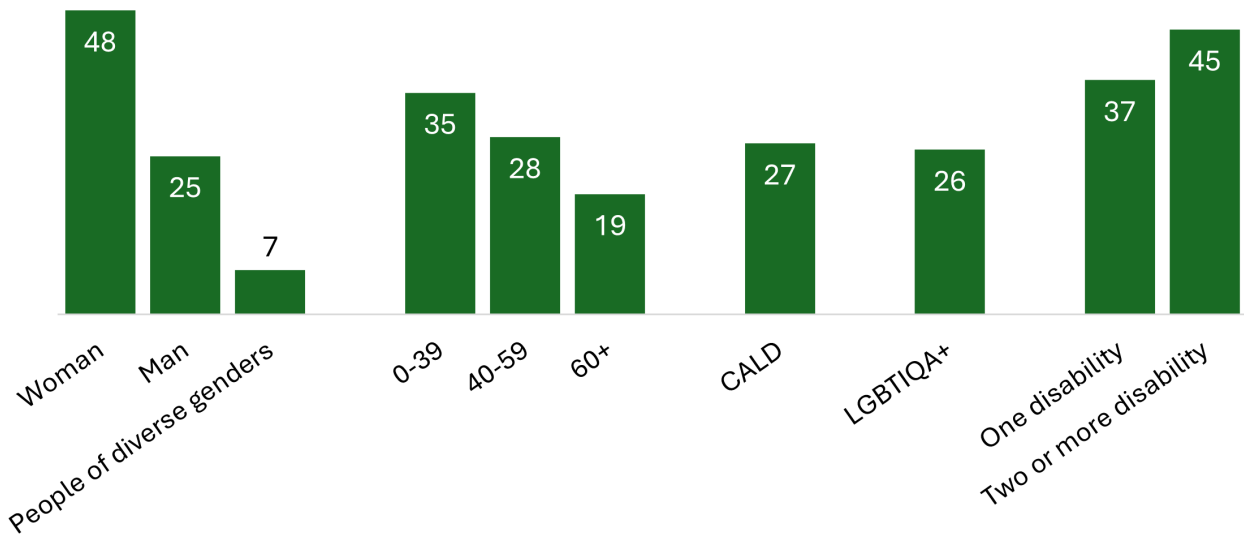


Figure 2: Bar graph showing the demographic profile of respondents with disability, reflecting the figures written above.

More than half (55%) of respondents with disability have a physical disability, 42% reported a long-term or chronic health condition, 37% have a sensory disability, 33% have a mental health condition, 29% identify as neurodivergent and 12% with cognitive or intellectual disability.

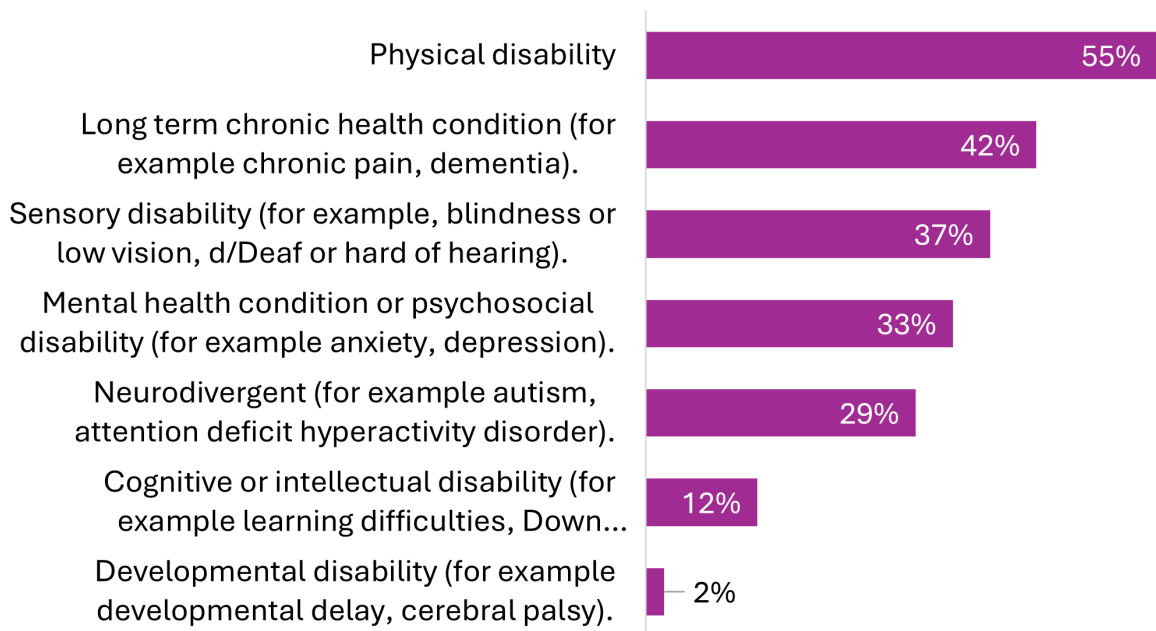


Figure 3: Bar graph showing people with disability by type of disability, reflecting the figures written above.

People with disability who responded visit the City of Sydney local area for different reasons:

- 82% go out and socialise
- 66% go to cultural events
- 63% use services
- 43% work
- 35% exercise, or do sport or other physical activity
- 13% study.

Reported use of services was higher with people of diverse sexualities and genders (77%), and for people over 60 years (84%).

Respondents with disability – reasons for visiting local area

“Do you, or the person with disability, visit the City of Sydney local area to: (Select all that apply)”

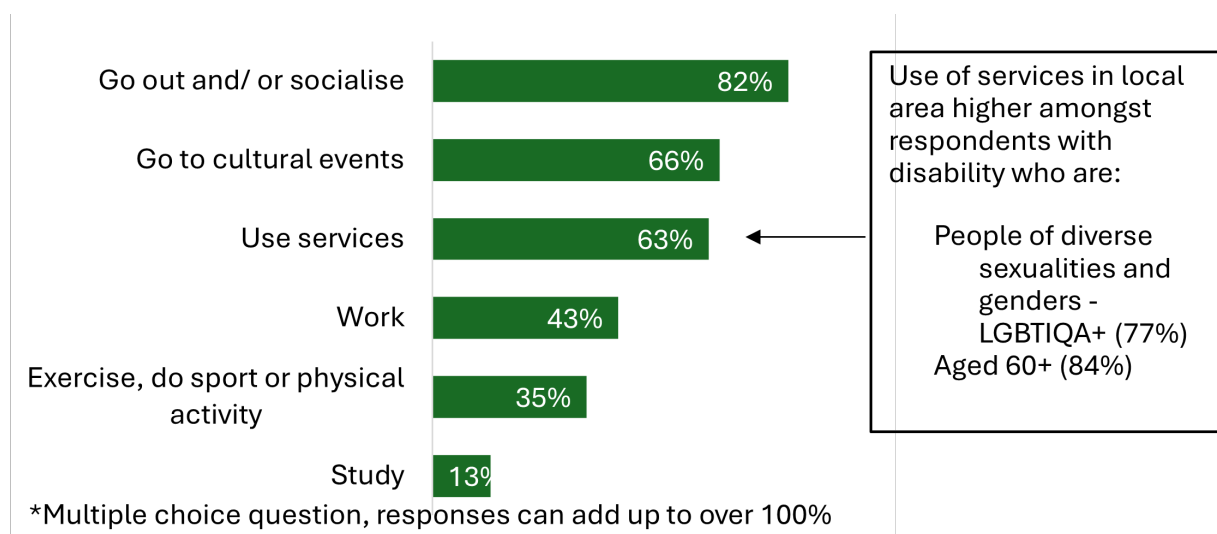


Figure 4: Bar graph showing reasons for people with disability visiting the City of Sydney local area, reflecting the figures written above.

When looking at the profile of unpaid care:

- 35% of people with disability were carers
- 87% of family were carers
- 56% of businesses, peak bodies or service providers.

The significant proportion of carers living with disability (35%) is notable as caring has implications for health and wellbeing and socioeconomic status, creating need for responsive programs and supports for carers¹.

Unpaid support by respondent group

“Do you provide regular unpaid support to a person with disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition or older person?”

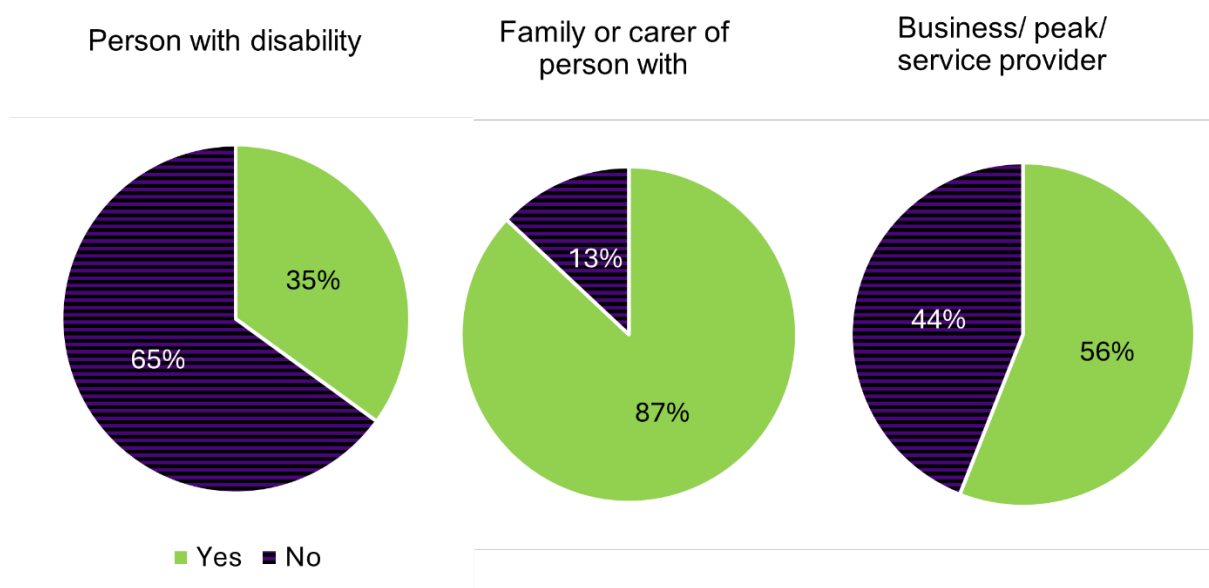


Figure 5: Pie graph showing unpaid care provided by respondent group, reflecting the figures written above.

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

A third of people with disability feel people’s attitudes towards disability are negative

When asked about people’s attitudes towards people with disability, 21% of people with disability reported they felt attitudes were positive, 46% provided a neutral response and 33% reported negative attitudes. Attitudes among family members and carers, businesses, disability peak bodies and service providers reflected a similar trend.

¹ National Carer Strategy 2024-2034, [Draft strategy](#), November 2024

“What do you feel people’s attitudes are generally towards people with disability in the City of Sydney local area?”

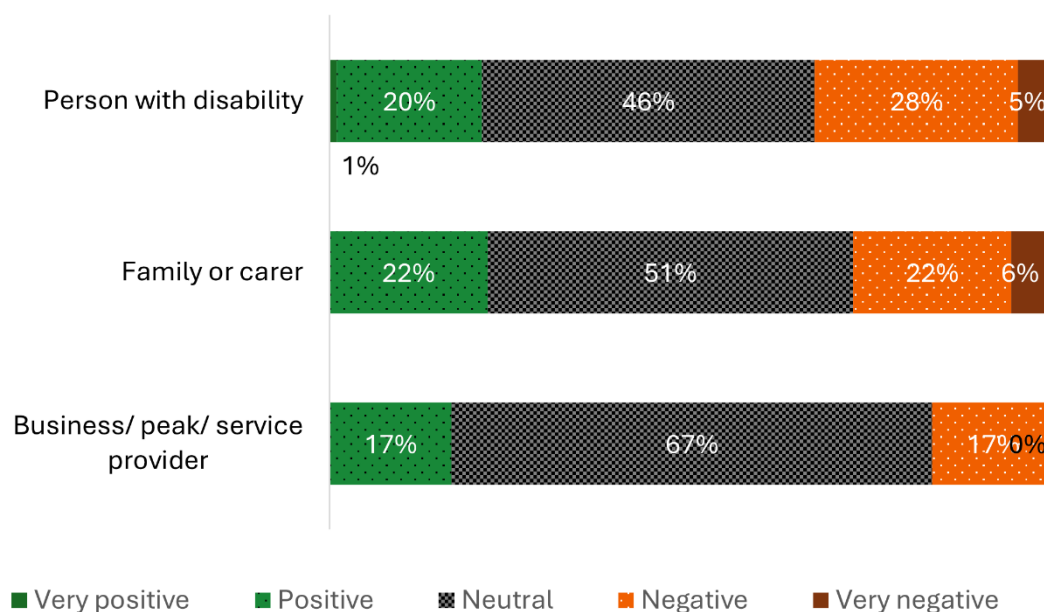


Figure 6: Bar graph showing perception of attitudes towards people with disability, reflecting the figures written above.

Women, people from multicultural backgrounds and people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability were more likely to say that people’s attitudes towards disability are negative. Women were more than 3 times more likely to report negative attitudes when compared with men.

People from multicultural backgrounds, people of diverse sexualities and genders, and people with 2 or more disabilities reported more negative attitudes towards people with disability.

Respondent with disability sample only - % saying that attitudes are ‘negative’

	Total positive	Total negative		Total positive	Total negative
Person with disability	21%	33%	LGBTIQA+	19%	31%
Woman	15%	40%	One disability	27%	16%
Man	36%	12%	Two of more disability	24%	40%
People of diverse genders	14%	57%			
0-39	17%	37%			
40-59	22%	29%			
60+	26%	32%			
CALD	19%	37%			

Figure 7: Table highlighting demographics more likely to say people’s attitudes are negative towards people with disability, reflected trends written above.

Two in 5 respondents with disability disagree they feel welcome and included in the local area

When responding to the statement “I feel welcome and included within City of Sydney local area”, 31% of people with disability agreed with the statement, 29% gave a neutral response and 40% disagreed. There was a clear gender-based difference as more than twice as many men felt welcome and included than women, while 50% of women did not feel welcome and included.

Almost 50% of people with 2 or more disabilities did not feel welcome and included.

“If you have a disability, how do you feel about this statement: “I feel welcome and included in the City of Sydney local area.” (Excluding 'not relevant')

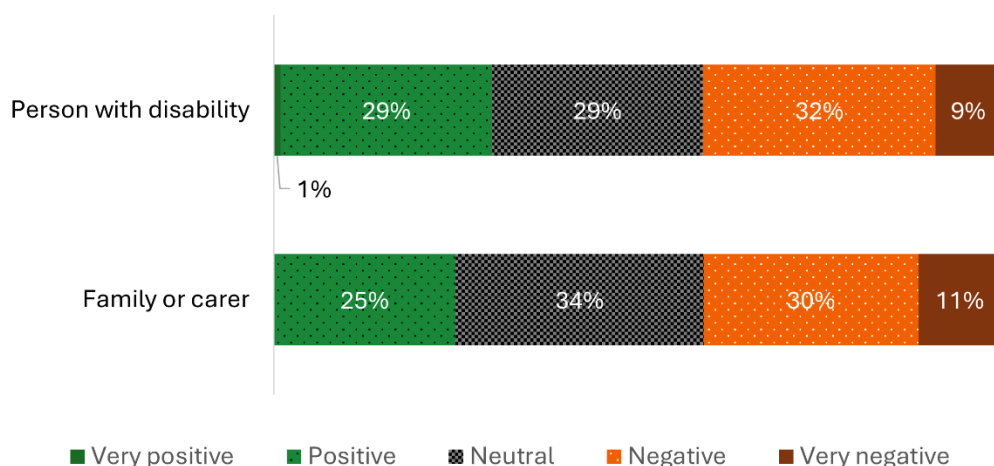


Figure 8: Bar graph showing people with disability and family and carers, and if they agree or disagree that they feel welcome and included in the local area, reflecting the figures written above.

These results suggest that more work is required to challenge and change negative attitudes and behaviours towards disability, and to showcase the diversity of the community and champion inclusion.

Intersectionality should also be highlighted in communications and through promotion of positive stories to broaden the community’s understanding and perspectives of disability. Disability should be celebrated as a natural part of human diversity that should be respected and valued.

The City of Sydney can play a leadership role in leveraging its communications, programs and training to challenge bias, stigma and stereotypes and celebrate disability by promoting the ‘social model’ and ‘human rights model’ of disability.

84% of respondents with disability experience discrimination in the City of Sydney local area

When asked about discrimination experienced in the City of Sydney area, 84% of people with disability reported experiencing at least one form of discrimination, with 65% experiencing disability discrimination and 44% experiencing ableism. Family members (51%) and carers (40%) of people with disability also experienced high levels of disability discrimination and ableism.

People with intersectional identities have unique and disproportionate experiences of discrimination

More than a quarter (26%) of people from multicultural backgrounds experienced racism and people of diverse sexualities and genders were overrepresented among people who reported experiencing disability discrimination (73%), ableism (62%), homophobia (42%) and sexism (39%). Woman were

more than 3 times as likely to experience sexism (27%) and people with 2 or more disabilities were more likely to experience all forms of discrimination.

“Have you or the person with disability you care for, experienced the following in the City of Sydney local area? (Please select all that apply)”

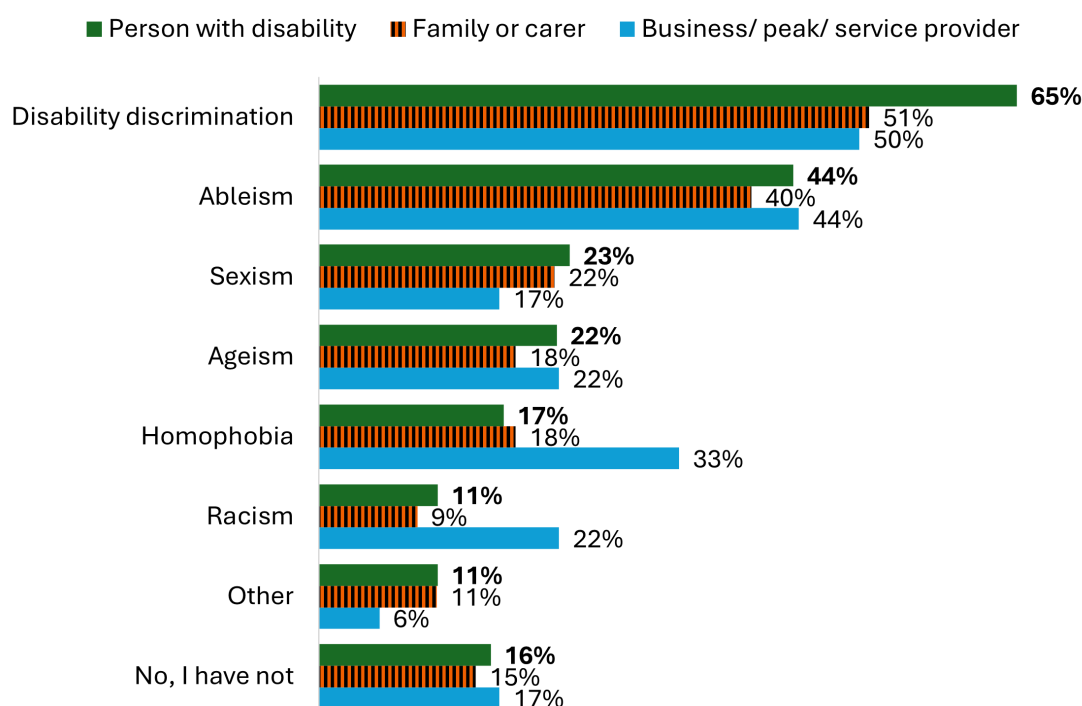


Figure 9: Bar graph charting the percentage of different forms of discrimination experienced by people with disability, reflecting the figures written above.

Suggestions for improving positive community attitudes and behaviours

When asked how the City of Sydney can support positive community attitudes and behaviours towards disability, suggestions included playing a leadership role in promoting:

- positive images and stories of diverse people with disability, including people with non-visible disabilities and people with intersectional experiences
- more visibility of people with disability in the community, so that the diversity of the community is featured in communications
- opportunities to celebrate disability through communication campaigns, programs and events.

Attitudes can be shifted towards disability by:

- including people with disability in planning, using co-design and co-production principles
- creating more opportunities for people with disability to be in leadership roles, representing and advocating for people with disability
- increasing community education and training for disability awareness across the City of Sydney area, including local schools, businesses and the community
- training and promoting disability rights and ways to advocate for change and provide feedback.

The City of Sydney can do more to create an accessible physical environment through universal design so that everyone has an equitable opportunity to access and participate in the local area. This will in turn, help people with disability feel more welcome and included.

Providing safe spaces that are accessible and inclusive such as quiet spaces at City of Sydney facilities, parks and other public spaces would enable people with disability to come together and connect.

Liveable communities

Almost half of respondents are unsatisfied that City of Sydney events, services and programs are inclusive

When measuring satisfaction of how inclusive City of Sydney services, programs and events are of people with disability, people with disability reported highest satisfaction with libraries (59%), parks and reserves (43%), community centres (40%), aquatic centres (45%) and customer service (41%).

“How satisfied are you that City of Sydney services, programs and events are inclusive of people with disability? (Excluding 'not applicable')”

Respondent with disability sample only

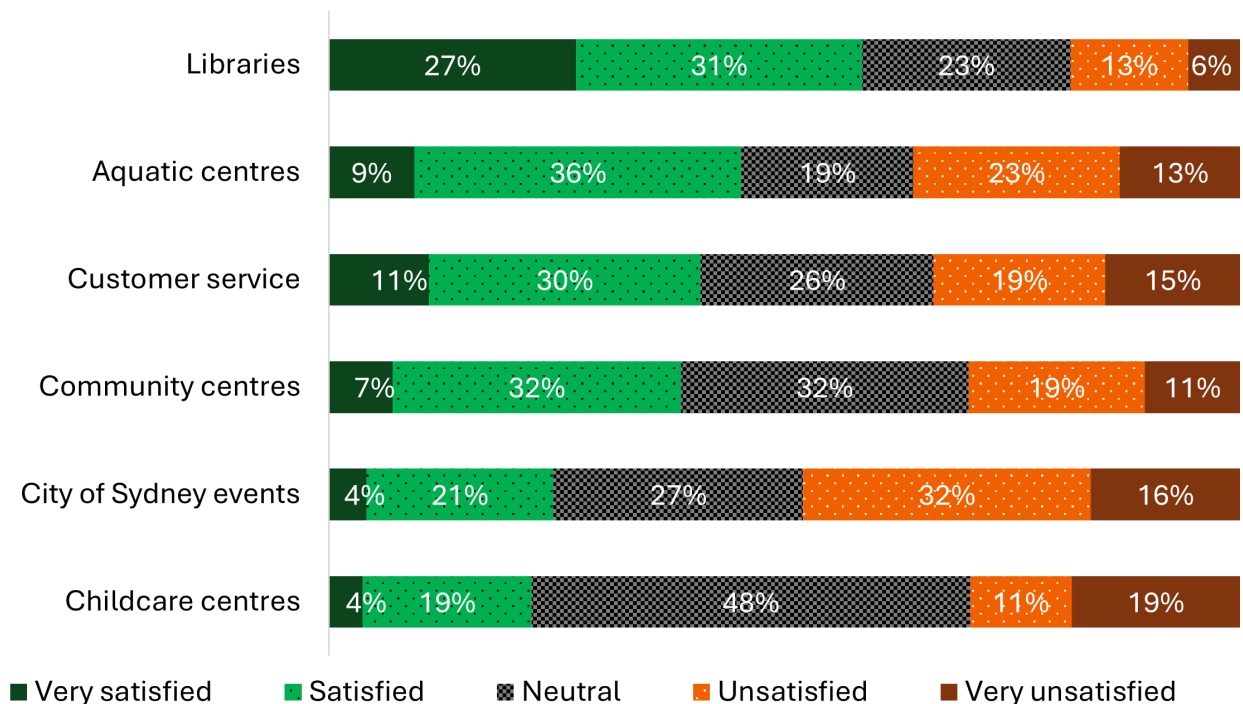


Figure 10: Bar chart showing percentage satisfaction of service and facilities, reflecting the figures written above.

More people with disability are unsatisfied than not with accessibility of a range of services and facilities in the City of Sydney area

When asked about how accessible services and facilities are in the City of Sydney area, people with disability were most unsatisfied with accessible drop-off areas (73%), footpaths (63%), mobility parking (62%), public toilets (62%) and public seating (55%).

When considering family members and carers, the results mirrored people with disability, with the notable exceptions being childcare centres (42% satisfied) and playgrounds (42% dissatisfied).

“How satisfied are you with the accessibility of the following services and facilities in the City of Sydney area? (Excluding 'not applicable')”

Respondent with disability sample only

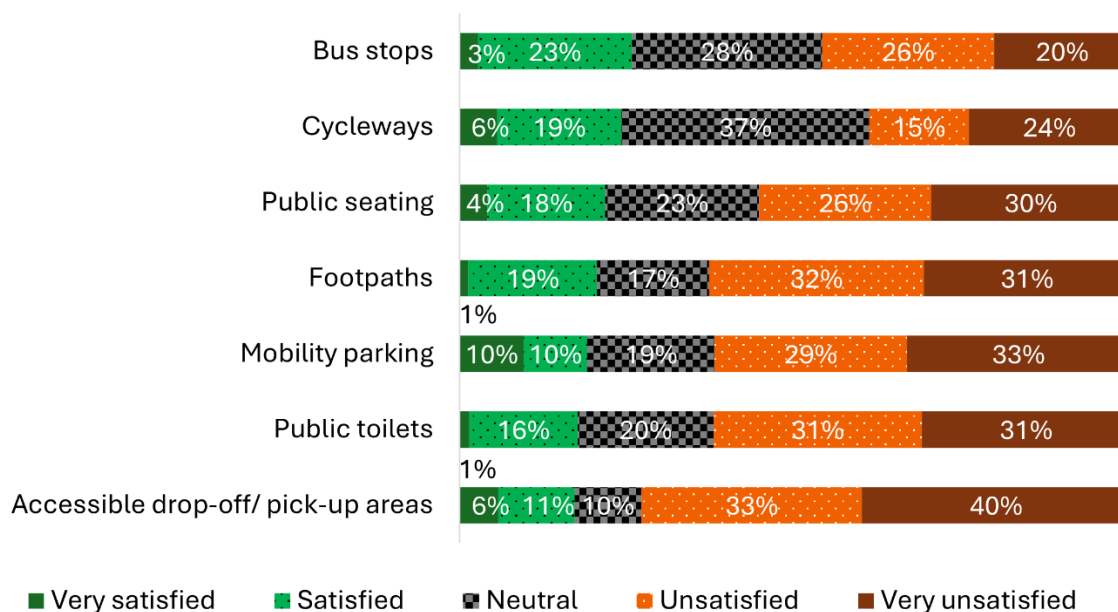


Figure 11: Bar chart showing percentage dissatisfaction of accessibility of facilities, public domain, parking, drop-off and public toilets, reflecting the figures written above.

Respondents with disability who are women, from multicultural backgrounds or with multiple disabilities are more likely to be unsatisfied with inclusiveness of City of Sydney events

Almost half of respondents with disability reported dissatisfaction with City of Sydney events (48%). Women with disability were more than twice as likely to be unsatisfied (55%) than men (23%).

Notably, 58% of people with disability from multicultural backgrounds were dissatisfied with events, 52% of people of diverse sexualities and genders, and 62% of people with 2 or more disabilities were unsatisfied with the inclusiveness of events.

Respondent with disability sample only - % saying that attitudes are 'negative'

	Total satisfied	Total unsatisfied		Total satisfied	Total unsatisfied
Person with disability	25%	48%	LGBTIQA+	19%	52%
Woman	17%	55%	One disability	29%	32%
Man	50%	23%	Two of more disabilities	21%	62%
0-39	17%	62%			
40-59	32%	44%			
60+	26%	32%			
CALD	25%	58%			

Figure 12: Table showing dissatisfaction rates around inclusivity of City of Sydney events, showing profiles of people with disability.

Summary

More evidence is needed to explore the reasons for dissatisfaction of people with disability with City of Sydney events. This could be addressed by co-designing events, seeking continuous feedback and consistently promoting access and inclusion features.

It is clear there needs to be greater compliance with the City of Sydney's inclusive and accessible event guidelines for events in the local area. This will enhance inclusion for people with disability at events.

Only a quarter of people with disability were satisfied with the accessibility of businesses

When asked about the accessibility of businesses in the City of Sydney local area, only one quarter of people with disability were satisfied, while 42% were dissatisfied. Women were almost twice as likely to be dissatisfied (42%) than men (24%), and people of diverse sexualities and genders were 62% dissatisfied with the accessibility of businesses.

“How satisfied are you with the accessibility of businesses located in the City of Sydney area?”

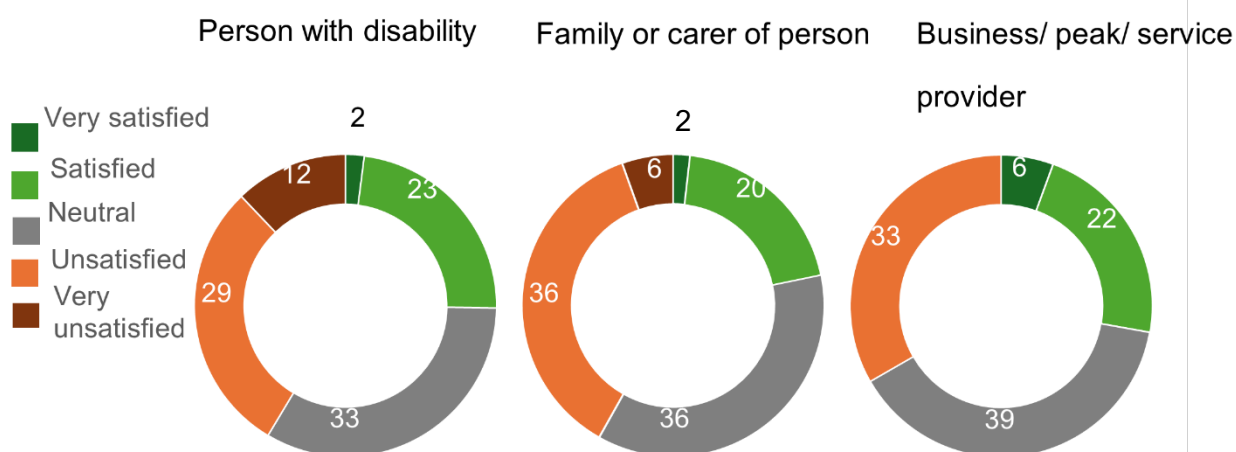


Figure 13: Pie graph of satisfaction rating of local businesses according to respondent types, reflecting the figures written above.

The housing status of people with disability, family members and carers is varied

People with disability were most likely to be paying off a mortgage (24%), renting (23%), an outright owner of their housing (21%) or living rent free with family (18%).

Notably, people from multicultural backgrounds were more likely to be living rent free with family (27%) or in social housing (8%), and people of diverse sexualities and genders and those with 2 or more disabilities were almost twice as likely to have no fixed address (12% and 11%) or chose 'other' (8% and 7%).

A higher proportion of respondents with disability aged 0 to 39 years live with family (27%) and a higher proportion of social housing tenants among respondents with disability aged over 60+ years (16%).

“In relation to your home, which of the following applies to you?”

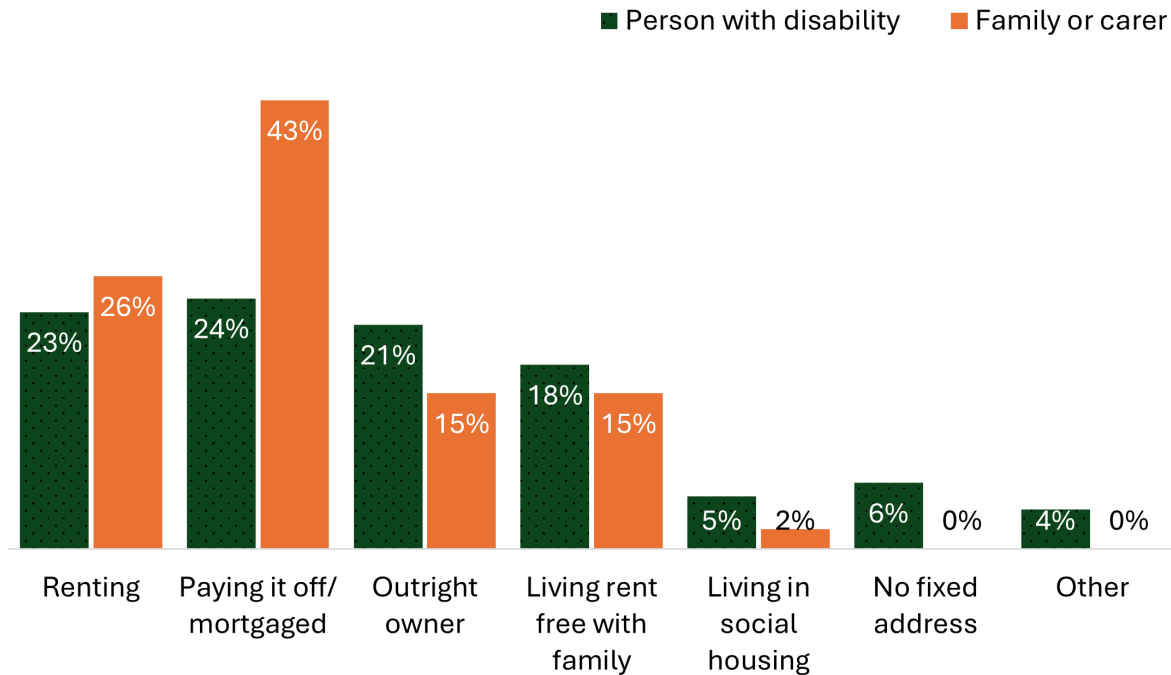


Figure 14: Bar chart showing housing tenure of respondents with disability and family and carers, reflecting the figures written above.

Under 40% of respondents with disability are satisfied that their housing meets their needs

Under 2 in 5 respondents with disability were satisfied that their housing meets their needs, with 44% of people with disability being dissatisfied and 34% of family or carers dissatisfied. Satisfaction towards housing is lower among people from multicultural backgrounds (54%), people of diverse sexualities and genders (50%), and for people with 2 or more disabilities (55%). Women were more likely to be dissatisfied (42%) than men (29%).

“If you live in City of Sydney local area, how do you feel about your housing meeting your needs? (Excluding not applicable)”

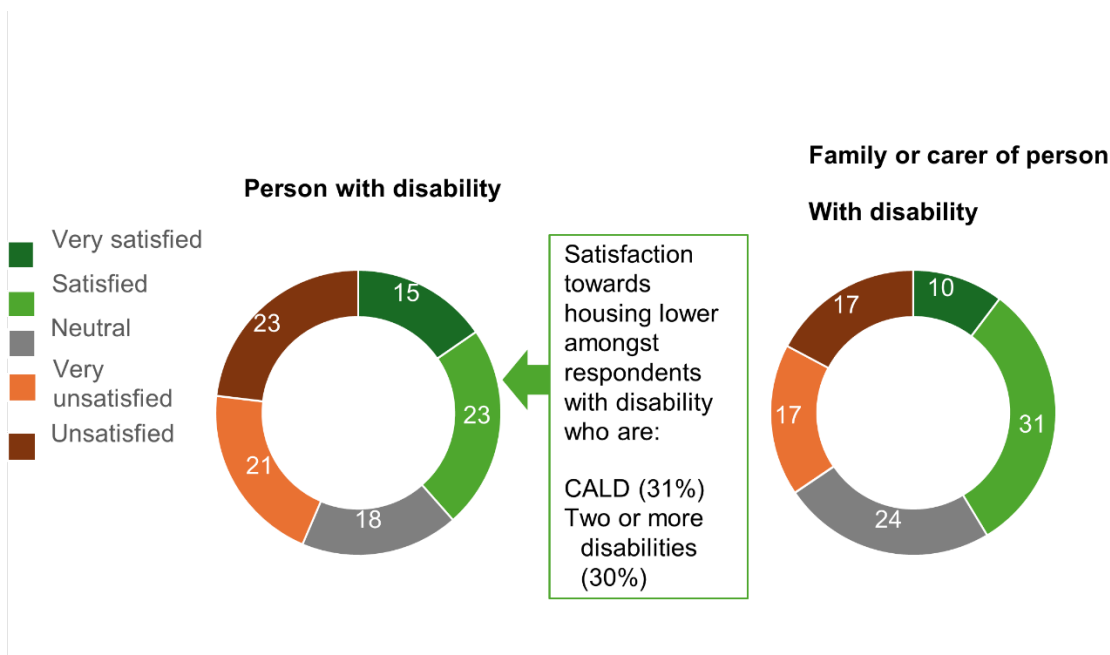


Figure 15: Pie chart showing the percentage of people with disability and family and carers satisfaction with housing meeting their needs, reflecting the figures written above.

Respondents with disability who are women, aged 60+ or with diverse sexualities and genders (LGBTIQA+) are more likely to be living alone

One third of respondents with disability live alone (36%), 19% live in a couple and 43% live with family or friends. More than twice as many women live alone (40%) than men (17%), 74% of people over 60 years and 42% of people of diverse sexualities and genders live alone. These groups may be more at risk of loneliness or social isolation.

“What best describes your household?”

Respondent with disability sample only.

	Just me	Lives with family or friends		Just me	Lives with family or friends
Person with disability	36%	43%	LGBTIQA+	42%	15%
Woman	40%	40%	One disability	29%	51%
Man	17%	58%	Two of more disability	42%	36%
0-39	27%	52%			
40-59	21%	57%			
60+	74%	5%			
CALD	31%	50%			

Figure 16: Table showing profile of respondents with disability living alone or with family or friends.

More than a third of family members and carers of people with disability say they ‘always’ or ‘often’ feel lonely or socially isolated

When asked how often people feel lonely, more than a third (37%) of families and carers, and 45% of people with disability, ‘always’ or ‘often’ feel lonely. Women were more than twice as likely to feel lonely than men, and almost two-thirds of people from multicultural backgrounds (63%), and 58% of people of diverse sexualities and genders reported feeling lonely.

People with 2 or more disabilities were more than 3 times more likely to feel lonely compared to people with one disability.

Proactive programs to connect people with a diverse range of disabilities, offer safe spaces to come together and meaningful engagement or activity are needed to combat the growing epidemic of loneliness and social isolation for people with disability.

“How often do you feel lonely or socially isolated?”

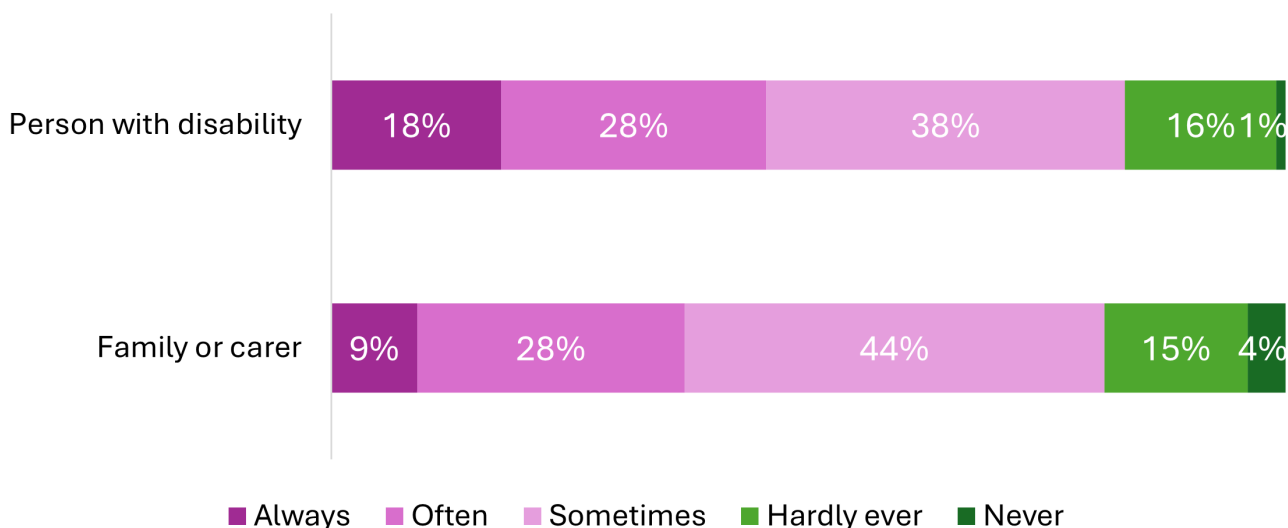


Figure 17: Bar chart showing the percentage of people with disability and family and carers that feel lonely or socially isolated, reflecting the figures written above.

Suggestions for creating a more liveable community for people with disability

When we asked how the City of Sydney can improve access and inclusion of our services and facilities to create a more liveable community, feedback included:

- **Continuous engagement** with people with disability to receive feedback, prioritise and co-design solutions. Ensure there is a regular community listening and feedback mechanism and provide training for greater peer-led advocacy.
- **Physical accessibility is important:**
 - ensure all facilities, parks and public spaces are accessible and the principle of universal design is embedded in planning
 - ensure the City of Sydney looks beyond compliance with current Australian Standards and towards best practice
 - accessibility of footpaths and maintaining an accessible path of travel is vital for people with disability to participate in the community
 - playgrounds with a range of accessible equipment that consider the Everyone Can Play principles of ‘Can I get there, Can I play, Can I stay’ promote greater inclusion
 - a capital works program aimed at improving accessibility, with input and prioritisation by people with disability can empower disability-led improvements
 - consult with people with disability before the design phase of new facilities to ensure they’re accessible and inclusive of people with a diverse range of disabilities
 - improved wayfinding and signage in Central Sydney will assist with independence.
- **Accessible pick-up/drop-off points and more mobility parking** is important for safety for people with disability. In Central Sydney, this includes more:
 - strategically located accessible drop-off points
 - mobility parking spaces with kerb ramps and close to key facilities.
- **Public toilets are a fundamental necessity and promote inclusion:**
 - availability of accessible public toilets in facilities and public spaces enable people with disability to plan and participate in the local community

- more accessible adult change facilities enable greater dignity and promote inclusion.
- **More public seating is needed** to allow for rest points in public spaces.
- **Quiet spaces** at key locations and events throughout the city will assist people with sensory disability and people who are neurodivergent.
- **Promote access and inclusion for businesses** by playing a leadership role in:
 - promoting the business case for access and inclusion to make it easier for people with disability to buy products and services, which will diversify customer bases and enhance profitability
 - encouraging businesses to improve physical accessibility, disability awareness and inclusion training, accessible communications and information.
- **Inclusive programs and events:**
 - co-design events, have dedicated access and inclusion coordinators, provide Auslan, captions and audio-description
 - provide inclusive programming for people with a diverse range of disabilities, as well as inclusion in mainstream events, including sports, arts, social activities and safe places to connect and belong
 - promote inclusive programs and events to the disability community, along with accessibility features to encourage participation
 - accept the Companion Card at City of Sydney facilities, activities and events to enable more people with disability and carers to participate.
- **Partnerships and systemic advocacy** need to address barriers to access and inclusion at both community and policy levels, including affordable and accessible housing, transport, education and employment.

Meaningful employment

People with disability can give organisations and businesses a competitive advantage as they have different ways of navigating, solving problems, challenging assumptions and thinking 'outside the box'. Studies have shown that employing people with disability adds to the diversity of the workforce. People with disability have higher rates of retention, take fewer sick days and incur fewer staff related business costs.

Most workplace adjustments cost less than \$500 and research has shown companies that embrace best practice for employing and supporting more people with disability in their workforce outperformed their peers².

Despite this, according to the People with Disability Australia report, people with disability are twice as likely to be underemployed. If employed, people with disability are more likely to work part time, or as a casual worker, compared with people without disability. This difference in labour force participation rate has remained relatively unchanged for people with disability over the past 20 years.

² Australian Human Rights Commission, Good access is good business, December 2023

Less than half of respondents with disability are in paid employment

Less than half (44%) of respondents with disability are in paid employment. Employment participation was much lower among women (40%) compared to men (60%), and in people aged over 60 years (16%) compared to people aged 0 to 39 years (60%).

Rates of unemployment are higher for people from multicultural backgrounds (52%), people of diverse sexualities and genders (65%), and those with 2 or more disabilities (69%).

71% of family or carers are in paid employment.

“Are you currently in paid employment?”

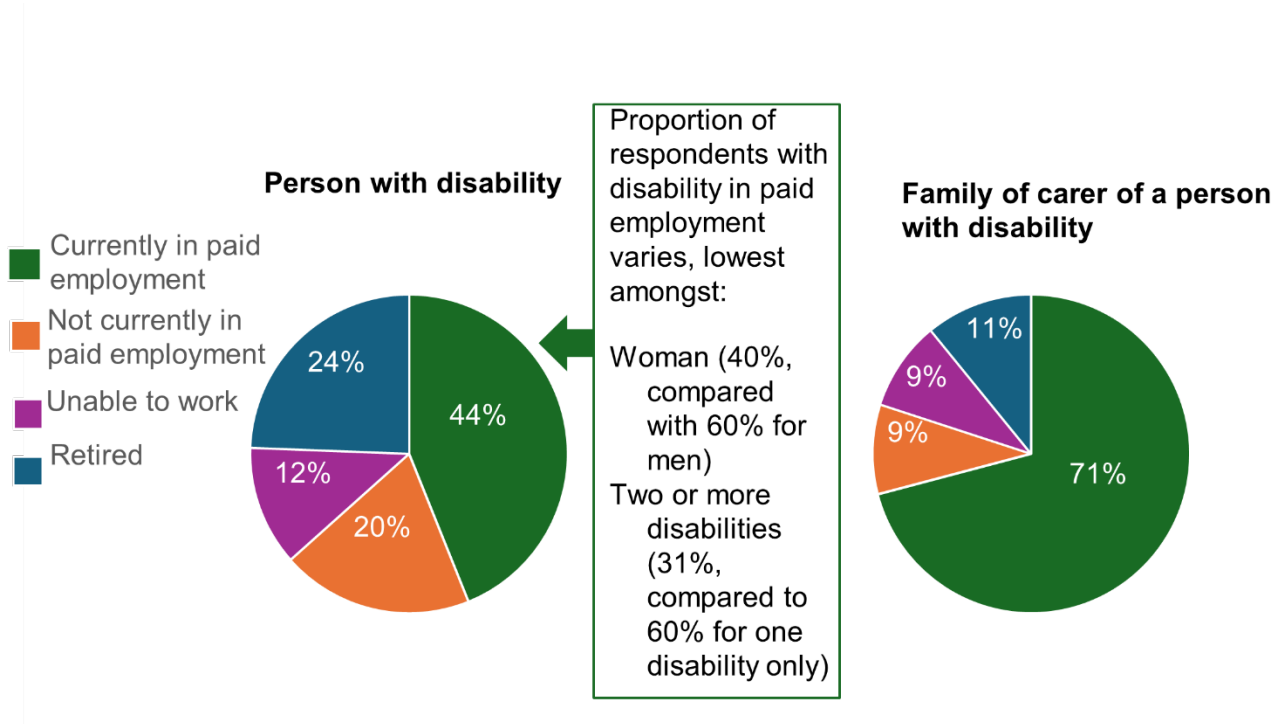


Figure 18: Pie graph showing rates of employment for people with disability, family members and carers, reflecting the figures written above.

Almost three quarters of family members and carers provide unpaid caring for people with disability

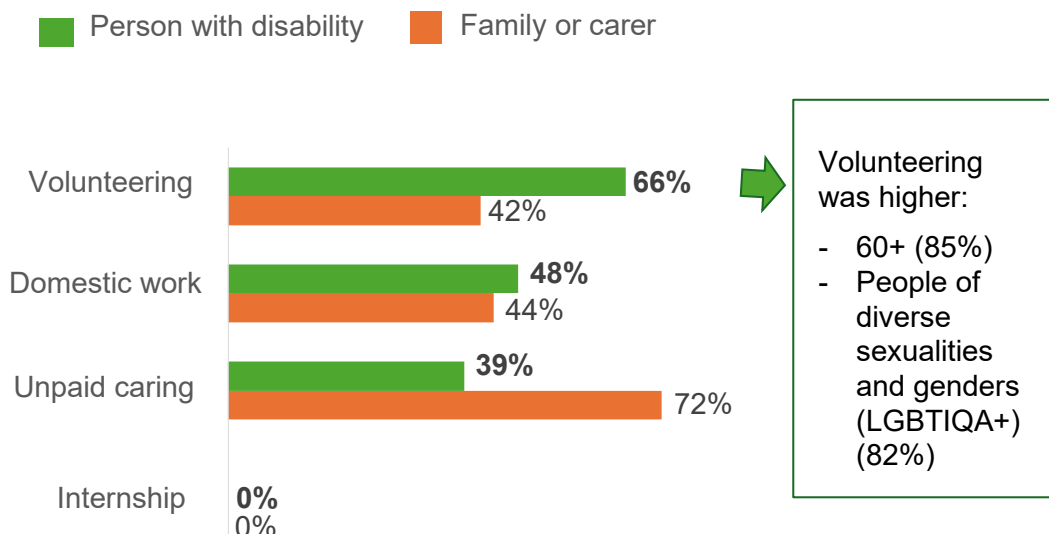
When asked about the types of unpaid work, 66% of people with disability volunteer, while this figure is just under half of family members and carers (42%).

Rates of volunteering are higher among people over 60 years (85%), and for people of diverse sexualities and genders (82%).

Domestic work is performed by 48% of people with disability, and 44% of family and carers.

Notably, almost three quarters (72%) of family members and carers provide unpaid caring, while this figure is 39% for people with disability.

“Do you do any of these types of unpaid work? (Please select all that apply)”



*Multiple choice question, responses can add up to over 100%

Figure 19: Bar graph showing rates of unpaid work for people with disability, and family and carers, reflecting the figures written above.

Suggestions for supporting access to meaningful employment for people with disability

When asked how the City of Sydney can support access to meaningful employment for people with disability, feedback included:

- **Challenge bias, stigma and stereotypes by:**
 - viewing people with a disability as assets that add value to the City of Sydney through added diversity and through empowering inclusion
 - increasing positive images and stories of diverse people with disability in mainstream communications to change attitudes and promote inclusion.
- **Creating inclusive job opportunities by:**
 - identifying job opportunities that are accessible and suitable and promoting them to disability employment services and through disability networks
 - providing part-time employment opportunities or consider job sharing arrangements to allow more people with disability to work at the City of Sydney.
- **Partner with disability organisations:**
 - for targeted recruitment and to access specialist support to enable people with disability to retain and thrive in employment
 - training and development opportunities can include internships, traineeships, and volunteering opportunities, to enable skill development for entry-level recruitment at different organisational levels
 - support to transition into permanent employment based on strengths.
- **Transition support** by partnering to provide support for those transitioning from secondary school to employment, including workshops to build skills and experience and bringing employers together to facilitate open employment opportunities for young people with disability from inclusive employers.

- **Provide workplace optimisation** with a specific policy starting at recruitment throughout a person's employment journey that capitalises on workplace flexibility and promotes outcomes-based working.
- **Ensuring accessibility of the workplace** by conducting access audits of the workplace and developing a program of works to implement upgrades in line with Australian Standards.
- **Targeted training and development opportunities that include:**
 - providing opportunities for skills development, a culture of continuous learning, and provide people with disability a seat at the leadership table
 - specialist training on a diverse range of disabilities, including non-visible disabilities, intellectual disability, people who are neurodivergent or have mental health conditions
 - managerial training to enable better support of City of Sydney employees with disability.
 - informal supports such as mentoring, shadowing and peer support, as well as a disability employee network to connect with peers and access support.
- **Create a disability workforce strategy** co-designed with people with disability to include all levels of employment from entry level to leadership, that sets a clear path to increase employment of people with disability.
- **Play a leadership role by:**
 - promoting the business case for disability employment as a benefit among local businesses
 - sharing disability awareness training and knowledge on creating inclusive workplaces and promote positive stories of disability employment to challenge stereotypes and create change
 - considering programs or incentives for businesses that champion access and inclusion, and grants to enable businesses to improve their accessibility.
- **Supporting pay equity and open, inclusive employment:**
 - ensure the City of Sydney does not procure from, create, fund or participate, or award new grants to Australian Disability Enterprises.

Systems and processes

Social media, email newsletters, and the City of Sydney website continue to be the top sources of information for people with disability

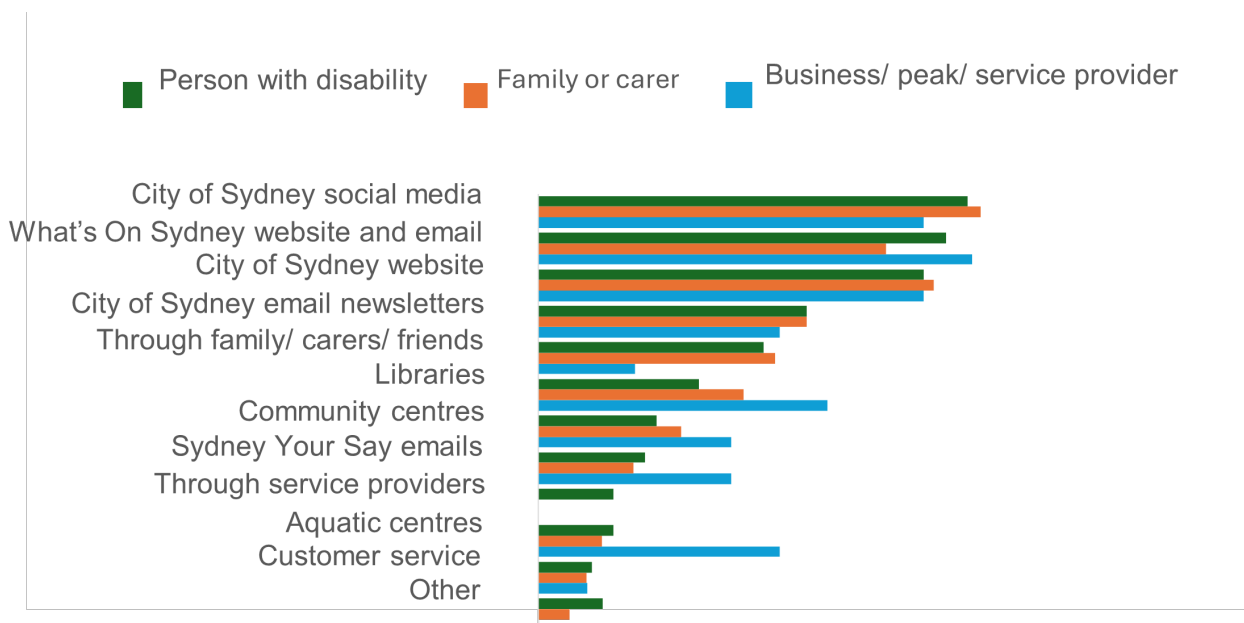
When asked about how they hear about City of Sydney services, facilities, programs, events and information, respondents most commonly reported using social media (49%), What's On Sydney (47%), City of Sydney website (44%) and newsletters (31%).

A large proportion of people get information from family and friends. This is the case for 26% of people with disability and 27% of family and carers.

Other sources of information for people with disability, their family and carers include libraries (19%), community centres (14%), aquatic centres (9%), service providers (9%) and customer service (6%).

These findings indicate that the City of Sydney should provide information through a variety of methods to communicate with people with disability, their family and carers.

How do you hear about City of Sydney services, facilities, programs, events and information?" (Tick all that apply)



*Multiple choice question, responses can add up to over 100%

Figure 20: Bar graph showing the information method used by people with disability, their family and carers, and businesses, disability peaks and service providers, reflecting the figures written above.

People with disability are most satisfied with social media, website and feedback options

Measuring satisfaction among respondents showed that people with disability were most satisfied with social media (62%), information and documents (61%), website (59%), and options to provide feedback (55%).

Among people with disability, the services that registered the highest rates of dissatisfaction were grants and sponsorships (40%), procurement (27%) and public access computers (27%).

There are divided views about having opportunities to have a say on important issues

When asked for views on the statement: "There are enough opportunities for me to have a say on issues that are important to me," responses were divided:

39% of people with disability agreed, while 35% disagreed. There were clear differences for people with intersectional identities.

For example:

- women were much more likely (38%) compared with men (20%) to disagree
- people of diverse sexualities and genders (42%) were much more likely to disagree.
- people with 2 or more disabilities (42%) were much more likely to disagree when compared with people with one disability (27%).

Only 29% of family members and carers agreed, compared with 31% who disagreed.

Summary

These results indicate there is more work to be done to provide safe, inclusive and accessible opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers to have a say on issues that are important to them.

“How do you feel about this statement: “There are enough opportunities for me to have a say on issues that are important to me.”

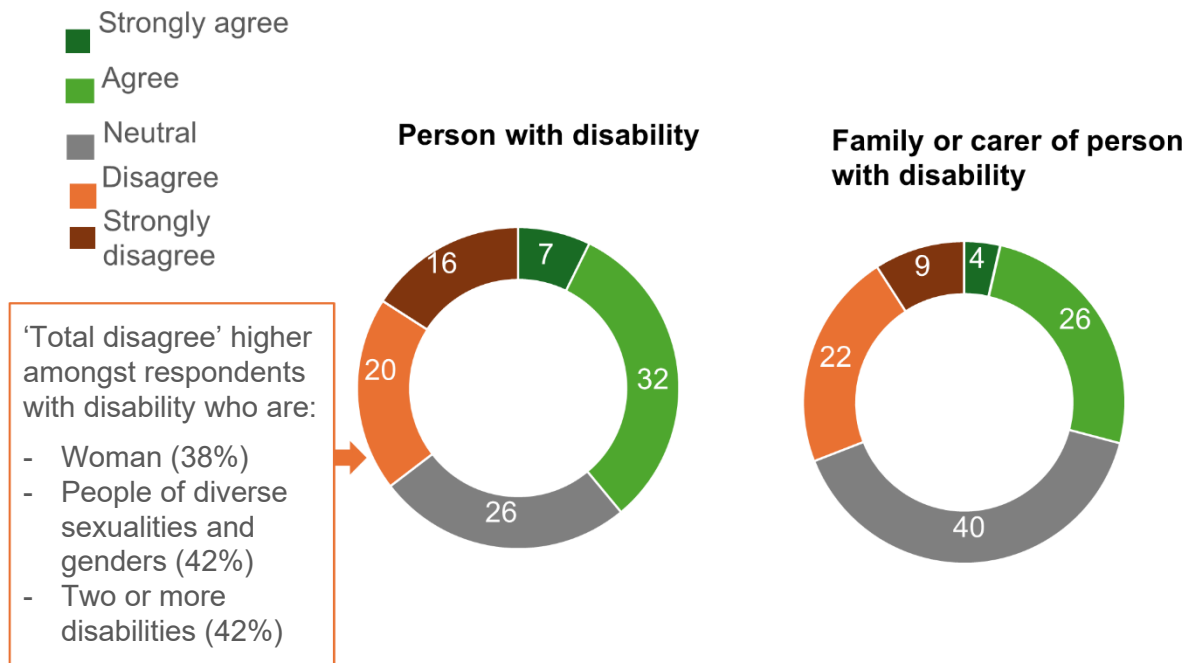


Figure 21: Pie graph showing the total agree and disagree of people with disability, their family and carers and businesses, disability peaks and service providers, reflecting the figures written above.

Suggestions for improving systems and processes to be more inclusive and accessible

When asked for suggestions on how to improve systems or processes to be more accessible and inclusive of people with disability, feedback included:

- **Creating accessible feedback mechanisms:**
 - a ‘snap and solve’ mobile phone app, and an easy-to-use accessible complaints mechanism
 - have regular community listening sessions with diverse people with disability to enable continuous feedback and improvement, including with priority groups
 - ensure the feedback loop is ‘closed’ so people with disability can see how their voices led to action
 - include people with disability in planning through co-design and co-production to enable peer-led solutions, policies, programs and events
 - continue to engage with the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel to seek feedback and input on City of Sydney policies, strategies, guidelines, information and events.
- **Accessible information and communication:**
 - where possible, provide alternative formats as the norm, such as Microsoft Word, large print, audio, Auslan and Easy Read
 - provide social stories for programs and events with important safety and accessibility information included
 - provide information in plain English to increase accessibility and offer targeted information in different languages for different cultural groups
 - provide a variety of methods to contact the City of Sydney including phone, email, online meetings and in-person.
- **Simplify the grants and sponsorship application process:**
 - co-design an accessible grant application with people with disability
 - promote the City of Sydney’s grants and sponsorships program to people with disability and service providers to increase equitable access.

Stage 1

- **Create strategic partnerships** with universities, businesses, schools and service providers, to collaborate and promote best practice and disability rights.
- **Support more opportunities for people with disability to connect** such as an online platform linked to social media that would allow people with disability to come together and share thoughts and ideas, collaborate, advocate and promote programs and services.

Co-design roundtable – key findings

On 9 October 2024, the City of Sydney held a co-design roundtable at Lower Town Hall.

The event aimed to empower the co-design of responsive actions to address barriers and challenges towards access and inclusion and provide opportunities to promote the rights of people with disability in the new inclusion (disability) action plan.

In total, 90 people attended the roundtable including:

- 38 people with disability, family members or carers
- 29 service providers or disability representative organisations
- 23 City of Sydney employees, including disability employee network members.

The roundtable was facilitated by the Australian Disability Network and included a lived experience panel discussion and 13 table-based co-design workshops on the focus areas of the inclusion (disability) action plan.

The workshops were peer-led by members of the City of Sydney's Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel, along with City of Sydney employees with disability. City of Sydney employees with key responsibilities for implementing the current action plan supported these discussions.

The table-based workshops offered an opportunity for participants to:

- co-design actions in the new plan
- select their 3 top priority actions
- give their key 'vision' and 'principles' to underpin the new plan.

This section contains a summary of the feedback that was provided across each of the 4 focus areas.

At a glance: key themes discussed at the roundtable

City of Sydney employees took detailed notes of table-based discussions at the roundtable. After the event, the comments raised on each table were analysed and divided into key themes.

The top 5 themes discussed during the roundtable included:

- recruitment and inclusive workplaces
- community attitudes
- communications
- access to information
- council decision making and participation.

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

The biggest barrier to full participation in the community for people with disability is attitude. Attitudinal barriers are created by people who see disability only in a negative way and is perpetuated through stigma, bias, stereotypes, discrimination and fear. These barriers include low expectations of people with disabilities, and these barriers contribute to all other barriers³.

Misconceptions, negative attitudes and a lack of knowledge about disability can impact many aspects of life for people with disability, including education, employment, health and community participation. A person unable to participate in everyday activities, or who avoids situations, may be at higher risk of negative outcomes, including social isolation, unemployment and poor health⁴. In 2022, one in 10 people over the age of 15 years living with disability had experienced disability discrimination. Young people, people with a severe or profound disability, and people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability experienced significantly higher rates of discrimination⁵.

People at the co-design roundtable with lived experience of disability shared their experiences of discrimination which take place in different areas of their lives. Some participants mentioned the need to take away the “emotional burden” of people with disability to create change, while others raised their experience of feeling the “expectation that people fit into set requirements”.

From these discussions, it is clear much is needed to improve community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability and provide opportunities for education and training to empower people with disability to actively lead change.

More positive images and stories of people with disability

All table-based workshops discussed the need to showcase the diversity of disability, including non-visible disabilities and intersectionality. We were told to recognise that people with disability are not a “one size fits all” community.

Attendees told us that “normalising awareness of living with disability” and celebrating disability through positive images, stories and communication campaigns would be vital towards combatting negative attitudes, bias and stigma towards people with disability.

Leading by example and using the resources, influence and reach of the City of Sydney was highlighted. To do this, the City of Sydney could provide opportunities to celebrate a diverse range of disabilities through communications and events, thereby “pushing the narrative” and making the case that “accessibility helps everyone”.

We were told that communications should be strategic, targeted and available across multiple platforms and formats to enhance accessibility and impact.

Supporting peer-led advocacy

Common suggestions included providing training and support for peer-led advocacy by and for people with disability and amplifying disability voices through policy and advocacy. These activities were seen as important towards living the value of ‘nothing about us, without us’.

By promoting the opportunity for capacity building and disability-led change-making and advocacy, people with disability can be empowered to promote positive attitudes and behaviours and effect impactful systemic change that is needed.

³ Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, [Social Model of Disability](#), November 2024.

⁴ Australian Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [People with disability in Australia](#), April 2024

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Disability, Ageing and Carers Australia: Summary of Findings](#), July 2024

Diverse disability awareness and inclusion training

Several people at the roundtable recommended that the City of Sydney increase training opportunities for staff, businesses, service providers and the community on disability awareness and inclusion.

The City of Sydney has rolled out mandatory inclusion (disability) awareness training and diversity and inclusion training, and a suite of mental health training for employees in the past 4 years.

Some suggested next steps to build on this included:

- diversifying the role-specific access and inclusion training that is available
- providing disability awareness and inclusion training by people with lived experience of disability
- ensuring training on a diverse range of disabilities (, for example d/Deaf awareness training, non-visible disabilities, psychosocial disability, as well as people who are neurodivergent) and intersectionality.

Implementation of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme

More education of non-visible or 'hidden disabilities' is needed across the City of Sydney, along with promotion and awareness-raising to be rolled out across the City of Sydney local area.

The City of Sydney can advocate for greater membership to the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program for businesses and promote images and stories of people with non-visible disabilities to help change attitudes.

Inclusive and targeted community programming

Attendees told us community programming that fosters positive community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability should continue in the next plan, along with ensuring mainstream programs and events are inclusive and accessible for all people.

They recommended programming should be diverse and take into consideration a wide variety of interests and access requirements. Inclusive programming should include sport, music, art and cultural programs, community programs, festivals and events.

It was also suggested that more targeted promotion of inclusive programs and events for the disability community is needed to increase participation and reduce experiences of social isolation.

We also heard that events should prioritise intersectionality: being "inclusive for all".

Accessibility features of programs or events should be publicised and communicated through a variety of avenues and alternate formats to the disability community.

Liveable communities

As one participant noted, "liveable communities are shaped by the people who live there".

Safe and welcoming spaces promotes inclusion

Attendees told us about the importance of having dedicated safe, accessible and welcoming spaces provided for people with disability. This could address the feeling that "people feel invisible" in the community.

We were also told that incorporating quiet spaces and quiet times will allow for greater participation by people with sensory disabilities in key City of Sydney facilities such as community centres, libraries, pools and gyms and recreational facilities.

More accessible public toilets and accessible adult change facilities

The need for more accessible toilets and accessible adult change facilities in the City of Sydney area, along with their regular servicing was highlighted by attendees. The availability of accessible facilities “provides dignity and enables greater participation” by people with disability.

Improved signage and wayfinding

E-signs and interactive maps on digital screens to assist with wayfinding and having an option to request help would support independence for people with disability in Central Sydney. Along with better wayfinding, there were suggestions to build signage into footpaths, and having colour and tactile wayfinding in footpaths for people who are blind or have low vision.

We were also told that the City of Sydney’s [accessibility map](#) should be promoted, and access maps provided for major events and festivals. Tactile and braille signs, wayfinding signposts, pictograms and simple Easy Read signage were also recommended.

Physical accessibility improves liveability and inclusion

Roundtable attendees told us that accessibility audits, along with a dedicated capital expenditure budget to improve access and inclusion at City of Sydney facilities, and in the public spaces could improve liveability. This potential action should be subject to consultation with people with disability.

We were also told that the City of Sydney should continue to complete Access Keys and make them publicly available to enable people with a diverse range disabilities to pre-plan and to boost inclusion.

Attendees also told us that planning with universal design principles and a best practice “accessibility lens” will provide for better access for all.

The public domain should promote connection and place-making, and be inclusive, and accessible.

We were also told that improving information around physical accessibility will assist the entire community.

The importance of accessible footpaths

Attendees told us that footpath renewals and maintaining an accessible path of travel is vitally important. Creating a more walkable city should have accessibility front of mind and look towards continually improving footpaths.

We were told about the need to minimise obstructions in considering the location of street furniture, the impact of outdoor dining, display of goods on the footway, and greening with footpath gardening – to make sure we consider accessibility for people with disability.

Wider and more accessible footpaths, mapping footpaths and effort-based mobility routes, as well as better lighting and the ability to easily report footpath accessibility issues to be resolved quickly were all suggested (, for example ‘Snap Send Solve’ was highlighted)

The [accessibility map](#) was noted by some attendees as a great resource, with need to continuously improve and add information that will assist people with a diverse range of disabilities.

It was suggested that the City of Sydney could investigate creating a mobile phone app that details accessibility for people with disability, which includes the accessibility map, and would provide for greater independence and participation.

Valuing green space and the need for more inclusive playgrounds

Having accessible green spaces, parks, playgrounds and reserves was highly valued by participants when mentioned.

But attendees also told us there is a need identified for more inclusive playgrounds, with inclusive and sensory play equipment and inclusive design to bring people together to connect , for example

spaces for wheelchairs at tables and Auslan and communication boards, braille and tactile signage, and resting places with a variety of seating.

We were also informed that making community gardens more accessible and inclusive was seen as an opportunity to engage more people with disability in the community.

Having more inclusive play spaces that consider the NSW Government [Everyone Can Play guidelines](#)⁶ and the best-practice inclusive principles of ‘Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay?’ was also raised.

More mobility parking and accessible drop-off points

The increased need for accessible parking and drop-off points in Central Sydney was raised by roundtable participants. This was especially important for people with mobility disability and the safety risk posed to people when accessible options with kerb ramps are not available.

The strategic placement of dedicated accessible drop-off points in Central Sydney would provide for greater safety and access by people with disability.

It was also noted that more communication of mobility parking rules is required to educate the community that mobility parking scheme permit holders can stop in a no parking zone for up to 5 minutes to drop off or pick up passengers or goods if the driver remains within 3m of the vehicle.

Other participants raised the need for more accessible EV charging in council and private car parks.

Affordable and accessible housing

The lack of affordable and accessible housing was emphasised by participants, with the need to promote universal design, and advocate for the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines to be adopted by the NSW Government. One participant told us that “designing for diverse communities is designing for all”.

Increasing accessible and affordable housing through planning controls, the City of Sydney affordable and diverse housing fund and advocating for more and better social housing were mentioned as ways the City of Sydney can continue to support housing needs of people with disability.

Moreover, the City of Sydney can look at creative strategies and best practice towards providing more accessible and affordable housing for people with disability (, for example unused office space, shared options, partnerships).

Training, incentives, awards and grants for businesses

A key point raised during the roundtable for inclusion in the new plan included the need for the City of Sydney to continue collaborating with businesses and service providers to improve accessibility, promote the business case for access and incentivise accessibility enhancements.

Resources for organisations to implement improvements should be developed, making access and inclusion easy, along with access to grants and sponsorship funding to undertake upgrades or undertake inclusive programs benefiting people with disability.

We were told by participants that the City of Sydney should provide opportunities to educate, provide training and raise awareness of a diverse range of disabilities among businesses and service providers. Incentives and awards should also be considered to motivate businesses to improve access and inclusion.

Attendees also raised that the City of Sydney can demonstrate leadership through employing people with disability and promoting stories of businesses that demonstrate good employment practices.

⁶ NSW Government, Planning, [Everyone can play guidelines](#), February 2023

Targeted communication campaigns developed to challenge and change attitudes to increase employment of people with disability can be rolled out in the City of Sydney local area.

Inclusive businesses that commit towards creating greater access and inclusion should be recognised with shop-window signage for people with disability to feel confident to engage and to encourage other businesses to make improvements.

Accessible programs and events

Promoting inclusive events on the What's On website with accessibility features, and posters or flyers for the disability community will facilitate greater participation. We were also told that having quiet spaces, accessible drop-off points, and accessible communications through Auslan, captions and audio description would be highly valued.

It was also noted that community centres can be promoted as disability inclusive community hubs and include co-designed programs and activities and facilitate connection through support groups and "social cafes". One example of a social cafe operating in Tasmania was highlighted as a case study. Another gap that needs addressing is better nightlife activities for people with disability to participate, particularly for young people with disability.

Targeted and accessible disability events, as well as providing opportunities to celebrate disability were all suggested: International Day of People with Disability, Mental Health Month, R U OK Day, Carers Week, Autistic Pride, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Deaf Awareness Day, World Sight Day and Disability Pride.

Attendees expressed the need for greater accessibility at major events and using the City of Sydney's influence to ensure that third-party event producers embed access and inclusion at events. We were given feedback around the need to design event sites to position infrastructure in accessible locations. For example, positioning a sensory or quiet space close to the accessible toilet and drop-off/pick-up points where possible, to avoid people with disability "having to take the long way round". Where some third-party events didn't adopt best practice, we were told "you lost the experience" of being at the event.

It was expressed that co-design and co-production can help to ensure accessibility is forefront of mind, and gathering feedback and evaluation from people with disability will allow for continuous improvement.

Disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction

Roundtable participants discussed how climate change will continue to disproportionately affect people with disability. There were also suggestions for the City of Sydney to bring emergency and disability services and people with disability together, to undertake disability inclusive disaster planning.

The potential benefit of this is that it could build the capacity and disability awareness of services; and empower people with disability to undertake person-centred emergency planning.

Meaningful employment

Inclusive recruitment and targeted employment

Collaboration with specialist disability organisations will utilise their expertise and allow for greater support for people with disability throughout the recruitment and onboarding phase. Partnerships will enable capacity building for managers and employees and support the ongoing employment of people with disability, for example Vision Australia, Jigsaw, IncludeAbility, Council for Intellectual Disability, Australian Disability Network. Job customisation, tailoring roles to skills and experience, and ensuring equity of opportunity for people with disability is important.

We heard that entry-level recruitment programs for people with disability, including traineeships, apprenticeships, work placements and volunteering programs should be actively promoted with disability employment services and to the disability community. We were also told that more targeted recruitment, along with the promotion of positive employment stories, could help people with disability see the City of Sydney as “an employer of choice”.

Inclusive policies, such as support for adjustments, workplace optimisation and workplace flexibility should be openly promoted and be approached as ‘business as usual’, always asking the question in recruitment: “what can we do to help you?”.

Attendees reported to us the need for more social stories, plain English job advertisements and position descriptions, supportive recruitment practices, and creative recruitment methods.

For example, we were told that video applications and online interviews and making interviews more task-based are ways to encourage more people with disability to apply for roles at the City of Sydney. These methods could provide for greater choice around disclosure of disability during the recruitment process.

We were also told that fostering a culture of trust and open dialogue around diversity and inclusion, disability and caring responsibilities, will provide confidence for more people with disability to disclose and comfortably request the supports they need to succeed.

Attendees also told us that there should be a City of Sydney commitment towards targeted recruitment of specific roles and entry-level positions to create a pathway for more people with disability to be employed. Part-time and job-sharing arrangements should be considered as a strategy towards enabling more people with disability into open employment.

Inclusive workplaces and providing ongoing support for employees with disability

Attendees reported to us the importance of psychological safety in the workplace, by promoting a culture where diversity and inclusion are pivotal. One suggested idea was an “accessibility passport” that could be offered to new employees with disability outlining their access requirements and workplace adjustments without having to tell their story to multiple people, as well as rights, support programs and inclusive policies.

Attendees also suggested ongoing professional development and training opportunities to increase skills and experience, as well as transparent policies, guidelines and programs that support a diverse and inclusive workforce and enable people with disability to thrive in the workplace. Flexible working and outcomes based workplans can allow for equality of opportunity for people with disability. The City of Sydney could also offer career planning or ‘job coaches’ to support employees with disability to advocate for their needs and facilitate career progression.

We were told about the need to make regular check-ins between employees and managers the norm, along with discussions about access and inclusion requirements, promoting open dialogue. Others highlighted that workplace flexibility benefits all employees.

Providing safe quiet spaces, and “safe words” and other shortcuts for staff to take time and space needed without full disclosure required were suggested to help instil a culture of trust and safety among managers and employees.

Informal supports, such as Inclusive City (disability employee network) offers a supported peer network that aim to promote the rights of people with disability and enhance access and inclusion. Other opportunities arising from mentoring, shadowing and peer support that are available, all contribute towards providing support for employees with disability.

Disability advocates that can act as role models and advocates was seen by some attendees as the next step in the inclusion journey. Positive stories of inclusive employment and promoting the benefits and qualities of employing people with disability are needed to combat stigma and stereotypes and promote change.

Attendees also told us that anonymous surveys that can measure a more accurate reflection of the number of people with disability in the workplace, their various experiences, their levels of safety and inclusion, and ideas for improvements, could allow for continuous improvement.

Some participants told us about what they considered to be good practice leave entitlements at other organisations, such as recognised leave for people living with long term health conditions and leave for employees who wish to undertake training for their support animal without requiring a medical assessment.

We were also told by participants that greater visibility of employees with disability and carers will help to challenge assumptions and change attitudes. One assumption that participants told us about was the “misconception of needing more time and assistance”. Therefore, showcasing an employee’s passion, drive and meaningful employment at the City of Sydney will demonstrate that career opportunities are possible for people with disability.

Employment targets demonstrate commitment

The labour force participation rate in Australia for people with disability has remained relatively unchanged for the past 20 years⁷.

Several suggestions were made around having employment targets, from entry level through to leadership. Where mentioned, targets are considered to provide for accountability and transparency, demonstrating leadership in disability employment.

This would be in line with provision of disability inclusion employment targets proposed in the Resolution of Council on 29 July 2024.

Setting clear goals and performance measures around access and inclusion for leaders at the City of Sydney could further embed values of diversity and inclusion.

Review and promote the workplace optimisation policy

Attendees told us that the City of Sydney should make it the norm to ask employees if they require workplace optimisation, have a robust policy that is widely promoted and make adjustments quick and easy to support inclusion. We were also told that employees with disability should be actively engaged throughout policy development processes through consultation and co-design to ensure it is representative and fit for purpose.

Building the capacity of people with disability as leaders

Attendees told us that there needs to be more people with disability in leadership positions to help lead-change. Investing in capacity building, management and leadership development of people with disability should be a priority.

One potential solution for addressing this is a disability workforce strategy, providing a clear roadmap for disability employment from entry level to leadership, setting clear goals and providing accountability will help affect change in disability employment at the city.

Moreover, disability awareness and inclusion should be front of mind through creating opportunities to share diverse lived experience of disability with executives at the city, including exploring creative ideas such as ‘mentor up programs’ enabling executives to spend time and learn from employees with disability.

Access and inclusion fundamentals need to be top down and embedded into executive leadership, with trained and informed leaders championing diversity and inclusion across the organisation.

⁷ Australian Human Rights Commission, Employment for people with disability in Australia, November 2024

Disability awareness and inclusion training

Attendees told us that training specific to a diverse range of disabilities, including people with non-visible or 'hidden' disabilities, as well as a greater understanding and appreciation of intersectional identities is needed.

Inclusion (disability) awareness training should be updated and developed through co-design, as well as providing regular opportunities to hear and learn from people with diverse lived experience built into training programs.

Ambassadors, volunteers and casual event staff should receive mandatory inclusion (disability) awareness training, as well as specific training such as inclusive and accessible events.

Supporting inclusive education and transitions

Around 10% of Australian school students aged 5 to 18 years have a disability, and most (89%) attend a mainstream school⁸. Education is the building blocks towards future employment, and the City of Sydney can support young people to transition into employment through supporting capacity building initiatives and transition projects, and those that bring inclusive employers together to provide employment opportunities. The City of Sydney can partner and collaborate with the disability sector, NDIS, education and employment providers to help increase employment of people with disability.

Procurement practices supporting disability owned businesses

The City of Sydney should not support Australian Disability Enterprises who segregate people with disability and do not offer fair pay for employees.

Instead, the City of Sydney should strengthen procurement practices to support businesses that are disability owned and led, and that support the open employment and pay equity for people with disability, in line with a Resolution of Council on 11 December 2023.

Systems and processes

Continuous community engagement with people with disability

Feedback from participants stressed the importance of greater engagement with people with disability on a regular basis when developing major strategies, policies and initiatives. Suggestions included reporting back to enable people with disability to see how their voices have been turned into action and change. For example, community listening exercises, roundtables, forums and focus groups. Other participants valued the need to provide accessibility and supports when workshops include people with lived experience.

Accessible feedback mechanisms including in-person and over the phone, as well as online were suggested to improve services and programs for people with disability. Along with customer service providing end-to-end support for people with disability, so that they are not 'lost in the system' and having to repeat their story.

When designing a new service, program or facility, consultation with people with disability can help to ensure accessibility and conducting user testing will determine if a facility, service, program or process is fit for purpose.

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, People with disability in Australia 2024, Summary Factsheet 6: Education and skills

The Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel was seen as a valuable resource for the City of Sydney to engage with diverse lived experience for independent advice and guidance, and to co-design solutions or programs.

Promoting the guide to council decision making, and the many ways people with disability can have a say, advocate and participate was also mentioned. Easy and accessible ways to give feedback and make complaints and seek resolutions should be prioritised, along with promoting avenues to seek support for individual advocacy from disability representative organisations.

Embedding increased consultation and co-design where possible, into Council processes

Co-design is inclusive, promotes diverse perspectives, improves idea generation, services and outcomes. It can also save time and money, and empowers people to give them greater choice and control⁹.

We were told that participants with disability want to be “in the room when decisions are made”. And that by embedding co-design into Council processes, this will enhance outcomes both for the City of Sydney and people with disability in the community.

Co-production of programs and events will provide for equity of opportunity and boost participation. We were also told that the City of Sydney should aim to demonstrate best practice by ‘doing with, and not for’ people with disability, valuing the diverse voices of those with lived experience, and where possible empower disability-led change.

Access and inclusion advocates

Attendees told us that upskilling employees responsible for implementing the inclusion (disability) action plan with specialist access and inclusion training could help build organisational capacity. Having access and inclusion advocates across the City of Sydney will ensure this is front of mind and encourage continuous improvement. Providing opportunities for executives and advocates to collaborate on a more regular basis will promote inclusion at all organisational levels.

Accessible information and communication

At the roundtable, accessible information and documents were emphasised as very important for inclusion. For example, accessible PDF, Word, large print, Auslan videos and Easy Read documents for key strategies, policies and guidelines.

Suggestions for the City of Sydney website included an in-built screen reader, improved navigation and search functionality, and web-chat options. Developing a City of Sydney mobile phone app made for and with people with disability could improve independence and promote participation.

Having visual aids, use of images and pictures, and providing Easy Read information can all support improved accessibility in the customer service experience.

Attendees also told us that continuing to have alternative formats available at libraries, such as audio books, Auslan videos, large print and braille books will all enhance inclusion. We were also told that hard copies in some cases are “still an important medium to be used” when considering access to information at City of Sydney facilities.

Centralised disability information and online platform to connect

Attendees told us about the need for more centralised, easy to find information about disability services, programs, events, advocacy, useful resources and accessibility. This could be made available in alternative formats such as the website, in app form, printed directory, and in-person supports.

⁹ JFA Purple Orange, Guide on co-design with people living with disability.

We were also told that information about the National Relay Service, Translating and Interpreting Service, and how to request accessible information or documents should be readily available on the City of Sydney website and in print at service counters.

The City of Sydney's [accessibility map](#) was seen as a great resource and should be kept current and improved with additional accessibility features of facilities, public spaces, parks, reserves and playgrounds, mobility parking, public toilets, lifts, street furniture and effort-based mobility routes. There were several suggestions to investigate the development of an easy-to-use mobile app version to support accessibility.

Attendees told us about the need for more regular in-person disability hubs at community centres, bringing key disability services and government agencies together to support people with disability. These may include NDIS, Centrelink, housing and homelessness services, disability service providers and others.

Providing information to empower informed independent choice was seen as an important function of the City of Sydney. Information and a guide for peer-advocacy, along with training could be developed and promoted to people with disability in the community.

Disability specific community development support, through sector training, resource development and capacity building for service providers and disability representative organisations is highly valued. Partnerships with disability service providers should be strengthened to facilitate greater support and connection to services, programs and events for people with disability.

Signage and communications reflecting City of Sydney policies promoting inclusion

Roundtable attendees made a number of suggestions about the need for visible signage and communications in the City of Sydney area promoting inclusive policies such as the [Companion Card](#), assistance animals, [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#), recharge stations, quiet spaces, racism not welcome, [refugee welcome zone](#), and other signage.

Promoting digital literacy

In 2018, 1.1 million (29%) people with disability were not using the internet and 1.4 million (38%) older Australians were not using the internet¹⁰. Access to computers and opportunities to enhance digital skills were highlighted as barriers for some people with disability.

Attendees at the roundtable told us that the City of Sydney can play a role in promoting digital literacy by providing programs at libraries and community centres that teach digital literacy and support people with disability to participate safely online to access information or connect. Providing and promoting public access computers with accessibility features, as well as training and skills development opportunities, will support digital literacy for people with disability. Providing free wifi at key facilities will assist more people to connect online.

Sensory seeking and calming tools and resources

Accessible sensory seeking and sensory calming kits being available at community centres, libraries and at events for use in quiet spaces will promote acceptance and inclusions. This could include tools, fidgets and resources, for example noise cancelling headphones, weighted blankets and blindfolds.

End-to-end user thinking for customer service

Improving the customer service experience was another key theme raised during the roundtable.

We were told about how thinking about the customer experience through learning from lived experience and engaging in user testing will improve the customer experience for people with

¹⁰ [Use of information technology by people with disability, older people and primary carers](#), Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020

disability. We were also told that “having to repeat your story to Council is exhausting”, and that a “no wrong door” approach to customer service is essential.

Upskilling customer service employees on disability awareness and accessibility will further improve the customer experience, and providing support to follow requests through to completion will provide a person-centred approach.

We were also told that having greater in-person customer service availability across the City of Sydney local area could be of benefit creating greater access for people with disability. Seeing the person with disability as the expert in their lived experience, we were told that the City of Sydney can proactively ask people with disability the question “how can we make this more accessible for you?” across many of its services, programs and events.

There were also suggestions for the City of Sydney to offer a simple way for people to report accessibility issues in various forms, such as the website, app, in-person, and other channels. One suggestion was for customer-facing facilities to have a Service NSW-style in person survey to capture more insights about customer service experiences with the City of Sydney.

A more accessible and targeted grants and sponsorship program

Participants provided suggestions around improving the accessibility of the City of Sydney’s grants and sponsorship program. We were told that the grants and sponsorship program should investigate ways to make applications simpler and remove barriers for people with a diverse range of disabilities to apply. This should be done in collaboration with people with disability.

Attendees suggested the program could engage in targeted promotion to the disability community, and the applications process should be accessible. For example, verbal or video application, Easy Read application, peer support person. Feedback on the application process should also be actively sought from applicants with disability to allow for removal of barriers for continuous improvement.

Provide programs, activities and events at reduced rates or for free

Financial barriers are restrictive to people with disability on limited incomes participating in the community. In 2021, 25% of people with disability aged 15 to 64 in Australia would not have been able to raise \$3,000 in a week for an emergency, and 9% of people with disability went without meals due to a shortage of money¹¹.

With the current cost-of-living crisis, when on a fixed income, it becomes a matter of paying for necessities first and there can be little left over to pay for costs associated with community participation.

This was reflected in suggestions at the roundtable for the City of Sydney to “make sure things are free”, and in turn combat the high levels of loneliness and social isolation experienced by people with disability. Some ways this could be achieved include through providing rebates and discounts for pensioners and by accepting the NSW Companion Card at more facilities and services.

Explore how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence can support access and inclusion

Roundtable participants also told us how emerging technologies could be considered in improving access and inclusion in the City of Sydney local area. This links to recent research in this area that shows how artificial intelligence for example, could assist people with disability to communicate, learn and promote inclusion, and could support interactions with local government¹².

We were told by one participant that “accessible development” in technology “has led to innovations for everyone”. In particular, participants mentioned opportunities to leverage existing and emerging projects, including an AI-powered avatar software that is currently being developed by Sydney

¹¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [People with disability in Australia: Finances](#), April 2024

¹² Forbes, [Empowering individuals with disabilities through AI technology](#), June 2023

Stage 1

Trains and members of the Australian Deaf community that can translate audio announcements into Auslan.¹³

¹³ The Mandarin. [AI-powered Auslan avatar can help Deaf people with train travel](#)

Vision

The following vision was crafted from the co-design process, considering the suggestions put forward at the roundtable:

Drive greater social change and equity. We will do this by promoting and protecting the inherent rights, dignity and voices of people with disability, and creating a more inclusive, accessible, resilient and diverse city for all.

Principles

The following principles were put forward during the co-design process:

- Resilient
- Inclusive
- Accessible
- Connected
- Empowering
- Advocacy
- Social justice
- Innovation
- Collaborative
- Equity
- Universal design
- Compassion
- Solution focused
- Diversity
- Capacity building
- Respect

Focus groups – key findings

Five focus groups were undertaken to ensure diverse perspectives of priority groups were captured, respecting intersectionality and accessibility. The focus groups were peer-led in partnership with specialist disability organisations to provide expertise and impartiality. The focus groups included:

- People with intellectual disability: 29 August in partnership with Council for Intellectual Disability
- People of diverse sexualities and genders with disability: 11 September in partnership with SQuAD (Sydney Queer and Disability community group)
- People with disability from multicultural backgrounds: 17 September in partnership with the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association, Settlement Services International and Ethnic Community Services Cooperative
- People who are neurodivergent: 26 September in partnership with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability: 17 October in partnership with First People's Disability Network

Although each focus group was unique and identified barriers and challenges specific for that community, there were some common themes and important perspectives to highlight within the feedback.

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

Representing the diversity of people with disability

- There is a lack of visibility and representation of priority groups, and more positive images and stories are needed demonstrating the diversity and qualities of different groups.
- The City of Sydney can showcase the contributions of people with a diverse range of disabilities and provide opportunities to celebrate talent and ability: “celebrate that diversity means we are all different, and that’s what makes us the same”.
- Support the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme and promote awareness of non-visible disabilities.
- There is greater need for an anti-racism campaign locally, as well as education and communication combatting ableism and disability discrimination.
- Greater efforts to promote social cohesion, inclusivity and a sense of belonging are needed.

Capacity building for disability-led changemaking

- Building the capacity of priority groups to advocate and lead change: “make sure there is a strong voice of people with disability so they can have their say”.

Training on intersectionality, priority groups and specific disabilities

- More training on intersectional identities and of specific disabilities is needed to challenge stereotypes and promote unique talents and abilities (including for multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, women and people of diverse sexualities and genders, older people with disability, and people with non-visible disabilities, intellectual

disability and psychosocial disability, people with multiple disabilities, and others). Where possible, training should be co-designed with people with disability.

- Training on disability-inclusive language and on communicating effectively with people with a diverse range of disabilities is needed.

Physical accessibility promotes inclusion

- Physical barriers in the built environment impact feelings of inclusion, and accessibility should be considered in design and provided as a 'norm'.

Inclusive programming supports inclusion

- More programming that takes into consideration cultural safety, offers safe and welcoming spaces, and that is accessible for a diverse range of disabilities is needed. The City of Sydney can use existing facilities such as community centres, libraries and recreational facilities, and promote a variety of targeted programming and events that welcomes priority groups with disability and allows them to connect and participate in a variety of activities.
- Support the creation of support and advocacy groups for people with a diverse range of disabilities and carers.
- Events bring people together to connect and feel included. Look at opportunities to celebrate a diverse range of disabilities or people with disability during priority group celebrations. For example, Autistic Pride Day, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, World Down Syndrome Day, R U OK Day, Mental Health Month, or during other celebratory occasions such as Harmony Week or Mardi Gras.

Liveable communities

Improve the accessibility of facilities, public spaces, footpaths, parks and playgrounds

- Access audits of facilities and public spaces should be conducted, and a program of works developed with clear targets to improve access and inclusion.
- Inclusive design can promote community connection within public spaces and parks. For example, wheelchair spaces at tables with public seating.
- More inclusive parks and playgrounds are needed, with inclusive play equipment for people with a diverse range of disabilities to enjoy.
- More accessible green space would enhance liveability.
- Ensure inclusivity is considered in public spaces and through planning controls to facilitate connection and place-making.
- An accessible path of travel needs to be prioritised for footpaths.
- More lifts in public spaces and especially along popular accessible travel routes in Central Sydney are needed.
- More lighting is needed to increase safety and accessibility, including at events.

Mobility parking and accessible drop-off

- More mobility parking and accessible drop-off points in the City of Sydney local area are needed, including kerb ramps.
- More community education around the ability to use 'loading' and 'no parking' zones for drop-off for people with mobility parking permits is needed.

Better wayfinding and signage

- Consider electronic wayfinding that gives directions and is available in accessible formats, and help points to connect with a person.
- Simple, Easy Read signage and wayfinding would enable greater independence and participation, especially in Central Sydney.

- Signage should include phone numbers to call for assistance, and where to find in-person support.
- A mobile phone app with accessibility features of facilities and events, and the accessibility map would greatly benefit people with disability, including sensory maps of central business districts.
- Navigating transport interchanges was particularly difficult for some people with disability and needs clearer signage and integrated wayfinding with public spaces.
- Signage that welcomes people of diverse sexualities and genders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from multicultural backgrounds, people with non-visible disabilities, and people with assistance animals should be included at City of Sydney facilities.

Quiet spaces

- Designated safe and quiet spaces throughout the City of Sydney area would allow people to take a break in a place they know they're welcome.

Accessible toilets

- More accessible public toilets are needed, along with universal access (not requiring an MLAK key).

Recharge stations

- More recharge stations are needed at City of Sydney facilities and in public spaces.

Lack of accessible and affordable housing

- Investigate local planning controls and innovative solutions. For example, explore use of vacant buildings or the diverse housing fund to increase the amount of accessible and affordable housing in City of Sydney local area.
- Advocate for more specialist disability accommodation to provide housing designed for people with significant disabilities to provide liveability, accessibility and high physical support.

Online platform to connect and get disability information

- The City of Sydney could develop an online platform to allow people with disability to connect, find out relevant information on disability programs and events.

More accessible and inclusive programming at mainstream events

- Promote accessible and inclusive events in mainstream programming (for example Sydney Festival, Fringe Festival, and others).
- Investigate opportunities to make mainstream events more compliant with the inclusive and accessible event guidelines.

Strengthening partnerships and bringing services together

- The City of Sydney can play a role in bringing services and priority groups together to build relationships, educate and advocate for supports (for example NSW Police, Centrelink, NDIS, NSW Housing, and others).
- Ongoing sector support and development is needed, along with capacity building in access and inclusion.

Supporting disability-owned social enterprise

- The City of Sydney could support community cafes or social enterprises where people with disability could be provided with job training and employment opportunities.

Meaningful employment

Disability workforce strategy

- A coordinated workforce strategy that empowers people with disability, from entry level to leadership is needed, with disability employment and leadership targets.
- Commitment with dedicated targeted entry-level position programs should be available for people with disability, for example internships, traineeships, apprenticeships.
- Physical accessibility of the workplace should be provided as a priority to remove barriers to employment.
- Support to retain employment and thrive in roles should be considered, including with partnerships to specialised disability organisations. For example, Jigsaw, Aspect, Council for Intellectual Disability, Australian Human Rights Commission IncludeAbility and others.
- People with disability want to work, they just need to be given an opportunity and have inclusive employers that are willing to learn with them. Strengths-based employment is needed that is outcome focused and offers flexibility and trust to enable greater employment of people with disability.
- Viewing disability as an asset, having the attitude: “we value your insights because you have lived experience, and a unique skill set”.
- Workplace optimisation (adjustments) should be considered as a step within recruitment and regularly and openly discussed with managers and promoted transparently.
- Psychological safety needs to be promoted, with a focus on safe and supported disclosure of disability within a culture of appreciating lived experience as values of diversity and inclusion.
- Part-time employment and job-sharing should be considered to provide more people with disability the opportunity to work.
- Provide disability leadership training, to upskill and provide for more leaders with disability.
- Continue to provide mentoring, peer support, and disability employee networks to support employees with disability, and consider a ‘buddy’ program for new starters.
- Volunteering should include people with intellectual disability and aim to lead to paid employment opportunities.
- People with disability have a “cultural load” in educating people about their disability, this should be recognised and supported in the workplace. For example an ‘accessibility passport’ is a creative way to have access needs met without needing to retell your story.
- Training on working with priority communities, as well as role related training is needed, for example, trauma informed service delivery.
- The City of Sydney can support more training for service providers on how to support someone during a mental health crisis and during recovery, and for reporting domestic and family violence and support services for those experiencing or at risk of domestic and family violence.

Encouraging businesses to enhance access and inclusion

- Promote the business case for access and inclusion and support and incentivise local businesses to train staff and employ more people with disability.
- Businesses could show signage or a window sticker to demonstrate they are safe and welcoming of people with a diverse range of disabilities.
- The City of Sydney can provide capacity-building resources to businesses to increase access and inclusion and promote employment of people with disability.

Support for open employment of people with disability

- Australian Disability Enterprises do not promote fair pay and should not be supported.

Grants to support disability-owned businesses

- Provision of grants that support people with disability to start their own business and employ more people with disability should be considered.

Systems and processes

Accessible information and communications

- Create more accessible communications through use of simpler language, Easy Read documents, visual aids, infographics, communication boards, providing different contact methods (online, by phone, or in-person), and social stories for events and programs.
- Key cultural, community, recreation and library information should be available in different accessible formats.
- More Auslan interpreted events and information, as well as more captioning available to promote greater accessibility.
- The City of Sydney website is complex and hard to navigate for people with a diverse range of disabilities and can be simplified with co-designed solutions.
- Capture people's communication preferences, and where possible communicate in the preferred method.

Centralised disability information

- People with disability need to know where to go for information, how to have a say, and how to advocate and create opportunities for change.
- A one-stop shop of disability relevant information is needed, including services, programs and events for people with disability, including information specific to different priority groups.

Continuous feedback and improvement

- Continue to engage with the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel to provide expert independent advice from people with a diverse range of disabilities.
- Have an easy way to submit accessibility issues and provide feedback when they are resolved, for example, mobile phone app.
- Have suggestion box at community facilities to get new ideas and continuously improve.
- Have regular community listening sessions with priority groups.

Discounts, rebates and supports to ease the cost-of-living crisis

- All focus groups included mention of the high cost of living, and a lack of affordability for services, programs and events. Providing rebates or discounts for people receiving the disability support pension, acceptance of Companion Card for carers, and access to discounted, or free programs and events would provide more opportunities to participate in the community and promote greater wellbeing for people with disability.
- Having open days at community centres and community hubs that provide access to support services and food relief and bring people together to connect were highly valued and should be promoted to the disability community.
- An accessible free safe space should be provided for the Aboriginal disability advocacy group to continue to meet, and the group be provided with community development support to promote sustainability and amplify advocacy efforts.

Exploring the role of artificial intelligence in supporting people with disability

- Supporting the role of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence in advancing access and inclusion and improving services and programs for people with disability.

Engagement activities

Overview of engagement

Sydney Your Say webpage

A [Sydney Your Say webpage](#) was created to facilitate this consultation. The page included a copy of the survey, focus group information, roundtable registration link and other key information about the consultation.

Online feedback form

Stakeholders were able to tell us about their experiences using an online feedback form. A link to the feedback form was provided on the Sydney Your Say webpage.

Sydney Your Say e-newsletters

The consultation was included in the Sydney Your Say e-newsletters in July and August 2024 which was sent to 6,650 subscribers.

City of Sydney e-newsletters

The consultation was also included in other e-newsletters in August and September 2024. These included community centres, First Nations opportunities, social housing, Green Square community, library, youth programs and City of Sydney News.

Key stakeholder notification

An email was sent to 121 key stakeholders inviting their input on the survey.

Social media campaign

The consultation opportunities were posted on the City of Sydney's social media channels including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Targeted advertising on LinkedIn and Facebook promoted the consultation opportunities. The consultation was accessed by 1,164 people using the link in these ads.

Posters and flyers

Posters and flyers were distributed and displayed across City of Sydney venues including libraries and community centres promoting the consultation opportunities.

Focus groups

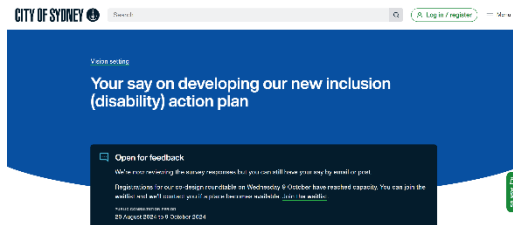
Fifty-three people with disability attended focus groups, along with 12 service providers.

Co-design roundtable

There were 90 participants at the roundtable, facilitating feedback and co-design of actions for the new plan.

Attachments

Attachment A – Sydney Your Say webpage



Why we're doing this

Our current inclusion (disability) action plan is due to finish on 31 June 2024, and we need to develop a new plan for 2024-2028.

At every stage of the planning process, we'll collaborate with those with lived experience of disability and people who care for people with disability. This will ensure our new plan is informed with the expertise of those who know best.

1. Foster community attitudes and behaviours
2. Livable communities
3. Workplace employment
4. Livable access to transport services

What we're doing

We want to be able to respond to emerging issues and provide opportunities for co-designing solutions that will enhance access and inclusion for people with disability.

To better understand barriers and challenges, we're taking feedback from people with lived experience of disability, family and carers, and disability service providers and disability service organisations.

Our community consultation includes a survey, focus groups and co-design roundtable.

Next steps

Once we've received your feedback from our survey, focus groups and roundtable, we'll publish a community engagement report. This report will include the consultation and co-design of actions with the community throughout the development process of the new inclusion (disability) action plan.

We'll publish this on our website with the draft action plan for comment in early 2025.

Language used in this survey

Language is powerful and community building. We recognise that there is no one way of being, engaging or being that will be right for all people. Our intention for this survey is to use as clear and simple as possible to ensure everyone can understand the survey, see their voice and message heard and have inclusive opportunities based on the survey.

People with disability	✓
What is the social model of disability?	✓
What is access?	✓
What is inclusion?	✓
What is a liveable community?	✓
What is intersectionality	✓

How you can give feedback

Consultation closes at 6pm on Wednesday 9 October 2024.

There are several ways you can give feedback:

1. **Take our survey**
Our survey closes at 6pm on Tuesday 17 September.
2. **Join a focus group**
We're seeking expressions of interest from people with lived experience of disability in our diverse communities. A participant in a focus group will help inform the development of our new inclusion (disability) action plan. Eligible participants must be over 18 years and will live, work or study in the City of Sydney local area. Expressions of interest are now closed.
3. **Join the co-design roundtable**
When: Wednesday 8 October 10:30am to 1pm
Where: Level 10, Sydney Town Hall
This meeting is to help us develop a co-design of separate actions to address barriers and challenges towards access and inclusion and provide support and advice to people with lived experience of disability in the new plan. People with lived experience of disability, disability peak organisations and local disability service providers are invited to attend.
Registration has now reached capacity. You can join the virtual one on one contact via a shared access mailbox.
[Join us later](#)
4. **Email or post your feedback**
You can give your feedback by email to sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or post to:
Cyril G. Day, Social Policy Officer - Access and Inclusion
Council City
123 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000



Photo: Sydney Your Say, Sydney Your Say and Sydney Your Say

Focus groups

We're seeking expressions of interest from people with lived experience of disability in our diverse communities to participate in focus groups to help inform the development of our new inclusion (disability) action plan. Eligible participants must be over 18 years and will live, work or study in the City of Sydney local area.

Each focus group will run for 2 to 3 hours and participants will be paid \$200 for their time.

A 2-page expression paper with background information and some questions to consider will be shared with participants before the focus group.

To apply, complete an expression of interest form to participate in the session listed below that is most relevant to you. An expression of interest will be assessed. Successful participants will be chosen for the focus group.

You will be notified of the outcome of your expression of interest at least one week before the focus group.

If you need help filling out this form, you can call the social policy team on 02 9555 9322 or email inclusion@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Focus group: People with Intellectual disability

Thursday 28 August

10am to 12pm

Location: 4th Floor, Sydney Town Hall

This focus group is pre-facilitated by the Council for Intellectual Disability. If you would like support to access your own Council for Intellectual Disability on 1800 424 065.

Expressions of interest are closed.

Focus group: People of diverse sexualities and genders with disability

Wednesday 14 September

10:00am to 12:00pm

Online using Zoom

This session is pre-facilitated by Charlie Zabo, an experienced facilitator from the Sydney Queer and Disabled Community group (SQDC).

Expressions of interest are closed.

Focus group: People with disability from multicultural backgrounds

Thursday 17 September

10am to 12pm

Location: 4th Floor, Sydney Town Hall

This session is pre-facilitated by the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association and is co-hosted in partnership with the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association and the NSW Government.

If you require a translator, please indicate the language required in the accessibility requirements section of the expression of interest form.

Expressions of interest are closed.

Focus group: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability

Thursday 17 October

10:00am to 12:00pm

Location: 4th Floor, Sydney Town Hall

This focus group is pre-facilitated by the First Peoples Disability Network. If you would like support to apply, you can call First Peoples Disability Network on 1800 424 065 or email fpdn@fpdn.org.au.

Expressions of interest are closed.

Focus group: People who are neurodivergent

Thursday 28 September

10:00am to 12:00pm

Online using Zoom

This focus group is pre-facilitated by Aislinn Robinson, a neurodivergent advocate from Autism Spectrum Australia (Asperger).

Expressions of interest are closed.

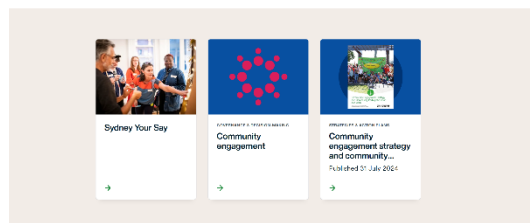
Getting support

We recognise that by sharing your lived experience of disability in writing, it may bring up distress or discomfort. If you need to speak with someone for confidential support, you may wish to contact:

Urbane Urban@urbane.com.au
Beyond Blue BeyondBlue@beyondblue.com.au
1800 RESPECT 1800RESPECT@nsw.gov.au

Other ways you can give feedback

Talk to us in person	✓
If you are Deaf or have complex communication needs	✓
If you need an interpreter	✓



Was this page helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No



Attachment B – Sydney Your Say e-newsletter

Sydney Your Say

CITY OF SYDNEY 



Help shape our new inclusion (disability) action plan

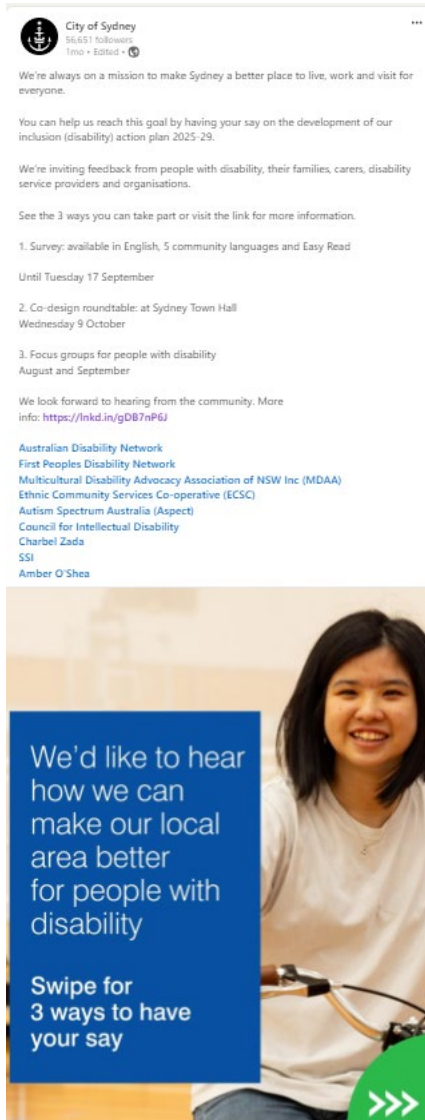
People with lived experience of disability, family, carers, service providers and organisations are encouraged to provide feedback and share their experiences to inform and co-design the 2025–2029 plan.

Have your say by Tuesday 17 September.

[Read more](#)

Attachment C – Social media posts

LinkedIn



City of Sydney
16,651 followers
1mo • Edited •

We're always on a mission to make Sydney a better place to live, work and visit for everyone.

You can help us reach this goal by having your say on the development of our inclusion (disability) action plan 2025-29.

We're inviting feedback from people with disability, their families, carers, disability service providers and organisations.

See the 3 ways you can take part or visit the link for more information.

1. Survey: available in English, 5 community languages and Easy Read
Until Tuesday 17 September
2. Co-design roundtable: at Sydney Town Hall
Wednesday 9 October
3. Focus groups for people with disability
August and September

We look forward to hearing from the community. More info: <https://lnkd.in/gDB7nP6J>

Australian Disability Network
First Peoples Disability Network
Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW Inc (MDAA)
Ethnic Community Services Co-operative (ECSC)
Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
Council for Intellectual Disability
Charbel Zada
SSI
Amber O'Shea

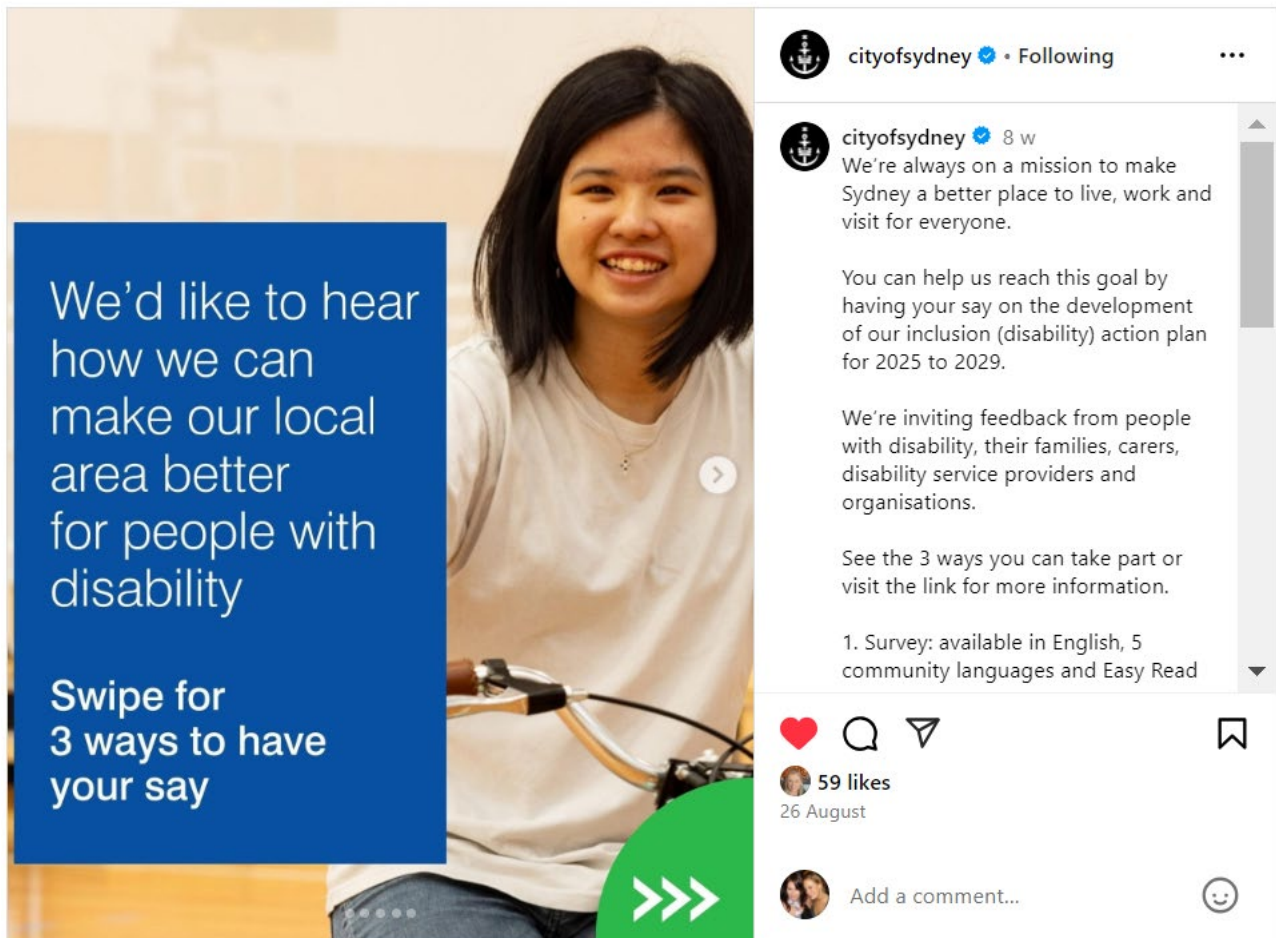


We'd like to hear how we can make our local area better for people with disability

Swipe for 3 ways to have your say

>>>

Instagram



Facebook

City of Sydney August 26 · 🌐

We're always on a mission to make Sydney a better place to live, work and visit for everyone. You can help us reach this goal by having your say on the development of our inclusion (disability) action plan 2025-29.

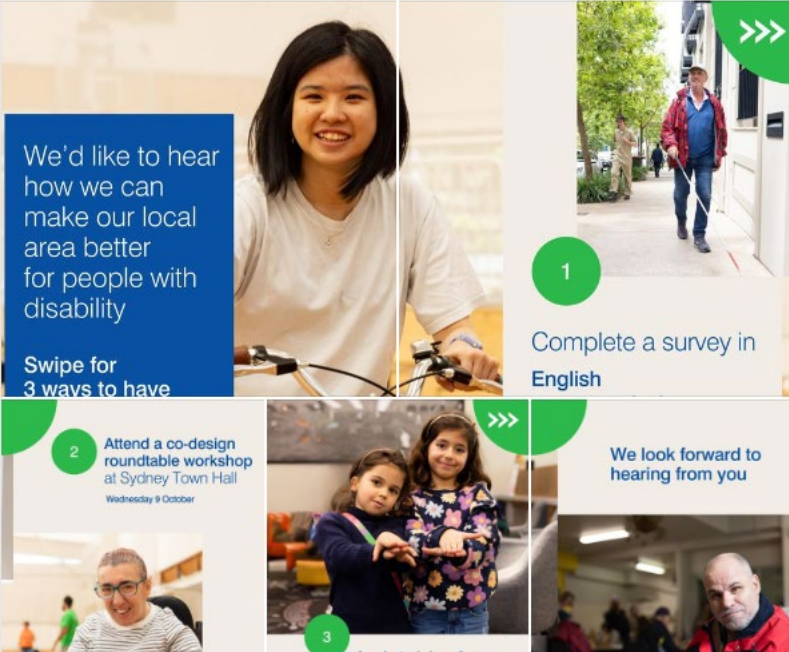
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Until Tuesday 17 September
2. Co-design roundtable: at Sydney Town Hall
Wednesday 9 October
3. Focus groups for people with disability
August and September

We look forward to hearing from the community: <https://city.sydney/yoursay-idap>

Australian Disability Network
First Peoples Disability Network
Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW
Ethnic Community Services Co-operative
SSI - Settlement Services International
Council for Intellectual Disability



We'd like to hear how we can make our local area better for people with disability

Swipe for 3 ways to have

1 Complete a survey in English

2 Attend a co-design roundtable workshop at Sydney Town Hall Wednesday 9 October

3 We look forward to hearing from you

Attachment D – Marketing and communications

Poster



Help shape our new
inclusion (disability) action plan

People with lived experience of disability, family and carers, and disability service providers and organisations are encouraged to provide feedback and share their experiences to inform and co-design the 2025–2029 plan.

Take a survey by Tuesday 17 September
The survey is available online in English, simplified and traditional Chinese, Thai, Spanish and Indonesian. An Easy Read version is also available and printed copies can be requested at any of our libraries, community or customer service centres.

Join a focus group
People with lived experience of disability in our diverse communities can apply to participate in focus groups.

Join the co-design roundtable
Register to attend this workshop on Wednesday 9 October at Sydney Town Hall.

You can give feedback on the plan at
city.sydney/inclusion-disability

More information
Jayne Gan
Social Policy Officer - Access and Inclusion
02 9265 9333
inclusiondisability@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
Translating & Interpreting Service: 13 14 50



CITY OF SYDNEY 

city.sydney/inclusion-disability

Attachment E – Focus group for people with intellectual disability

When: Thursday 29 August 2024

Partners: Council for Intellectual Disability

Participants: 7

About the focus group

Eight people with intellectual disability took part in the focus group. Seven attended as participants and one person co-facilitated the group with a Council for Intellectual Disability staff member.

The focus group ran for 2 hours in a hybrid model of online and in-person participation. Four people attended in person and 3 joined online with Microsoft Teams.

At the start, participants were supported to become familiar with the topic and purpose of the focus group.

The right to stop the discussion at any stage was confirmed for all participants. Participants confirmed feeling comfortable and consented to the focus group. Participants were made aware that their personal information would not be shared and that all feedback would be de-identified.

Due to specific support needs of participants with their focus and level of cognition, the facilitators used discretion in selecting questions to bring out responses during the session. PowerPoint slides in Easy Read format were used to aid content comprehension.

The following summary report looks at the responses and themes of the participants involved:

- strengths/assets
- barriers/challenges
- positive attitudes and behaviours
- liveable communities
- meaningful employment
- improving systems and processes
- ideas for future actions.

The report was prepared by inclusion projects officer Jonathon Kelleher and inclusion services manager Jemima Macdonald at the Council for Intellectual Disability.

Summary report

Strengths / Assets	Barriers / Challenges
The city has many events and spaces to visit	Lack of kerb ramps for people who use wheelchairs
The city has good services	Lack of mobility parking spaces in the city centre
People with intellectual disability can have a “strong voice” and opportunities to have a say in the City of Sydney	Lack of representation of people with intellectual disability
Community centres and programs are inclusive of people with disability	Lack of positive images and communications that show the ability of people with intellectual disability
City of Sydney has a good atmosphere with communal spaces and is inclusive of everyone	Lack of awareness of intellectual disability
City of Sydney is a place where “all opinions and choices are welcome”	Lack of lifts in public places
If you cannot access a place, you can write to the City of Sydney to do something about it and improve access	Accessibility of streets and places can be a challenge for wheelchair users

Positive attitudes and behaviours	Liveable communities
People have negative attitudes towards disability, thinking you’re inconvenient or “too hard” and need to be accommodated for.	Easy Read signs and information in the city would help, with audio options to help people who cannot read well, and the ability to give directions.
“I think I feel more welcome with people being non-judgemental” – “I can be who I want to be” in the City of Sydney.	More green spaces would be good to make people feel uplifted and calm.
It depends, some people treat you nicely and others don’t.	Quiet spaces in the city would be good to take a break when needed. This would assist people who get sensory overload.
“I feel included with the support of my family who make me feel comfortable and help a lot. However sometimes when I am outside without my family there are things that make me feel uncomfortable.”	Places and facilities should have plain English and phone numbers to be able to speak to someone to answer questions or ask for help.
The City of Sydney could showcase the contributions of people with intellectual disability.	Listen to the difficult experiences of people with intellectual disability and help create a space where “everyone can be together”.
“I have the freedom to go wherever I want, like to the parks.”	Areas like Chinatown have so many little and big neon signs that can be hard to read and

Positive attitudes and behaviours	Liveable communities
	understand – the important parts need to be more prominent.
	Communal spaces are good for people to feel included and part of something – “I love going to cafes where they have those big tables.”
	For public spaces and buildings in the City of Sydney, everyone should be able to access – “it can be hard for people with disability to get to work or do things” so all places should be accessible.

Meaningful employment	Improving systems and processes
A few participants had experience volunteering. They agreed that volunteering should lead to employment opportunities at the City of Sydney.	Use a “mind map” for consultation to support people with communication barriers to be able to contribute and give ideas.
One participant shared they volunteered at a City of Sydney service for 11 years but had to stop when funding was cut. The participant said they would have “loved to have been paid”.	“Provide a suggestion box at community facilities to get new ideas”.
Open employment of people with disability should be promoted by the City of Sydney (not Australian Disability Enterprises)	The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a way the City of Sydney can support people with non-visible disabilities to be able to get support or help.
Most participants wanted a paid job but had not found one due to challenges faced due to employers not understanding their disability.	There is a lack of accessible information about City of Sydney services and programs in Easy Read.
Part-time or casual paid employment should not affect people’s Disability Support Pension. Workers with disability are entitled to the same rights as workers without disability.	The grants and sponsorship program should be promoted more for people with disability to apply.
Many participants had Cert III or TAFE qualifications, but employers would not give them an opportunity.	“Make sure there is a strong voice of people with disability so they can have their say.”
The City of Sydney can showcase best practice with disability employment to help create change.	People with disability should have the option to contact services on the phone or attend in person.
One participant would like to start their own business and employ other people with intellectual disability.	Paying to use printers at libraries and City of Sydney centres is hard as not everyone has the money to pay.

Meaningful employment

Ongoing support in jobs for people with intellectual disability is important to help with job security.

There should be equal pay for people with disability who get jobs in City of Sydney.

One participant was fired from their job in the city because of their intellectual disability. This person wants a job “that I don’t have to worry about getting fired from” and that is not a short-term contract.

Improving systems and processes

Ideas for future actions

New electronic wayfinding system that includes plain English, Easy Read and directions.

Translate a guide to council decision-making to Easy Read and promote and make easily accessible on the website.

Disability awareness training for City of Sydney employees on intellectual disability, including people with lived experience.

Employment opportunities (traineeships, work experience and volunteering) for people with intellectual disabilities at the City of Sydney.

Create more social groups for people with disability to meet up at in the community – people with or without disability can be welcome, to practice inclusion.

What’s On should be an app with events in Easy Read with accessibility features all listed.

There should be a report it app that people disability can just take a photo and send accessibility issues or barriers to easily.

The accessibility map should be available as an app and promoted more for people with disability to know about and use.

The cultural walks and library apps should be made into Easy Read for people with intellectual disability.

The City of Sydney can establish an internship program for people with intellectual disability in collaboration with the Council for Intellectual Disability to support employment pathways.

The City of Sydney can provide training for people with disability to start their own businesses and seek funding through the grants and sponsorship program.

People with intellectual disability could volunteer as City of Sydney ambassadors to gain skills and experience and help to change attitudes

Join the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program and roll it out across the city

Ideas for future actions

Training for customer facing staff on how to communicate with people with disability that use communication aids.

Recharge stations available across the City of Sydney local area for people who use electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Quiet spaces in Central Sydney available and promoted for people who need to take a break.

The City of Sydney to provide specific training for people with intellectual disability when they get jobs.

There should be more Easy Read information about what is going on in the city, events and new projects.

The government needs to put more funding into services that support inclusion and employment of people with intellectual disability.

The City of Sydney website is hard for some people to read and could be made more accessible in Easy Read.

Fix kerb ramps, make sure there are more disabled toilets and more accessible parking spaces.

Recognise the contributions that are being made by people with intellectual disability in the City of Sydney area – for example if a person with intellectual disability has assisted in creating something, have a note/symbol that informs people of this.

Attachment F – Focus group for people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability

When: Wednesday 11 September 2024

Partners: Sydney Queer and Disability community group

Participants: 11

Strengths / Assets	Barriers / Challenges
Aquatic centres have events that are welcoming of people of diverse sexualities and genders.	Difficulty navigating bus interchanges.
Libraries are inclusive.	Lack of spaces that welcome people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability.
Lack of affordability and cost-of-living crisis affecting people on limited income.	Major events are less accessible due to noise, there is a need for more quiet spaces.
The City of Sydney promotes diversity and inclusion	Lack of positive images and communications that show the ability of people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability.
	Lack of awareness and training on people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability.
	Lack of awareness of people who are neurodivergent.
	Lack of awareness about assistance animals.
	Lack of wheelchair accessibility on streets and public facilities.

Positive attitudes and behaviours

People can have negative attitudes towards people of diverse sexualities and genders or people with disability, or both. More training and promotion of positive stories is needed.

I feel a sense of belonging and quality of life in the City of Sydney ... I feel safe and connected.

City of Sydney events bring people together to connect and feel included.

Reflect the National Autism Strategy in increasing positive images of people who are neurodivergent and training for greater understanding of neurodiversity.

There is a lot of 'cultural load' for disability, to educate others and change attitudes and behaviours. The City of Sydney can lead this education and awareness raising to lessen the burden experienced by people with disability.

Positive attitudes and behaviours

Celebrate and promote days of significance for people of diverse sexualities and genders to be inclusive of people with disability and have accessible Pride events, such as Mardi Gras and more inclusive mainstream events, for example Fringe Festival.

Businesses could have a rainbow sticker or sign on facilities that are welcoming of people of diverse sexualities and genders, where staff are trained and aware to offer support.

Have a program that encourages businesses to be inclusive and supportive of people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability and provide free inclusion (disability) awareness training for businesses.

Employees trained on assisting people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability and intersectionality. Training should be co-designed with intersectional people with disability.

The City of Sydney joins the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program and undertakes mandatory training to ensure employees are educated to support people with non-visible disabilities.

I am happy and feel welcome, but barriers like transport and physical access impact my ability to feel included.

Stigma is amplified with an intersectional identity, such as people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability.

The City of Sydney is very overt in its support of people of diverse sexualities and genders, which promotes inclusion and safety.

I love libraries, museums, the pool and my university.

Liveable communities

Lack of affordable and accessible housing. For example, in Manchester where fixed percentage of new developments are required to be affordable and accessible for people on low incomes.

Free shuttle buses around the city to enhance accessibility.

Quiet spaces in the city would be good to take a break when needed.

Need to invest in making public infrastructure more accessible to a diverse range of disabilities, for example parks and community facilities.

Lack of accessibility for wheelchair users in Newtown (it is unsafe to travel on the road).

Police are intimidating, making the city less liveable. First Nations training and advocacy could support change.

Support to apply for NDIS could really assist people with disability. The City of Sydney should partner with NDIS local area coordinator to provide support.

Assistance for filling out forms, and for help using technology could support people with disability.

Liveable communities

Reflect the National Autism Strategy in providing space for support groups for people who are neurodivergent and quiet places that are sensory friendly.

Greater lighting is needed at events for safety for people with disability, for example Vivid at Kings Cross.

Need for more lifts in public spaces.

Better signage and wayfinding would enable more people with disability to feel confident going out in the city.

What's On should promote accessibility features and disability-inclusive events.

Access audits of public spaces and community facilities would identify areas to enhance access and inclusion for a diverse range of disabilities.

Grants could prioritise enhancing access and inclusion of facilities, programs and events.

More mobility parking spaces in the city.

More green spaces that are physically accessible make the city more liveable.

Meaningful employment

Volunteer work does not seem to fall under anti-discrimination legislation and is limited.

Disability Employment Services are not helpful, and the current system is punitive.

Advocate for a strengths-based employment and ongoing support for employees with disability to retain work.

NSW Health has a diversity and inclusion job board, this may encourage people with disability to apply as they know the organisation is supportive and inclusive.

Challenge attitudes about employing people with disability so they are seen as an asset and are valued employees.

Include a statement such as “we value your insights because you have lived experience and a unique skill set”.

There is a gap for people who cannot work full time, and people who need support workers for employment. There needs to be more flexible working conditions and part-time roles for people with disability.

Need to switch thinking from ‘accommodating people with disability’ to empowering and optimising.

There needs to be more opportunities to convert volunteer work to employment pathways for paid employment.

Meaningful employment

Flexible working conditions and hours will enable more people with disability to be employed, including online work and part-time work. Clear policies that are promoted to target people with disabilities.

There need to be inclusive employment policies, for example workplace optimisation supports, more time and patience, trained supportive managers and greater opportunities.

It would be best not to have to mask and hide intersectional identities within inclusive workplaces as this is tiring and impacts wellbeing.

There is a lot of stigma and judgement around mental health, people think you're unsuitable for work and there is discrimination. "It's important to treat everyone fairly, and give everyone a chance to work".

Case studies showcasing the talents and abilities of people with disability in the workplace will help to challenge stigma and stereotypes.

There should be people with disability supported into leadership positions.

There should be more support for people with communication disabilities to support access to employment.

Funding and training for organisations to create employment opportunities.

Improving systems and processes

Online feedback is sometimes not accessible, there needs to be multiple ways to give feedback and receive information, including in-person.

Review and consult on the use of identity first language, for example Autistic person.

Ensure the National Autism Strategy is reflected in the next inclusion (disability) action plan.

Promote Companion Card acceptance at City of Sydney facilities, which allows support workers or carers to have free entry.

Promote public access computers free to use with accessibility features.

Embed accessibility features into the website, for example screen readers.

Capture people's communication preferences and where possible communicate in that accessible way, make this a standard operating procedure at the City of Sydney.

More Easy Read information and writing in plain English across the City of Sydney and embedded in policies.

More Auslan interpreted events, information and trained employees.

More captioning available to promote greater accessibility.

Improving systems and processes

More grant funding and training support for access and inclusion outcomes for people with disability.

City of Sydney have a phone app that is accessible.

Promote and ensure people with disability are represented in decision making by using inclusive and accessible engagement methods.

Ideas for future actions

Better wayfinding system that includes plain English, directions and more signage, especially at transport hubs.

Regular events and support groups for people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability to come together and connect.

Disability awareness training for City of Sydney employees, including intersectional experiences of disability.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower should be rolled out across the City of Sydney to know staff are trained and supportive and promotional signage displayed at facilities.

Make more affordable leisure and recreation opportunities , for example free tai chi in Green Square, free internet in public spaces.

Continue to advocate for more affordable and accessible housing.

Provide training and signage welcoming assistance animals at City of Sydney facilities.

Safe spaces for people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability to regularly meet.

Partnership with NDIS local area coordinator to provide assistance at City of Sydney facilities for accessing NDIS to assist with workshops and applying for NDIS.

Support quiet spaces in City of Sydney are that are sensory-friendly and welcoming of people with disability.

Accessibility audits of key facilities and works to upgrade facilities to Australian Standards.

Advocate for open employment of people with disability in inclusive workplaces.

A coordinated workforce strategy supported with policies that empower people with disability by aiming to recruit, retain and develop people with disability.

Promote the support at the City of Sydney available to recruit, retain and develop employees with disability, including real stories from current employees and workforce optimisation supports that are available.

Support programs that encourage businesses to be accessible and inclusive of people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability.

Ideas for future actions

Conduct access audits of key community facilities and create a schedule of works to enhance access and inclusion for a diverse range of disabilities.

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities be accessible and promoted for use of people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability.

Support given to fill out forms and use public technology, and investigate programs that support technology training.

Attachment G – Focus for people with disability from multicultural backgrounds

When: Tuesday 17 September 2024

Partners: Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association, Settlement Services International, Ethnic Community Services Cooperative

Participants: 9

Strengths / Assets	Barriers / Challenges
In parks and aquatic centres, I see children who are learning to be respectful of people with disability.	Sydney Town Hall requires signage upgrades for accessible entry points for people with disability.
There are a variety of restaurants and attractions that make the city great.	Wayfinding is difficult in Central Sydney for people with disability.
Diversity and inclusion are important in the City of Sydney area.	There isn't any accessible and safe drop off points close to Sydney Town Hall which can make drop-offs and pick-ups unsafe for people with a diverse range of disabilities.
Tourist attractions like the Harbour Bridge and Opera House are showcased by City of Sydney, for example Sydney New Year's Eve.	Transport is a barrier to access in the city as well as a lack of training for transport staff on disability awareness.
All are welcome and included, including people from multicultural communities.	Lack of respect and negative attitudes to people with disability.
City of Sydney employees have positive attitudes.	Time limit on accessible toilets, for example the doors close on you and you cannot open them.
Respect and love are shown.	Technology (access to internet and knowledge of use of devices) can be a barrier for people with disability.
Customer service is friendly and welcoming.	Lack of accessible businesses with physical accessibility and disability awareness education.
People are positive and open.	Sometimes family and carer attitudes can be a barrier towards decision-making and participation in the community.
	Obtaining a driver licence can be a barrier to employment for people with disability.
	Cost-of-living crisis is impacting many people with disability of low incomes.
	Mental health stigma is a big problem.
	Discrimination and ableism are widespread.

Positive attitudes and behaviours

Training for staff on disability awareness, engaging with people with disability, working with people with a diverse range of disabilities, and on disability-affirming language is needed to create positive attitudes and behaviours.

Greater awareness and support of people with mental health conditions is needed.

International Day of People with Disability should be all year round to celebrate disability and break stereotypes and stigma. More inclusive mainstream events are needed to provide greater opportunities for participation for people with disability.

More positive images and opportunities to hear lived experience of disability are needed.

There is still discrimination against people with disability, attitudes need to change to challenge discrimination and ableism with information, education, communication and resources.

Mental health awareness, positive images and case studies should be promoted to change attitudes and challenge stigma and stereotypes.

Liveable communities

Improved safety and security for people with disability is needed when out and about in the City of Sydney area.

Golf cart access at major events that accommodates wheelchairs is needed, for example Sydney New Year's Eve and Vivid.

Advocacy for travellers at transport hubs could support people with limited mobility, for example there used to be one at Central train station.

Better wayfinding and signage are needed across Central Sydney, for example transport hubs, accessible entrances and lifts.

More inclusive communal spaces to come together and connect and more inclusive universal design needed for public spaces and places. For example, Singapore food courts have tables with spaces for wheelchair users.

More inclusive community events and more promotion of what's available and the accessibility features.

Subsidies for leisure and recreation for people with disability on low income could support participation and inclusion, and promotion of Companion Card.

More recycling bins, more 'return and earn' stations and sustainability education to curb pollution. In Japan there is a no waste policy.

Homelessness is a big issue. There needs to be more shelters, and affordable and accessible housing and the City of Sydney could explore use of vacant buildings to support people experiencing homelessness.

Quiet time in community and aquatic facilities can support inclusion for people with sensory disabilities, for example Ryde aquatic centre.

Liveable communities

Help points with clear signage in community facilities are important for people with disability to seek assistance.

More disability awareness and education is needed among Sydney businesses.

The City of Sydney needs to address safety for people with a disability, for example help points or safe houses.

Disability-inclusive events and programs should be promoted to allow people with disability to connect and meet for people with disability to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

More rubbish bins are needed to reduce litter and pollution and promote sustainability.

Parks and green space could be more accessible.

Signage and wayfinding in the city needs to be improved to enable people with disability to independently get around and access Central Sydney.

Help points could be made available at customer service points scattered across the city where staff are trained to support people with a diverse range of disabilities.

Meaningful employment

Accessing work can be a barrier. Workplaces should be accessible and inclusive.

Attitudinal barriers towards employment of people with disability need to be addressed, including challenging false assumptions – I was told “give me a good reason why we should employ you when we can employ an able-bodied person”.

Identified positions for people with disability with employment pathways and entry level positions, through to leadership roles are needed.

Positive case studies of employing people with disability, and events that share lived experience to create greater awareness, understanding and inclusion.

Managers need to be trained to enable unbiased recruitment and provide support to retain people with disability.

Leadership is needed to change unemployment rates – “If someone wants to work, they can, and they should”.

Position descriptions should only have minimum mandatory qualifications or experience as having higher qualifications could rule out some people with disability.

Normal recruitment processes can be difficult for people with intellectual disability or people who are neurodivergent, for example cover letters, selection criteria responses. Recruitment processes may need revision to target employment of diverse people with disability with a dedicated recruitment program, for example Australian Public Service’s RecruitAbility.

The City of Sydney should work with proactive and progressive disability employment agencies to create pathway programs to employment for people with disability.

Meaningful employment

Peer support or mentors can support people with disability to retain employment.

Workplace policies should promote respect and eliminate discrimination of people with disability.

Challenge stereotypes and low expectations of people with disability by “promoting diversity is good and profitable for workplaces” and people with disability can do and excel at different jobs.

Burnout for people with disability is real and impacts wellbeing, there needs to be more awareness and understanding of this, and flexible working options and workplace optimisation supports to address and enable people to retain employment.

CEO's and leadership spend time with employees with disability to see what people with disability can do, for example mentoring.

Have grants that help people with disability to start their own businesses, and be their own bosses.

Improving systems and processes

City of Sydney website should use plain English and no jargon.

Greater patience and understanding from customer service staff is needed.

Use emerging technologies and artificial intelligence to increase accessibility for people with disability.

Scatter City of Sydney customer service across the city for greater access for face-to-face services.

Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel is a good resource to provide advice to the City of Sydney.

Technology can be a barrier, there needs to be printed materials available on request and face-to-face customer service.

People with disability need to know where to go for information, how to have a say, and how to create opportunities for change.

Information needs to be available from multiple sources, websites, social media, printed at community centres and customer service hubs, in-person and QMS advertisements.

Ideas for future actions

Entry level identified positions for people with disability, through to leadership positions – a disability workforce strategy covering a whole City of Sydney approach to recruitment, retention and development of people with disability (including flexible recruitment and recruitment program, flexible working and workplace optimisation supports policies). Actively promote this to people with disability so they know the City of Sydney is a disability-inclusive workplace, including on social media.

Ideas for future actions

Recruitment processes should be reviewed to remove barriers for people with a diverse range of disabilities and co-designed recruitment pathways developed for targeted employment of people with disability.

Disability awareness training by people with lived experience implemented to change attitudes, showcase positive stories, and give the business case for employing more people with disability.

Leadership in promoting disability awareness and inclusion to businesses in the City of Sydney area.

Access audits of City of Sydney facilities and a prioritised works schedule for upgrades created.

Quotas for employing people with disability to demonstrate commitment and leadership to employ more people with disability.

Opportunities for placemaking to create opportunities for connection for people with disability should be explored in planning and design, for example universal design.

Quiet times and quiet spaces at community facilities and recreation centres to promote inclusion of people with sensory disabilities.

Opportunity to use vacant buildings for homeless people and more accessible and affordable housing should be investigated.

Explore how artificial intelligence could enhance accessibility for people with disability.

Consider a disability leadership mentoring programs to help City of Sydney employees with disability and a buddy or peer-support training system for new employees with disability to help them navigate the system and have ongoing support to retain employment.

Attachment H – Focus group for people who are neurodivergent

When: Thursday 26 September 2024

Partners: Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)

Participants: 10

Strengths/ Assets	Barriers/ Challenges
Events and festivals, Mardi Gras.	Lack of housing affordability and cost of living.
"Overall, I feel welcome, like the city is my backyard".	Wayfinding is difficult in Central Sydney.
Volunteering for the City of Sydney for Sydney New Year's Eve.	Lack of understanding of neurodiversity, greater awareness is needed, for example Inner West Council neurodiversity awareness training.
City of Sydney website	"At first I didn't feel welcome, but with time I did".
Cultural diversity.	Lack of 'adjustments' for people with disability.
Always something to do.	Lack of quiet spaces and relaxed performances.
Good people, connections.	Lack of awareness about support workers, for example talk to the person with disability, not the support worker.
Good transport systems and close to everything.	Being independent in the city is hard due to busyness – Hidden Disabilities Sunflower would help me feel more confident as well as quiet spaces.
Cafes, shops, services, galleries, art, nightlife, bars, harbour.	Bike paths and feeling unsafe due to e-bikes.
Pools, parks and greenspace.	Discrimination still occurs, and we can play a key role in changing this.
Areas such as Newtown and Chinatown.	Employment for people who are neurodivergent is a big issue. Need businesses to be trained and willing to give people a go.
Walkability and bike paths.	Commercial places shut early, for example 3pm, we need longer hours.
	Safety can be an issue, unfriendly places, for example Devonshire Street tunnel.
	Pay inequity and work-life balance is challenging.

Positive attitudes and behaviours

More neurodiversity training is required for City of Sydney employees as well as businesses with a need to “celebrate that diversity means we are all different, and that’s what makes us the same”.

Greater awareness and support of people with mental health conditions is needed.

Greater efforts to promote social cohesion, inclusivity and a sense of belonging are needed.

Accountability is needed through accreditation and commitment towards mandatory training to become disability-inclusive, for example sign or sticker in front window for businesses.

There is still much discrimination against people with disability, attitudes need to change to challenge discrimination and ableism.

The City of Sydney should educate and promote the rights of people with disability through free training and communications campaigns.

Increase representation of priority groups and conduct regular community engagement with people with disability for continuous feedback and improvement.

Liveable communities

Quiet spaces in Central Sydney are needed, otherwise some people are forced to use public toilets which are not well suited and don’t promote dignity.

No MLAK keys should be required for public toilets, they should all be open and free to use, with regular serviced and maintained, and the accessible public toilet map needs to be more widely promoted.

Flexible seating in public spaces is needed.

More disability and neurodiversity awareness are needed for City of Sydney employees and businesses.

Better wayfinding and signage are needed across Central Sydney, for example transport hubs, public spaces, with a map and a phone number to call if you require help.

Busyness and wayfinding at public transport can be a problem, there is a need for quiet spaces, trained staff and clear signage.

More inclusive community events and more promotion of what’s available and the accessibility features, for example safe quiet spaces.

A sensory map of the local area and a central list of businesses’ quiet hours is needed.

Affordable and accessible housing is an issue, with people forced to leave the area due to rising costs. Selling of assets for affordable housing and utilising unused space in Central Sydney could provide more affordable housing.

Provide a technology platform that connects people with disability in the City of Sydney area and a community cafe or community centre safe space for regular connection opportunities. For example,

Liveable communities

community hub drop-in centre or 'safe haven' with a sensory cafe that is a social enterprise run by people with disability and providing job training skills.

Bicycles made a participant feel unsafe, for example e-bikes are fast and can create dysregulation.

Footpath dining can make it difficult to pass on footpaths, there still needs to be an accessible path of travel.

The City of Sydney should improve accessibility of public spaces and inclusivity for people with disability.

Community gardens provide the opportunity for people to connect and are welcoming for all people.

There should be a Report It App to easily report things that need to be fixed and to track response and resolution.

Grants should be available for businesses to become more accessible and inclusive.

The City of Sydney should promote an independent complaint mechanism. For example, disability advocacy organisations to support people with disability to have their complaints or issues resolved and consider partnering with not-for-profits such as Disability Law.

Major events and festivals need to have more consideration of people who are neurodivergent, for example sensory maps, audio description, tactile and braille signage, fragrance free policies, clear signage and communication, communication support, text-based communication, and social stories, as well as neurodiverse-led events and programming.

Enhance language support for people from diverse communities and develop culturally sensitive programs and services

Meaningful employment

The benefits of hiring people with disability need to be promoted, for example 'out of the box' thinking, challenging assumptions, giving organisations a competitive advantage, and attention to detail.

Attitudinal barriers towards employment of people with disability need to be addressed, including challenging false assumptions.

There should be clear targets for employment of people with disability for transparency and accountability, as well as identified traineeships or entry-level positions to create employment pathways for people with disability.

Job sharing or part-time work can create more opportunity for people with a diverse range of disabilities to maintain employment, for example job sharing according to strengths.

Accessing work can be a barrier. Workplaces should be accessible and inclusive, with clear policies and procedures, for example workplace optimisation/adjustments policy.

Volunteering should be used as a pathway to paid employment.

Meaningful employment

Psychological safety is important for people to openly disclose they have a disability. The culture must be accepting of diversity and value employees with disability as assets.

Recruitment processes may need revision to target employment of people who are neurodivergent.

The City of Sydney should facilitate a workshop or forum with businesses to promote the economic business case for access and inclusion presenting research, case studies and lived experience. This will challenge stigma and stereotypes.

There could be targets and rewards for businesses or social enterprises supporting employees with disability.

There needs to be consideration of 'meaningful employment roles' where people are also supported in their roles to grow their career and retain employment.

The City of Sydney can lead the way in employment of people with disability and can post job opportunities to target promotion for people with disability.

Flexible working is important for people with disability to be able to retain work. For example, working from home, as well as education and training for managers, and support and training on the job for employees. For example, do you require degree/diploma qualifications for the role or can you learn on the job?

It's important for managers to receive education and training on neurodiversity to focus on strengths and reasonable adjustments/workplace optimisation, rather than weaknesses.

The City of Sydney can support business incubators to target disability-led businesses.

The City of Sydney should create a best-practice model in disability employment and showcase the model to other councils and businesses in Sydney.

Mentorship and peer support programs provide disability specific training programs and vocational education and training.

Have social enterprises at public spaces and community gardens which employ and train people with disability.

Caring can create limitations on work with managing time and the stress and challenges involved, requiring flexible working arrangements.

The City of Sydney could create a pilot program and create career opportunities for people with disability and support them to excel and succeed.

Employers should remember "a little support goes a long way" and the positive effects will come back 100-fold through productivity and loyalty all the way through to the community.

Improving systems and processes

People who are neurodivergent may like to plan ahead. Having an app that is user friendly and helps us to pre-plan and prepare for our environment empowers people who are neurodivergent. For example, including the accessibility map and facility access information at events.

Improving systems and processes

Customer service could be helpful to provide step-by-step instructions, and let people know that they will help through each step along the way.

There could be a disability advocate in customer service to assist people with disability to navigate the system.

It would be great to promote that the City of Sydney supports the Companion Card, offering free entry to a support worker or carer to assist with affordability for people to attend events and programs.

It's important to be able to say 'I don't know, but I can find out for you'.

Plain English website information and documents available in Easy Read will help with accessibility of information.

Information needs to be available in a variety of formats, including printed posters and flyers at facilities, including the website, social media, apps and email.

It would be good if the website has the text-to-audio function embedded and easily available to use.

Grants for businesses to enhance access and inclusion.

The City of Sydney could support disability-led businesses and social enterprises through procurement.

Quiet hours at City of Sydney facilities and relaxed programs/events.

Ideas for future actions

An app for City of Sydney information, such as reporting issues and pre-planning accessibility information, for example the accessibility map would assist people with disability.

Showcase best-practice employment through case studies that feature real employees and how they have been supported in their roles to retain employment and grow their career.

Become a member of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program and provide mandatory training on non-visible disabilities and neurodiversity across the organisation.

Targets for disability employment, entry level to leadership.

Provide and promote job-sharing opportunities for employment for people with disability.

Facilitate an online social group for people who are neurodivergent to come together across the city and opportunities for safe spaces for people who are neurodivergent to connect.

Support the creation of social enterprises that are disability-led and support employment and skills development and training.

Provide continuous opportunities for feedback and engagement with people with disability to allow the City of Sydney to continuously improve its services and programs.

Ideas for future actions

Provide a workshop or forum for people with disability to understand their rights and advocate to achieve them.

Quiet times at community facilities and recreation centres to promote inclusion of people with sensory disabilities.

Opportunity to utilise unused assets for accessible and affordable housing should be investigated.

Customer service have a trained disability advocate to support people with disability to navigate the system step-by-step.

Provide information for people with disability to get supports and advocate for their rights on the website and on how to give feedback or complaints in Easy Read format.

Consider a disability leadership mentoring program to help develop employees with disability and a buddy or peer-support training system for new employees with disability to help them navigate the system and have ongoing support.

Provide sensory quiet spaces in Central Sydney and promote them for people with disability.

Attachment I – Focus group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability

When: Thursday 17 October 2024

Partners: First Peoples Disability Network

Participants: 16

Strengths / Assets	Barriers / Challenges
Unpaid carers supporting people with disability save the government money and should be celebrated and supported.	Need for safe trauma informed spaces in the City of Sydney local area.
Meals on Wheels is a great service.	Lack of respect and negative attitudes towards Aboriginal people with disability.
The City of Sydney's support for people experiencing homelessness.	Access to NDIS is difficult and more advocacy and support is required.
Music therapy is great for some people with disability.	Having a family and caring can be a barrier.
The City of Sydney is open to listening to community and wanting to support solutions.	Cost-of-living crisis is impacting many people with disability on low incomes.
	Mental health stigma is a big problem.
	Racism is overt since the no vote. More support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is needed with an anti-racism campaign.
	Discrimination and ableism are widespread.
	Not enough mobility parking spaces in the City of Sydney local area. There is an increasing need for more.
	Advocacy for more respite is needed to support carers.
	More food programs for people experiencing homelessness.
	Lack of accessibility leads to isolation.
	Trauma from experience from the Stolen Generation.

Positive attitudes and behaviours

Training for staff on disability awareness and cultural awareness.

Positive attitudes and behaviours

Greater awareness and support of people with mental health conditions is needed.

More positive images and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability are needed.

Training and a campaign for anti-racism is needed as there is much overt racism since the 'no vote'.

Training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability about their 'rights' and how to self-advocate and advocacy supports available.

Greater awareness raising and training of non-visible disabilities.

Liveable communities

There is a need for safe trauma informed spaces in City of Sydney local area where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability can come together and connect. Spaces could be co-designed with the community.

More inclusive spaces in public spaces and parks, for example wheelchair spaces with public seating.

Kerb ramps are not always in line at opposite sides of the road, and aren't available at every intersection, which can make it difficult for people who use wheelchairs to navigate and can be a safety issue as people are required to go into traffic.

There are not enough mobility parking spaces, and no knowledge that people with mobility parking permits can park in any regular parking space. More mobility parking spaces and community awareness about the drop-off and pick-up in 'loading zone' and 'no parking' is needed for people with disability to know the rules that apply to them.

The City of Sydney can advocate to Transport for NSW for carers to be provided an additional mobility parking permit, for example difficulty when there are multiple carers or supports needing to access one permit.

More supported independent living and specialist disability accommodation is needed in City of Sydney local area.

More community support for people with mental health conditions is needed. Advocacy and support for more and culturally sensitive service providers is needed in the City of Sydney local area.

There is a problem with domestic and family violence against Aboriginal people with disability, and more support is needed.

The City of Sydney can do more to clean up the environment, there is too much rubbish.

The use of wattle should be minimised due to allergies. Native plant selection should be done in consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Liveable communities

Large trees are being planted on verges next to footpaths and they are cracking the pavement which makes it difficult for people with limited mobility to navigate.

More outreach services are needed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the City of Sydney local area to select suitable native plants.

More training and awareness are needed on assistance animals being welcome in City of Sydney facilities, with signage at facilities and ongoing support for partnerships to train assistance animals is needed as the cost is prohibitive.

There are a lot of syringes on Wellington Street and Gibson Lane, Waterloo close to Mount Carmel School. Council needs to regularly clean up the syringes in this area as it's a safety risk for the children.

There needs to be a special free space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to use and share, for example 119 Redfern.

More art therapy is needed for people with disability, for example Mundine-led workshops in Redfern.

Bus drivers need more training, it can be difficult to use the accessible ramp onto a bus, and drivers are sometimes reluctant to use it.

Police are not trained on disability awareness and can mistakenly perceive some people with disability as aggressive in their behaviour and there is rapid escalation. There is also increased criminalisation of people with disability, as police are often the first responder for mental health crisis. Suggestion to invite the police liaison officer to a group meeting to raise awareness and understanding.

More disability awareness at restaurants and with businesses is needed, especially those under new management.

High cost of living is making it difficult, for example to cover housing, and still buy medicine and food and other living essentials.

There is not enough accessible and affordable housing in the local area.

More free activities for people with disability to keep people active and connected.

There needs to be better wayfinding and signage in Central Sydney.

Meaningful employment

Accessing work can be a barrier. Attitudes need to be changed and identified positions promoted to Aboriginal people with disability.

Positive case studies of employing people with disability, and events that share lived experience to create greater awareness, understanding and inclusion.

Meaningful employment

At interviews, people don't understand when you have non-visible disabilities – greater awareness and training is needed. Centrelink can also be difficult as there is a lack of awareness and understanding of non-visible disabilities.

More identified entry level positions are needed.

Improving systems and processes

City of Sydney website should use plain English and no jargon and give information in various formats, including in-person supports.

Greater cultural awareness and disability awareness from customer service staff and rangers is needed.

A separate community listening/focus group take place with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, including Carers NSW.

Promote 'A guide to council decision making' and ways people with disability can participate and have a say on matters important to them.

Feedback from this focus group and the draft inclusion (disability) action plan 2025–29 should be presented the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel.

Regular meetings such as the focus group, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability can openly share and advocate.

Ideas for future actions

Anti-racism campaign needed in City of Sydney local area, for example "Racism not welcome here" on banners with stories in media and news promoting positive images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. "We need a city that rejects racism, transphobia and ableism".

The group to regularly meet at 119 Redfern to discuss issues and connect to First Peoples Disability Network individual advocates and supports.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers support group be established and run regularly at 119 Redfern or Redfern Community Centre.

A monthly community hub be established in Redfern with Centrelink, Legal Aid, NDIS, First People Disability Network advocates, mental health and disability services, and carers support services.

Have regular NDIS help desk with Aboriginal local area coordinator at Redfern Community Centre to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to NDIS.

Disability awareness training with Aboriginal people lived experience implemented to change attitudes, showcase positive stories, and give the business case for employing more people with disability.

Advocate to provide disability awareness training to local businesses, police and Centrelink.

Ideas for future actions

Awareness campaign for mobility parking permit holders and more mobility parking spaces.

Advocate and support more supported independent living and specialist disability accommodation in the City of Sydney local area.

Advocate and support community mental health service providers to service City of Sydney local area.

Training for people with disability about their rights and how to advocate and where to go for advocacy support.

Signage at City of Sydney facilities be reviewed, and new signage developed including assistance animals are welcome.



Image: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability focus group participants. Photo by Margaret Sevenjhazi

Attachment J – Focus group with disability service providers

When: Wednesday 16 October 2024

Participants: 12

Strengths / Assets	Barriers / Challenges
In the City of Sydney local area there is a strong interest in collaboration across all sectors.	More opportunities for socialisation and connection in safe and welcoming spaces as there are limited venues that offer after hours programs and limited programming on weekends.
A lot of organisations are really interested in understanding the needs and support gaps and hold focus groups and workshops to work collaboratively to help support the community.	Transport signage is an ongoing problem, lack of signage to help connect your journey of travel, for example no visibility of signage for lift access to the train station.
City of Sydney held events during International Day of People with Disability – the events were diverse, and across different venues. There are visible improvements that the City of Sydney makes each year. Communication was accessible	Bus timetable changes are not communicated to the community and buses do not turn up on time or at all.
The City of Sydney has a lot of inclusive sports programs. There are a variety of different sports that community can participate in across a variety of different venues, for example pickle ball, and basketball which provide opportunities to socialise.	Accessible taxi and Uber drop-off and pick-up points are an issue as there are not enough around the city to safely drop off and pick up someone. This becomes a safety issue for people with disability.
	Property development updates are not communicated to the community. Accessible pathways are often blocked off or blocked with cars during construction periods.
	There is still work to be done for inclusive employment that offers continued support.
	Not enough accessible and affordable housing available in the City of Sydney area. More advocacy is needed and opportunities are needed.

Opportunities	Needs / Gaps
The City of Sydney can work with smaller events to promote access and inclusion at events, including promoting and mandating the inclusive and accessible event guidelines.	More work needs to be done for visibility of people with disability through promotions and marketing campaigns and sharing positive stories.

Opportunities	Needs / Gaps
Opportunities to look into applications for sharing regular updates on transport and pathway access.	Making sure that people with disability are leading the conversation, have a seat at the table and are co-designing programs and co-production.
Cross collaboration across Council boundaries for opportunities of shared resources and capacity building.	Community centres provide free community spaces and should be promoted as safe spaces for people with disability to drop in.
Local businesses to offer employment opportunities to school leavers and support of transition programs.	Best practice across all programs and events to provide information in plain English and Easy Read versions.
Establish a platform for communication with local businesses to enhance employment of people with disability.	Making sure there are clear pathways at major events and provide disability awareness training to staff before the event.
	Advocate for more Uber/taxi support for people with disability attending appointments. Services are unavailable, or unreliable.

Positive community attitudes and behaviours

Training for organisations and businesses on disability awareness, to challenge bias, and stigma.

Positive images for promotion and marketing, using images of people with disability can help create more understanding and educate the community. Engage people with lived experience to participate in promotion and marketing and opportunities to share and learn from lived experience.

More opportunities to share positive news stories of people with disability, and promote positive case studies in mainstream communications.

Provide all communication with a disability lens, for example always have Auslan interpreters at events and not just for when someone requests it.

We need people with lived experience to provide advice – consult regularly with diverse people with disability.

Provide training to staff before major events for people with disability.

Consult with people with disability when planning for advice and preference access and inclusion, for example hearing impairment, clear pathways around major events, for example at Vivid.

Ensure that people with disability are involved in co-design and co production.

Liveable communities

Understand housing needs and ensure universal design is applied to new developments. The City of Sydney can advocate this in planning controls to support affordable and accessibility housing options,

Liveable communities

and advocate for liveable housing design guidelines to be mandatory, and promote more specialist disability accommodation in the City of Sydney local area.

Providing designated accessible drop-off areas for taxis and Uber around Central Sydney, specifically at City of Sydney facilities, for example Sydney Town Hall and community centres.

Opportunities for quiet and safe spaces and spaces for socialising and connecting with others should be available for people with disability, for example community centres.

The City of Sydney should advocate for more wheelchair accessible taxis in the local area.

Inclusive and accessible public domain guidelines should be promoted for best practice.

Access to information relevant for people with disability, including local service information and directories and disability advocacy should be provided on the City of Sydney website.

Support and information for people with disability experiencing domestic and family violence should be provided.

Meaningful employment

The City of Sydney should advocate to phase out segregated employment and Australian Disability Enterprises and support open employment of people with disability and fair pay.

Provide more pathways to open employment and improve recruitment pathways to suit individual needs. For example, partner with disability organisations such as Council for Intellectual Disability and University of NSW to employ more people with intellectual disability.

Work with businesses to promote more employment of people with disability and advocate and communicate the economic business case for employing people with disability.

Provide incentives for businesses to employ more people with disability and provide capacity building resources and workshops to make it easy.

Provide grants to help businesses improve access and inclusion to employ more people with disability.

Updating position descriptions to be available in Easy Read and provide support for people with disability applying for roles.

Advocate to raise the minimum wage for people with disability.

Have inclusive and transparent employment policies , for example reasonable adjustments.

Provide support to retain people with disability in the workplace, for example peer support and mentoring, reasonable adjustments and flexible working.

Provide funding and resources to support businesses to be able to offer Easy Read documentation.

Provide opportunities for people with disability to be role models, for example leaders with disability and women in leadership roles.

Meaningful employment

People with disability often have a fear to disclose and there is a lack of mainstream employment opportunities. There is a need to create a safe workplace to encourage people to disclose their disability, promote a safe and inclusive workplace culture.

Lack of awareness of the funding opportunities that Job Access has available for business and organisations to support people with disability in the workplace. More promotion and distribution of resources is needed to raise awareness.

Australia Post has a mentoring up program with opportunities available for people with disability to mentor people in leadership.

Processes in place to provide psychosocial safety for people with disability to feel safe to disclose.

Provide support for people with disability to start their own businesses.

Systems and processes

Ensure the website meets WCAG 2.2 and ensure all information is in plain English and provide documents in Easy Read and audio.

Ensure that the City of Sydney website is updated regularly, and the entirety of the website is accessible. Look at options to add a screen reader for content to be provided in audio format.

Do user testing with the website with people with a diverse range of disabilities to identify areas for improvement for access and inclusion.

Ensure customer service staff have disability awareness training to better enable support of people with disability. Have diverse disability training with people with lived experience to build customer service disability confidence and awareness, for example low vision, d/Deaf, Neurodivergent.

Ensure grant application forms are accessible, as a baseline all application forms should be in plain English and Easy Read.

Strengthen procurement processes and ensure no Australian Disability Enterprises as suppliers.

Vision

People with disability are engaged in any project from start to finish and not just for providing feedback. Best practice is co-design and co-production. People with disability need to be included in the decision making with a seat at the table.

Equitable job opportunities, identified roles and targets.

Able to access services.

Universal design principles.

Accessible accommodation is available.

Vision

Empowered people with disability who can make their own choices and advocate for the supports they need.

Principles

Participation

Engaged

Participatory

Social justice

Accessible

Empowerment

In the driver's seat – with choice and control

Engaged

Self-advocacy

Attachment K – Feedback from pop-up stalls at community events

To engage more community members on the new plan, pop-up stall engagements took place at various community events in August and September 2024. A summary of these is provided below.

Wear It Purple Day event – 28 August 2024

On 28 August 2024, the City of Sydney held an event to mark Wear It Purple Day at Reginald Murphy Community Centre, Potts Point.

When we asked attendees “What can the City of Sydney do to be more inclusive of young people of diverse sexualities and genders with disability?”, feedback included:

- sensory quiet space
- less loud noises
- visibility in marketing
- more awareness and resources for young people in the workplace
- seats at the bus stop outside Gadigal metro station
- gender-neutral bathrooms
- better wayfinding.

R U OK? Plant Swap event – 9 September 2024

On 9 September 2024, the City of Sydney held a plant swap event to mark R U OK? Day at Pyrmont Community Centre.

When we asked attendees to “Help us plant a seed and grow our inclusion disability action plan”, feedback included:

- connect with Pyrmont support group, Jacksons Laundry, provide mobility aids, Monday AM
- more rails for steps
- more community garden visits and gardening groups, and afternoon teas for older people
- more art and craft activities at community centres
- no paid tickets at Sydney New Year’s Eve (not accessible)
- more parking permits for support workers
- better pathways to volunteering, mentoring about how to get involved
- more activities for men, such as a book club
- greater staffing at community centre.

Moon Festival community event – 12 September 2024

On 12 September 2024, the City of Sydney held an event to mark the Moon Festival.

When we asked attendees “How can the City of Sydney be more accessible and inclusive of people with disability”, feedback included:

- ramps
- dancing and music classes for adults
- more buses to Waterloo
- parking
- social groups for adults with autism
- bus services from Pyrmont.

R U OK? Pancake Day event – 13 September 2024

On 13 September 2024, the City of Sydney held an event to mark R U OK? Day at Cliff Noble Community Centre.

Stage 1

When we asked attendees “How can the City of Sydney be more accessible and inclusive of people with disability”, feedback included:

- community gardens in Waterloo
- shelters and seating at bus stops
- improved footpaths without obstructions
- more mobility parking and street parking
- more buses in Alexandria and Erskineville
- transport to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
- speed limits for scooters and bikes.

