

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 written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line underneath.

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".

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.

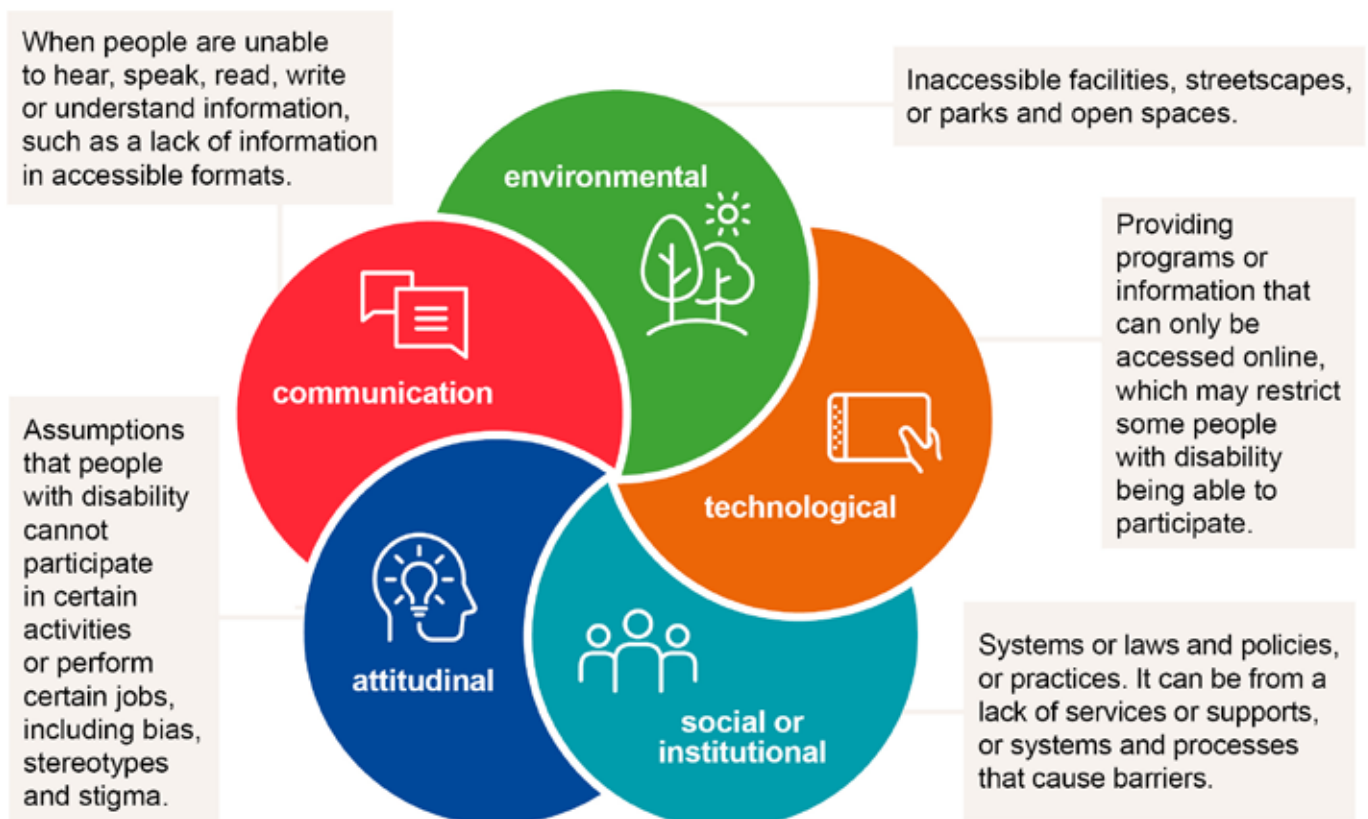
Social model of disability

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.

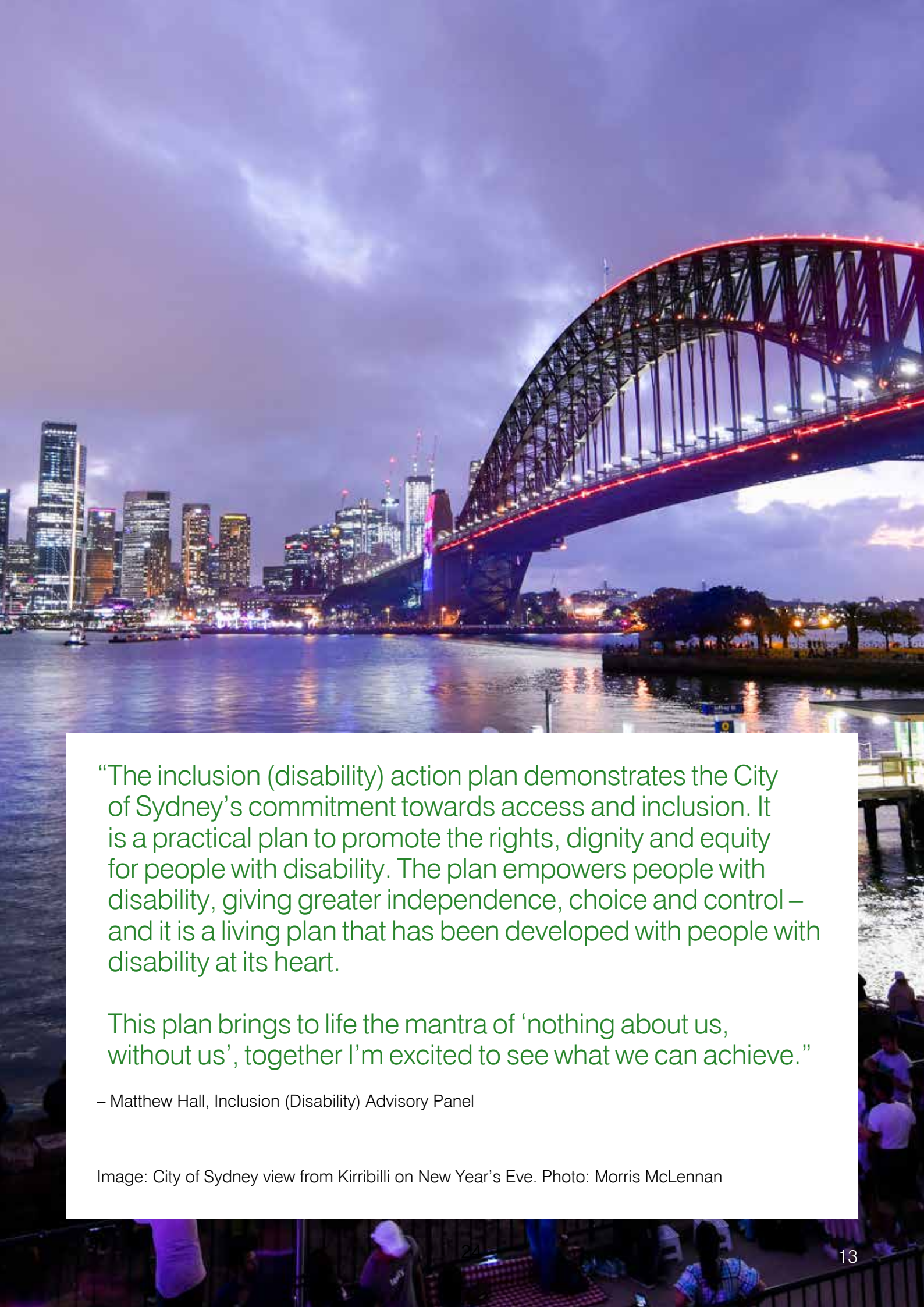
Four key directions

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.

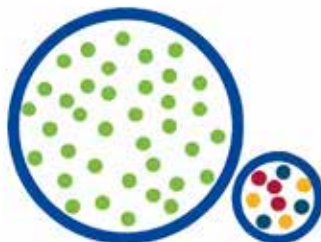
Inclusive communities benefit everyone by:

- **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

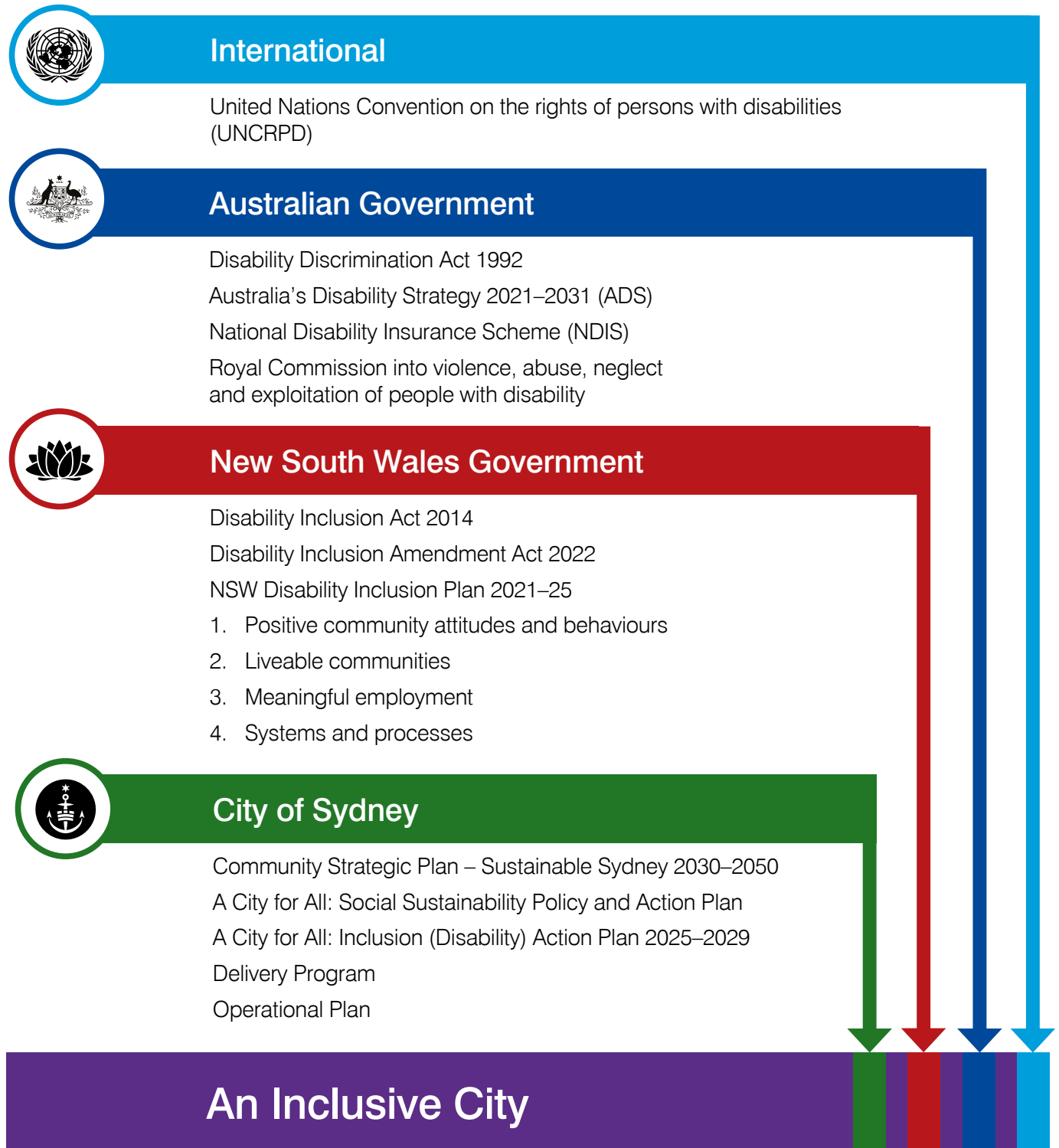


Figure 2: Diagram showing the relationship between international conventions, federal and state legislation and City of Sydney strategies, including the inclusion (disability) action plan

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



8%

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



80%

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



1 in 5

people has a **mental health condition**



1 in 6

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



1 in 2

people with disability (aged 15+) experienced **violence**



52%

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



38%

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



9 in 10

school aged children with disability go to a **mainstream school**



1 in 4

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has a **disability**



1 in 8

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



25%

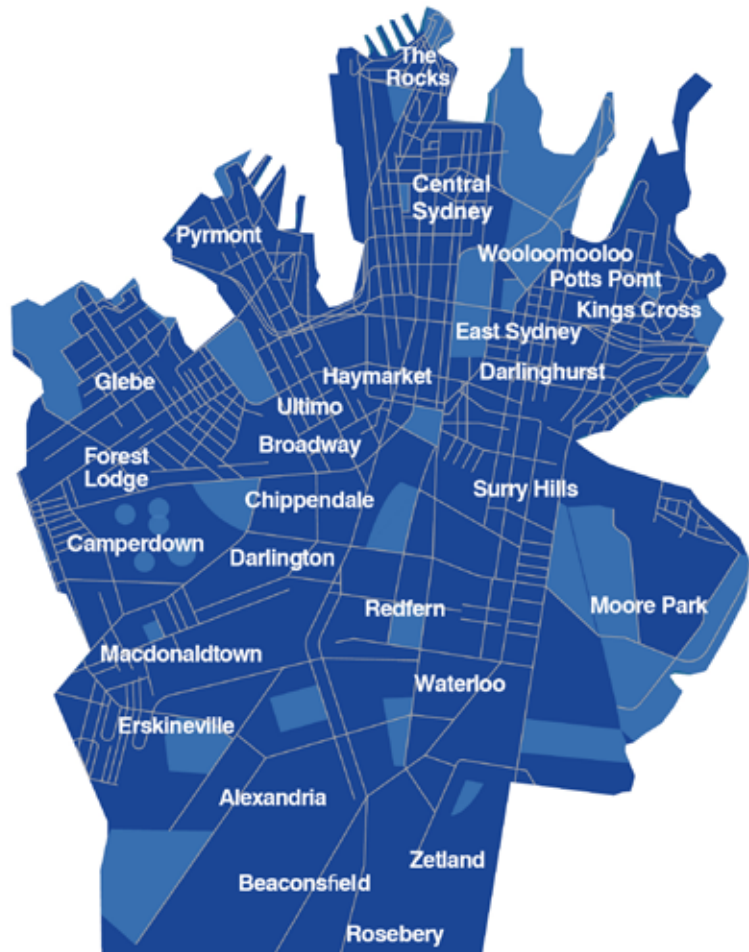
183,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has a disability

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

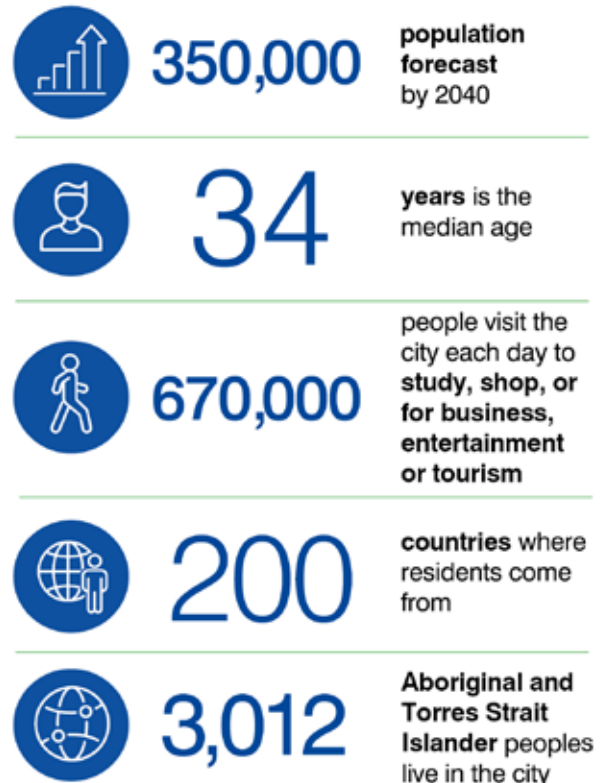
Community profile

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**



92% are willing to **help neighbours**



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



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



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



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.

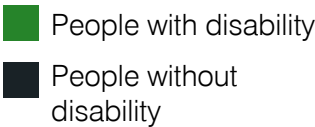
We're committed to creating a workplace culture where diversity and inclusion is valued – one where employees trust they'll be treated fairly, feel respected and empowered to produce the best outcomes for the communities they serve. We foster a culture of diversity, inclusion and belonging – in caring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

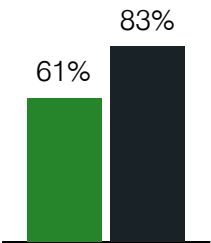
Related strategies

- People strategy
- EEO, diversity and inclusion action plan

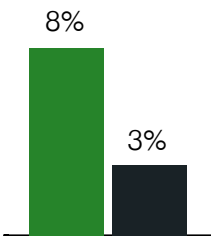
In Australia, employment rates for people with disability are slowly improving, but they're still significantly lower than those without disability across all sectors.



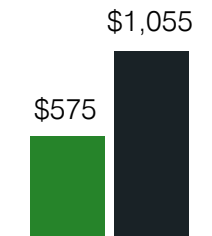
	People with disability	People without disability
Employment rates 2022	61%	83%
Full time	33%	58%
Part time	63%	33%
Unemployed	8%	3%
Average weekly earning	\$575	\$1,055



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.

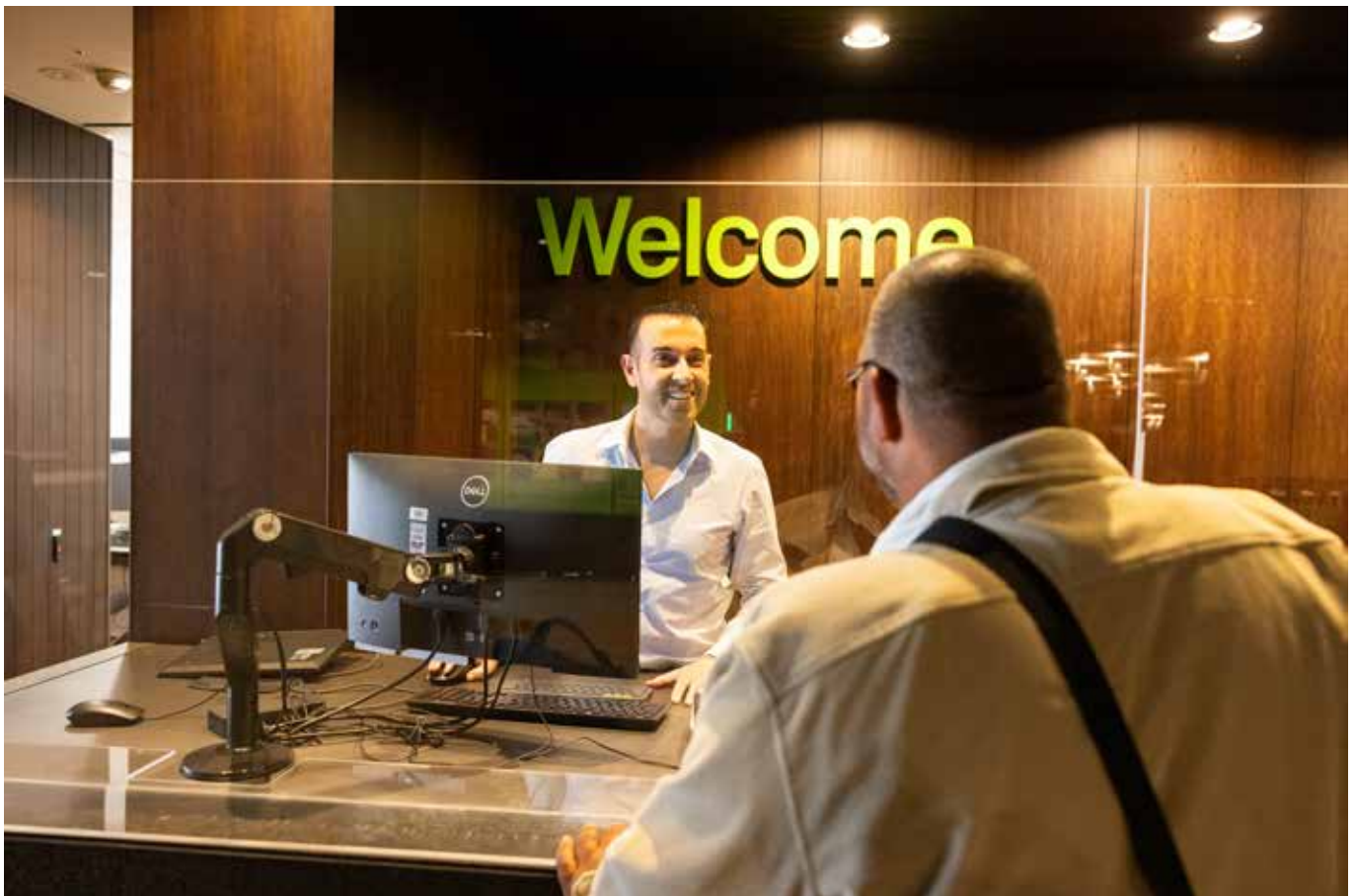


Image: Man visits customer service desk at Town Hall House. Photo: Phoebe Pratt / City of Sydney

- 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**.

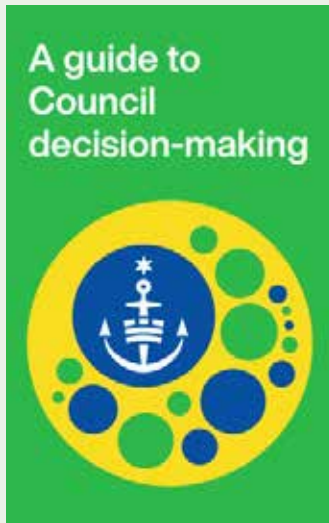
People with disability need to be engaged to help design and review services, programs, events and communications strategies to ensure that the needs of people with disability are considered. There is a need to embed more opportunities to co-design or co-produce.

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.

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*.

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.

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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