

Coolamon Shire Council

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

AUGUST 2022



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Acknowledgement of country

Council acknowledges the traditional owners of the land where we live, work and meet – the Wiradjuri. Council pays its respects to Wiradjuri Elders both past and present and extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of Coolamon Shire.

A message from Council

Inclusion sits at the heart of our vision for Coolamon Shire as a community that is vibrant, safe, and inclusive of all.

The Shire of Coolamon's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022 - 2026 seeks to build on our first Disability Inclusion Action Plan, demonstrating our continued commitment to building a community where people with a disability can access and participate in their community on an equal basis.

The Plan outlines the strategies and actions Council will deliver across the next four years to enable people with disability to have greater access to information, services, jobs, and facilities, and to ensure people living with visible or invisible disability, their families and carers are treated fairly, equally and with respect.

We know that by working together we can achieve great outcomes for our community and encourage every member of the Coolamon Shire community to read this plan, and identify how you can be involved in helping to build a community which is inclusive of everyone.

Executive Summary

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been developed to ensure Coolamon Shire Council meets its obligations under the Disability Inclusion Act (NSW) 2014.

The four focus areas of this plan are consistent with the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025 and include:

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

This is the second Disability Inclusion Action Plan Council has developed, and it has a strong focus upon working with the community, businesses, health and community agencies to strengthen the inclusiveness of Coolamon Shire.

A key strategy in this plan is to establish an Inclusion Advisory Committee to provide Council with a forum to consult with community members and seek specialist advice and experience about disability and inclusion. This is an important new initiative which demonstrates Council's commitment to inclusion principles, and the continued growth in its understanding about the importance of supporting all members of its community to access and participate in their community on an equal basis.

Why a disability inclusion action plan

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan ensures Coolamon Shire Council meets its obligations under the Disability Inclusion Act (NSW) 2014 but more importantly it demonstrates Council's commitment to ensuring all members of the Coolamon Shire community can participate in and contribute to our community.

Inclusion is a universal human right and sits at the heart of the community's vision for Coolamon Shire:

*In 2040, Coolamon Shire will be home to thriving rural communities with access to services and facilities that support community life. We will learn, live, work and play in a vibrant, safe, and **inclusive community**, proud of our history and confidently responding to growth and change.*

In its simplest form, inclusion is about the opportunity to be involved, to contribute and to be valued for your contribution. Local, national, and international research highlights that people living with a disability in our community and their families and carers, do not have the opportunity to participate in society on the same basis as everyone else.

As outlined in the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021 – 2025 people living with a disability face widespread social and cultural barriers that have a real and negative impact on their lives. People living with a disability are more likely to experience discrimination, and more likely to experience barriers accessing services, businesses, education, housing, employment (particularly meaningful employment), social and cultural facilities, and transport.

In 2018, 6.5% of people living in the Shire of Coolamon had a profound disability and overall, 21.5% of the community identify as having some form of disability – this is higher than national average. In addition, 14.7% of people (631 people) provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability. Combined, this represents a significant proportion of the community and reinforces how important it is for Council to focus on making Coolamon Shire an inclusive place for all members of its community.¹

Council has a key role in supporting people living with a disability and their families and carers through developing inclusive policies and plans, providing infrastructure, services and information, championing inclusive practices and, most importantly, through ensuring people living with a disability and their families and carers are treated fairly, equally and with respect.

¹ ABS, Region summary: Coolamon (A), [Coolamon \(A\) | Region summary | Data by region | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

Developing the plan

The Disability Inclusion Plan was developed by listening to and reflecting upon the aspirations of community members and stakeholders, complementing this with analysis of key data and best practice approaches, and responding to the obligations of the Disability Inclusion Act (NSW) 2014.

The Plan outlines Council's commitment to supporting people with a disability, their families and carers to enjoy wellbeing, dignity and social independence in the Shire of Coolamon, and explains how Council will actively work towards building a more inclusive community.

The key steps in the development of this plan were:

- **Evaluation:** Review of the 2017-2021 Disability Inclusion Action Plan, its implementation and of contemporary approaches to inclusion planning.
- **Policy context:** A review of the policy context for inclusion planning in Coolamon Shire including policy directions at the international, national and state level.
- **Demographic analysis:** A review of the profile of the Coolamon Shire community and identifying key factors relevant to the Inclusion Plan.
- **Consultation:** A consultation and engagement program conducted in March 2022 with Coolamon Shire residents, community leaders, health and disability agencies, and Council staff.
- **Council's role:** Consideration of Council's role in supporting people with disability in Coolamon, their carers, and families.
- **Strategies and directions:** Development of themes, strategies and initiatives to deliver on the plan and improve access and inclusion in the Coolamon Shire community.
- **Formal consideration by Council:** Consideration of the Plan by Council and exhibition of the Plan for public comment prior to final adoption.
- **Communicating the plan:** The plan will be distributed and promoted to community members, stakeholders and staff following its adoption.

What is disability?²

Disability is an umbrella term for impairments of body function or structure, activity limitations or participation restrictions. A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities.

As outlined in the Australia Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031

More than 4.4 million people in Australia have a disability or around 18% of the population. People with a disability are diverse, having different types and levels of disability, coming from all demographic and socioeconomic groups, and having varying needs for assistance.

People experience different degrees of impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction. Disability can be related to genetic disorders, illnesses, accidents, ageing, injuries, or a combination of these factors. Importantly, how people experience disability is affected by environmental factors including the opportunities, services, and assistance they can access, as well as by personal factors and community attitudes. This is often described as the *social model of disability* which describes the interaction of a person living with an impairment with the physical, social, attitudinal and communication barriers that prevent people living with impairment from participating in society on an equal basis. This perspective places the onus on the community to make adjustments to accommodate disability as an expected form of human diversity.

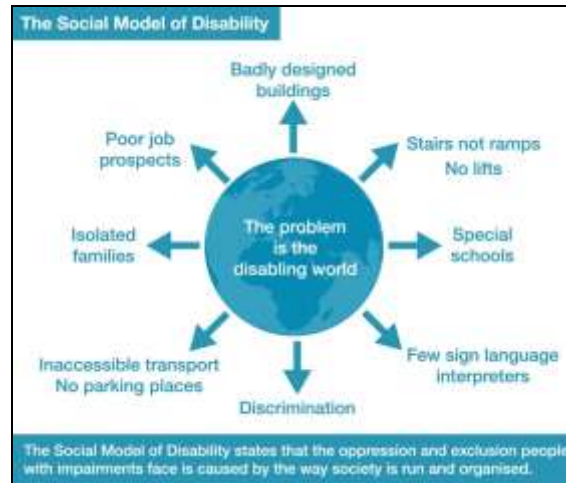
² Australian Government Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020, People with disability in Australia. Available online: [People with disability in Australia, Defining disability - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/1000000-people-with-disability-in-australia/1000000-people-with-disability-in-australia)

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People with Disability Australia. The Social Model of Disability. Available online: <https://pwd.org.au/resources/social-model-of-disability/>

Inclusion London. The Social Model of Disability. Available online: <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-of-disability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness/>



Source: Inclusion London. *The Social Model of Disability*

Progress and achievements since 2017

Council first developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan in 2017 as part of its obligations under the NSW Disability Inclusion Act, 2014. Council reports on progress in implementing the Plan through its Annual report and achievements from the past four years are listed below under the focus areas in the Plan.

Focus Area 1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

- Provision of information to Councillors, staff and the general community regarding the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2018 via Council’s website and newsletters and Council’s employee and volunteer induction programs.

Focus Area 2. Creating liveable communities

- Council’s websites have been updated to enable zoom and font resizing.
- The construction of disability amenities at the Coolamon Caravan Park, Ardlethan Swimming Pool Complex, and Ganmain Swimming Pool Complex.

- Successful grant applications to the Stronger Country Communities Fund for the construction of an accessible toilet at the Coolamon Visitor Information Centre, disabled access and accessible toilet at the Marrar Memorial Hall and accessible toilet at the Beckom Hall.
- The construction of accessible amenities at the Council Chambers, Coolamon Visitor Information Centre, Redgrave Park in Coolamon, Beckom Hall & Marrar Memorial Hall.
- Ongoing implementation of Council's Active Transport Plan including the construction of a path in Beckom linking the park to the hall and kerb blisters and ramps in Ganmain.
- Continued assessment of public facilities to ensure accessibility issues are considered as part of future upgrades.
- Council awarded funding under the Local Heritage Places Program to contribute to improved access to the Coolamon Post Office.
- Designated disabled parking was established in Cowabbie Street, Coolamon.
- Flyers have been distributed to businesses in Cowabbie Street, Coolamon to promote locations of disabled parking bays.

Focus Area 3. Supporting access to meaningful employment

- Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan and related recruitment process supports access to meaningful employment and that all staff are supported within the workplace.

Focus Area 4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

- Council's policies and procedures relating to community engagement support all community members to participate in the decision making of Council.

Policy environment

The Coolamon Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 is influenced by International Conventions and all levels of government in Australia working together to ensure the rights of people with disability are actively promoted and upheld. Legislation is now in place to ensure people with disability are consulted about how, together, we can make practical changes to the delivery of services and facilities so they can be accessed equally by all Australians, regardless of disability status. The various elements of the policy framework which guides preparation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan for Coolamon Shire are:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (Convention) 2006
- Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021 - 2031
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS Act 2014)
- NSW Disability Inclusion Act, 2014
- NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025
- Coolamon Shire 2040: Our community’s vision for the future.
- Coolamon Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement 2019-2039
- Coolamon Shire Equal Employment Opportunity and Discrimination Prevention Policy 2009
- Coolamon Shire Recruitment and Selection Policy 2014.

International	In 2008, the Australian Government signed the <i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (Convention) 2006</i> . In doing so, Australia has committed to ensuring the articles of the Convention are reflected in policy so that the human rights of persons with disabilities can be effectively exercised, and not exist only on paper.
National	<i>Australia’s Disability Strategy (2021 - 2031)</i> outlines a vision for a more inclusive and accessible Australian society where all people with a disability can fulfill their potential as equal members of the community. Its purpose is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability• guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability• drive mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disability

- engage, inform and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

The Commonwealth Government *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* implements Australia’s international human rights obligations on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as obligations relating to non-discrimination under other treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS Act 2014)* is a national insurance system that supports people with disability to enhance the social and economic independence of people with disabilities and their carers.

State

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014)* aims to ensure people with disability achieve full inclusion in community life. Under the Act, the NSW Government and all of its agencies (including local governments) are required to develop four-year Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Coolamon Shire Council’s DIAP, has been developed in accordance with the legislative requirements described in this Act which includes:

- Explaining how council regards disability principles.
- Detailing strategies for providing access to public buildings, events, and facilities.
- Providing details about how to access information.
- Explaining how employment opportunities for people with disabilities are to be supported.
- Demonstrating opportunities for people with disabilities to access the full range of services and activities available in the community.
- Detailing the consultation about the Plan with people with disabilities.
- Explaining how the Plan supports the goals of the State Disability Inclusion Plan.

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025* provides a whole of government strategy. The Disability Inclusion Plan has four areas of focus for improving the lives of people with disability including:

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

	<p>Council has adopted these focus areas as the themes for the Coolamon Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan with strategies and actions structured in response to the priorities and challenges in the NSW Plan and to reflect local dimensions of the statewide challenges.</p>
<p>Local</p>	<p>Coolamon Shire Council has a several policies and plans relevant to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, and which identify measures to promote disability inclusion. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Coolamon Shire 2040</i>: Our community’s vision for the future. • <i>Coolamon Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement</i> 2019-2039 • <i>Equal Employment Opportunity & Discrimination Prevention Policy</i> 2009 • <i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i> 2014.

The Coolamon Shire community³

Coolamon Shire population estimated to be **4,291** in 2020, is concentrated in 6 towns and villages - Coolamon, Ardlethan, Ganmain, Matong, Marrar, and Beckom. Coolamon is the largest with 2,336 residents (2020). Moderate population growth is projected, growing from 4,312 in 2021 to 4,612 in 2041 (7.0% growth), and growth concentrated in the township of Coolamon.

The Coolamon Shire community has a median age of 45.2 years compared with 38 years for Wagga Wagga LGA. Consistent with this, Coolamon has fewer children and young people (0 -14-year-old) and more older people (65 years and older) than wider NSW and this is projected to continue.

According to the SEIFA (Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage), the Coolamon Shire community experiences higher levels of disadvantage (977) than Wagga Wagga (995), but is generally consistent with several other close by regional communities e.g. Bland (973), Temora (964), Federation (963). Typically, regional communities like Coolamon Shire experience higher levels of disadvantage than metropolitan communities.

³ ABS, Region summary: Coolamon (A), [Coolamon \(A\) | Region summary | Data by region | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

ABS, Coolamon (A), 2016 Census All persons Quickstats, [2016 Coolamon \(A\), Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

Disability in Coolamon

<p>21.5% of the Coolamon Shire have some form of disability This is 924 people</p>	<p>At the 2016 Census 5.4% of the community needed assistance with core activities due to disability, long term illness, or old age. This is up from 5.2% in 2011.</p>
<p>6.6% of the community have a profound or severe disability This is 282 people</p>	<p>12.8% of the community have a moderate or mild disability This is 549 people</p>
<p>14.7% of the community are carers of people with a disability This is 631 people</p>	<p>5.5% of people aged 15 years or older are primary carers of people with a disability. This is 187 people</p>

What does this mean for the Coolamon community

- A growing population will **increase demand for services, supports and facilities**, particularly in the Coolomon township where population growth is expected to be concentrated.
- The increasing demand for programs, services, and spaces to support **older members of the community** will be particularly important. There is a strong link between aging and disability which means the rates of disability in the Coolamon Shire community are likely to increase.
- A **significant portion of the community is impacted by disability** because they have a disability themselves or because they are a carer. Increasing the accessibility of spaces and places and the capacity of the community to be inclusive of all community members, must be a high priority.

Consultation and engagement outcomes

Consultation and engagement for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan formed part of the wider engagement process for preparing Coolamon 2040: Our community's vision for the future. Engagement was built around a community survey, community drop-in sessions and workshops, interviews with community leaders, health and disability agencies, and a workshop with Council staff.

In particular the community survey along with the interviews with health and disability agencies provide important information to inform the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Understanding and experience of disability

Community members believe people with a disability are:

- **MORE LIKELY** to feel they belong and able to be an active member of their community, and to easily access education opportunities.
- **LESS LIKELY** to find it easy to travel around their community, to access the right services and supports to meet their needs, to be able to easily access buildings and facilities, to easily access housing and accommodation.
- **MUCH LESS** likely to be able to easily access employment opportunities.

Key barriers people with a disability experience

- **A lack of understanding about the breadth of disability.** It is not just about a physical disability, it can be a long-term illness, mental health illness etc.
- **Lack of acceptance / inclusion in the community** including poor attitudes by community members / organisations, lack of understanding about how to support / include people with a disability, stigma associated with disability, particularly mental illness.
- **A lack of transport is a major impediment** to accessing to services and participating in community life. Public transport options are limited / not accessible, access and participation is dependent on access to private transport, and community transport is not funded by NDIS.
- **Poor accessibility of buildings and public spaces** - older buildings, shops, businesses, playgrounds, the swimming pool, footpaths.

- **A lack of locally available services** e.g. respite care, health services, local support workers, adult education services, community activities, especially in small villages. Agencies and support services are located in major regional centres.
- **Long waiting lists for most services** (especially adolescent / paediatric) and private access to services is expensive and unaffordable for many families.
- **A lack of employment opportunities**
- **A lack of housing**, particularly for young people with a disability, and older people in Allawah Lodge, the hospital, and retirement villages.
- **Access to information** about services and supports. People often do not know what is available or where to start.

Challenges affecting the disability service system in and around Coolamon Shire

- The attraction and retention of qualified staff.
- The lack of co-ordination across the health and disability services sector. It is acknowledged some co-ordination occurs (e.g. Community of Practice convened by MLHD) but overall, coordination is inadequate.
- The support provided through the aged services system is not suitable and sustainable in supporting people with a disability in an ongoing way.
- There is high demand for the NDIS but limited understanding of who is eligible for the scheme. Many health professionals do not understand this and can create unrealistic expectations amongst their clients.

Council's role

Coolamon Shire Council has an important role in supporting people with disability, their families and carers. Council has a planning, advocacy, partnering and service delivery role which is outlined below:

Disability Inclusion Action Plan	A four-year plan outlining strategies and actions to deliver on Council's objective for a more inclusive and accessible community. The Plan demonstrates Council's commitment improve access to services, facilities and employment for people with a disability, and also focuses upon changing perceptions about people with disability.
Advocacy	Council actively advocates on behalf of the community about issues, services and projects to ensure equitable access to services and investment in Coolamon Shire and the region. This includes leadership to and participation on regional bodies.
Partnering	Council's senior community services staff participate in a Community of Practice which functions across the Local Health District and is open to key district disability health care services, and other relevant services. It aims to support clinicians, managers and key stakeholders to network and share strategies, local solutions, and issues.
Infrastructure provision	<p>Community facilities: Council provides a range of community facilities across the Shire including Coolamon Library and mobile library service, community halls in each town and village and swimming pools in Coolamon, Ardlethan and Ganmain. Council supports initiatives to activate community facilities to promote connectedness.</p> <p>Public places and spaces: Council develops and maintains critical public infrastructure including footpaths and walking tracks, accessible parking, bus shelters, public toilets, parks and playgrounds.</p> <p>Roads and transport: Council has an Active Transport Plan promoting alternative modes of transport and employs a Road Safety Officer to implement initiatives and improve road safety at the local level. Specific areas of focus include safety around schools, bus safety, 40km/h speed zones, pedestrian safety, special mobility vehicles and child restraints.</p>
Service delivery	<p>Information provision: About facilities, services and support is provided by Council through the website, newsletters, brochures and reports and through Council's customer service team.</p> <p>Community transport: Council provides transport for older people and people with disabilities, and their carers, and people who have difficulty accessing public or private transport.</p> <p>Support services: Council provides a range of services to support older residents with disability through provision of delivered meals, home modifications and maintenance, respite care to enable them to remain independent in their own home.</p>

Focus areas

Council will deliver on its vision of an inclusive community by concentrating upon four focus areas. These themes are consistent with the focus areas contained in the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025.

Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours	We will grow the community's understanding and knowledge about what it means to live in an inclusive community. We will help to build awareness of the contribution people with disabilities make to our community, and support our community to have positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities.
Creating liveable communities	We will focus upon ensuring people with disability, and their families and carers are able to participate in and contribute to all parts of community life. We will help to remove the barriers that have a real and negative impact on the lives of people with disability, making it easier to access services, education, housing, transport and public spaces and places.
Supporting access to meaningful employment	We will facilitate and grow opportunities for people with disability to be meaningfully employed by encouraging and supporting local businesses and organisations to provide genuine and ongoing employment opportunities for people with disability.
Improving access to services through better systems and processes	We will focus upon ensuring people with disability have equal access to information and services, allowing them to make informed choices and easily access mainstream services and opportunities.

Strategies and actions

The four focus areas broadly outline the aspects Council will concentrate upon in seeking to deliver on Coolamon’s vision to be an inclusive community. The strategies and actions outlined below provide a greater level of detail about what Council will do. The action plan will be updated each year to respond to emerging needs and opportunities and to inform Council’s integrated planning and reporting processes. Progress of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be reported to the community and service providers through the Annual Report.

Focus Area 1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours.			
Strategy		Action	Council area to lead
1.1 Improve the knowledge and understanding of Councillors and Council staff about what is an inclusive community.	1.1a	Provide information to Councillors, staff and community members regarding this plan and the strategies contained in it.	General Manager
	1.1b	Provide an induction session for new Councillors and Council staff to promote awareness of the needs and lived experience of people with disability and Council’s role in supporting them.	Corporate and Community Services
	1.1c	Provide regular updates to Councillors, and Council staff on disability issues, legislation and requirements through team meetings, emails, intranet and newsletters.	Corporate and Community Services
	1.1d	Review Council policies and procedures to ensure alignment with Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan.	General Manager
1.2 Work with local businesses to build their capacity to be more inclusive and accessible and encourage inclusive practices.	1.2a	Provide information to local businesses on practical ways to be more inclusive and accessible.	Corporate and Community Services
	1.2b	Partner with Intereach and retail businesses in the Coolamon Shire townships and villages to facilitate the Access at a Glance project.	Corporate and Community Services
1.3 Ensure Council delivers more information in inclusive and accessible	1.3a	Maintain staff awareness of accessible information needs and ensure information and documents are readily available in formats that are accessible to people with disability.	Corporate and Community Services

	formats to support people living with a disability to access Council services.	1.3b	Maintain optimum accessibility to Council's website through regular review and upgrades.	Corporate and Community Services
1.4	Build knowledge and understanding of inclusive practices within Council's networks and community committee structures.	1.4a	Include information about Council's responsibilities and objectives regarding inclusion and accessibility in Terms of Reference for Council Committees.	Corporate and Community Services

Focus Area 2. Creating liveable communities				
Strategy		Action		Council area to lead
2.1	Explore the option to establish a Coolamon Shire Inclusion Advisory Committee to provide Council with a forum to consult with community members and seek specialist advice and experience about disability and inclusion.	2.1a	Develop terms of reference for a Coolamon Shire Inclusion Advisory Committee including purpose and role, proposed composition, governance, frequency, tenure, and reporting arrangements.	General Manager
		2.1b	Invite expressions of interest for membership of the Committee and establish the Advisory Committee.	General Manager
		2.1.c	Review the role and effectiveness of the Advisory Committee at the conclusion of year 1 of its tenure.	General Manager
2.2	Improve the options for people with disability to travel around the Shire.	2.2a	Advocate to relevant State Government agencies for improved universally accessible public transport services to, and around the Shire.	General Manager
2.3	Develop a planned approach to refurbishing Council owned community infrastructure to meet universal access principles.	2.3a	Conduct regular access audits of Council infrastructure to ensure accessibility issues are dealt with and maintain a forward works program to guide and track implementation of recommendations.	Development and Environmental Services
		2.3b	Ensure customer service areas in Council buildings are universally accessible.	Development and Environmental Services
		2.3c	Implement a program of inspections and works to ensure paths, parks, and open space areas, including playgrounds, are accessible to people with disability and their families and carers.	Engineering and Technical Services

		2.3d	Ensure Council car parking facilities are well located and of sufficient quantity to meet the needs of people with disability.	Engineering and Technical Services
		2.3e	Create opportunities for the community to easily provide feedback on physical barriers with public infrastructure which affect the everyday life of people living with a disability.	Development and Environmental Services
		2.3f	Implement the 'Changing Places' facility policy to guide Council about when and where Changing Places should be installed around the municipality.	Development and Environmental Services
2.4	Promote the construction of accessible buildings in the Shire by developers and builders.	2.4a	Prepare and actively promote information for prospective developers and builders regarding accessibility requirements of relevant legislation, guidelines, and standards.	Development and Environmental Services
2.5	Enhance community awareness of community activities and events.	2.5a	Ensure Council information promoting community activities and events are readily available and in formats that are accessible to people with disability.	Corporate and Community Services
2.6	Improve the accessibility of Council organised events and activities	2.6a	Prepare and implement a guide for planning and delivery of universally accessible community events and promote to Council staff and community organisations.	Corporate and Community Services
2.7	Educate community groups and organisations, and sport and recreation clubs about the importance of diversity and inclusion to encourage them to welcome and increase participation by people living with a disability, their families and carers.	2.7a	Include information about the importance of diversity and inclusion in communication with community groups and organisations.	Corporate and Community Services
		2.7b.	Acknowledge, support and promote community events such as 'International Day of People with Disability'.	Corporate and Community Services
		2.7c	Actively promote Council's objectives and commitment to inclusion to sports and recreation clubs.	Corporate and Community Services

Focus Area 3. Supporting access to meaningful employment

Strategy		Action	Council area to lead	
3.1	Actively support Council service areas to increase employment and work experience opportunities for people living with a disability within Council as a pathway to paid employment and inclusion.	3.1a	Investigate the opportunity for work experience programs for people with disability.	Corporate and Community Services
		3.1b	Undertake regular audits of Council workplaces and implement recommendations to improve accessibility.	Corporate and Community Services
		3.1c	Review recruitment policies and procedures ensuring they have a strong focus upon access and inclusion.	Corporate and Community Services
3.2	Facilitate volunteering and work experience opportunities in Coolamon Shire with a focus on people living with a disability.	3.2a	Investigate and audit existing and new volunteer work programs which are inclusive of people with disability.	Corporate and Community Services
		3.2b	Support community organisations to help facilitate work experience opportunities for job-ready people living with a disability.	
		3.3c	Actively promote the principles of inclusion and accessibility to local community organisations.	Corporate and Community Services
3.4	Implement opportunities for Council services to include social enterprises in procurement and contract tendering processes.	3.3a	Review Council procurement policies to include social enterprises, particularly those with a focus upon providing meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability.	Corporate and Community Services

Focus Area 4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes				
Strategy			Action	Council area to lead
4.1	Improve access to Council customer services.	4.1a	Review Council customer service processes to identify barriers to access for community members.	Corporate and Community Services
4.2	Ensure Council's community grants program encourages inclusion and accessibility in proposed projects and activities.	4.2a	Review Council's community grants program policy and guidelines to require applicants to demonstrate how the proposed project or activity will reflect inclusive practices and enhance participation by people living with disability.	Corporate and Community Services
4.3	Ensure the principles of inclusion and accessibility are embedded in Council's occupancy agreements.	4.3a	Review Council's leasing and licensing policies to embed Council's commitment to Coolamon Shire being an inclusive community.	Corporate and Community Services
4.4	Ensure Council's engagement practices are accessible and inclusive.	4.4a	Implement Council's Community Engagement Strategy and processes to deliver improved access and participation in Council community consultation.	Corporate and Community Services
		4.4b	Provide regular training programs for Council staff to promote awareness of Council's Community Engagement Strategy and increase confidence in inclusive and accessible consultation practices.	Corporate and Community Services

Reporting on progress of the plan

Council will report on its progress of implementing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 as part of its Annual Report. Progress reports will also be prepared in January and July of each year to monitor progress.

A full review of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 will be carried out in January 2026 with a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan to be developed at that time.

Attachment A: Proposed inclusion advisory committee

The proposed Coolamon Shire Inclusion Advisory Committee provides Council with a forum to consult with community members and seek specialist advice around disability.

The Committee will comprise a selection of people with disabilities, their families and carers, who represent a cross section of the local community and reside in different geographic locations across the Shire. It will also comprise representatives from disability and / or health agencies, Councillors and relevant Council staff.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Provide advice to Council on issues relating to disability access, inclusion, communication, participation, and advocacy.
- Identify issues affecting people with a disability, and advocate, and promotes an awareness and understanding of these within Council and the community.
- Support and advise Council on the development and implementation of the Coolamon Shire Inclusion Plan 2022-2026.
- Provide staff with support and advice around the operational aspects of disability service delivery, future initiatives and overarching action plans that relate to people with disability.

The terms of reference, membership activities and meeting frequency will be developed by Council.