Access and Inclusion Plan 2014-2017

Prepared for Hawkesbury City Council by the Hawkesbury Access and Inclusion Committee









Hawkesbury City Council

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Mayor's Foreword

I am proud to present the Hawkesbury Access and Inclusion Plan 2014 to 2017, which outlines Hawkesbury City Council's ongoing commitment to improving access and inclusion for all residents and visitors to our City.

The City of Hawkesbury and its towns, villages and landscapes share a rich and enduring indigenous and cultural heritage. Many people have contributed to the development of the Hawkesbury, and as a community, we will continue to work together to shape and enjoy its future. To do this, we need to create a welcoming and accessible place so that everyone can participate in the social, cultural and political life of our community.

This Access and Inclusion Plan recognises that a significant proportion of the population will have a disability that restricts their everyday activities and consequently their ability to access the services and facilities that are available to the rest of the community. People may also face language and attitudinal barriers in finding out about these services and facilities and how to access and use them.

Major achievements have been made in improving access to Council buildings, parks and reserves and making Council information more widely available. Council has also established strong partnerships with community and business groups to recognise and celebrate the social and cultural diversity of our City.

Despite these achievements, Council is aware that there are still many access and inclusion issues to address, some of which are outside the scope of Council's responsibility and legislative requirements. Nevertheless we intend to take a leadership role in advocating for the removal of obstacles to the equal participation of all people in the social, cultural and political life of the community, and their access to the services and facilities they need.

In adopting this Plan, we want to send a clear message that Council is committed to providing the opportunity for people, regardless of their personal circumstances, to enjoy the same opportunities, rights, responsibilities and entitlements as enjoyed by all other people in the community. The Plan provides a practical framework by which this important community objective can be achieved.



Clr. Kim Ford
Mayor
City of Hawkesbury.

Copies of this Plan

Copies of this plan are available from Hawkesbury City Council's website www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au or from:

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Executive Summary

The Hawkesbury is made up of people from different backgrounds. The residents of the Hawkesbury share many things in common, but they also have different abilities and experiences which will impact on their individual capacity to enjoy the rights and responsibilities they are entitled to as members of the community.

It is estimated that 11,030 residents of the Hawkesbury (almost 18% of the population) have some kind of disability; while a further 5,662 people provide support and assistance to people living with a disability, or people who have a long term illness or the elderly.

People in the Hawkesbury come from more than 37 different cultural backgrounds. 1,608 indigenous people live in the Hawkesbury and 7,845 residents were born overseas, while three out of every seven residents had at least one parent who was born overseas.

A disability or difference may not in itself limit a person's capacity to access the services or facilities they need, or to participate in community life. However, people may face additional obstacles and challenges in a world designed for people who do not have a disability or which may overlook their differences.

These obstacles can be moderated when environments and practices are designed to be accessible and inclusive.

The goal of this Plan is to ensure that residents and visitors have equitable access to services and facilities and can participate fully in the social, cultural and political life of the community. The Plan supports the practical application of the core human rights principles of access and inclusion as set down in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and the principle of equality of opportunity for all people as set down in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

In preparing this plan, the day to day experiences of residents were documented to gain an understanding of the obstacles that people may encounter in accessing the services and facilities they need, and the barriers that restrict their participation in community and civic life. Based on these consultations, the focus areas for the Hawkesbury Access and Inclusion Plan for the next three years are:

Focus Areas for the Hawkesbury Access and Inclusion Plan 2014-2017

- An accessible built environment
- Participation in community life
- An informed and aware community
- Employment and learning
- Doing business with Council

The Plan identifies actions to be undertaken by Council to promote access and inclusion and non-discriminatory practices in the provision of services and the operation of facilities for the benefit of residents and visitors to the Hawkesbury. The Plan is also intended to provide guidance to community groups and the business sector on the practical implementation of access and inclusion strategies.

Policy Statement

Hawkesbury City Council is committed to the principles of access and inclusion and their observance in the way that Council does business, delivers service and programs, and engages with the community. Council recognises that access and inclusion are fundamental to creating a healthy and cohesive community.

Council has adopted policies to encourage the development of accessible facilities and services (in 1994) and promote the ability of all residents to enjoy the rights and responsibilities which they are entitled to as members of the Hawkesbury community (in 2000). In 2012, these policies were reviewed with Council adopting a revised Access and Inclusion Policy to set out the framework by which Council will work with the community to eliminate barriers which may prevent residents and visitors from participating fully in community and civic life.

The Policy recognises that Council is in a position to influence the planning, design and upkeep of accessible infrastructure and the built environment through its development assessment, development control and asset maintenance responsibilities. The Policy accepts that Council can also influence events, services or programs which are held on Council property are hosted by Council or financially sponsored by Council. For other areas where Council does not have direct responsibility, the Policy acknowledges that Council will need to work in partnership with developers, the business sector and community groups to achieve good access and inclusion outcomes for the community.

The Access and Inclusion Policy commits Council to operate in accordance with the following core access and inclusion principles:

1. People will experience Council's public buildings, venues and outdoor spaces as accessible, people friendly and welcoming spaces.

2. People can move around the city using a pedestrian pathway and road network that is linked to public transport.

3. People have the opportunity to participate in planning an accessible and growing city and enjoy a well-designed built environment.

4. People experience the Hawkesbury as a socially cohesive and connected community which supports them to play an active part in the life of the city.

5. People can participate in an inclusive democracy and have their say on issues that affect them.

6. People can easily communicate and do business with Council.

7. People can have confidence in their dealings with Council staff.

8. People have the opportunity to source information about improving access and inclusion.

9. People can compete for employment opportunities at Council on equitable terms.

Introduction

"according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, just under one in five (18.5%) Australians have a disability"

In the Hawkesbury, this number is slightly lower with 17.7% of the population (11,030 people) estimated to have a disability. Of this number, 9,522 people had a limitation which restricted their ability to communicate, to move around or to care for themselves, or a restriction associated with schooling or employment. For 2,514 people, the severity of their disability meant that they required help in their day-to-day lives.

The needs of people living with disability may impact on others, whether they are a carer, relative, or friend. In 2012 5,662 people were providing unpaid assistance to a person with a disability or someone with a chronic illness. Although disability directly affects less than one in five people, around one third of households held a person with a disability.



"the 2011 Census revealed that over a quarter (26%) of Australians were born overseas"

While the figure in the Hawkesbury is less than half of this number, people who live in the Hawkesbury come from more than 37 different cultural backgrounds. The last census counted 7,848 Hawkesbury residents who were born overseas, with 580 residents arriving in Australia in the last five years.

Historically, the majority of overseas-born people have come from Europe, however, there are increasingly more residents who were born in Asia and other parts of the world

The Hawkesbury also has a rich and enduring indigenous history and heritage. The Hawkesbury-Nepean River (known as 'Deerubbin' by the Dharug people) has been a focus for human communities for many thousands of years. The river and its floodplains provided an abundance of natural resources and were places with strong social and spiritual significance. The 2011 Census recorded 1,608 indigenous people living in the Hawkesbury.

The diversity of the community will mean that a significant proportion of the population will have a disability that restricts their everyday activities and consequently their ability to access services and facilities that are available to the rest of the community. Other people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds may also face language and attitudinal barriers in finding out about services and facilities and how to use them.

Planning for Access and Inclusion

A disability or cultural difference may not in itself limit a person's ability to access the services or facilities they need, or to participate in community life. However, people may face additional obstacles and challenges in a world designed for people who do not have a disability or which overlooks their differences.

The diversity of the community means that that not all people who live in the Hawkesbury will share the same experiences and skills. Some people may face particular barriers in participating in the normal relationships and activities available to the majority of people. These barriers may be magnified by economic disparities, social inequities, and discrimination.

For some people, participation and access may not be straightforward. The level of disability or disadvantage that they experience will reflect the degree to which the community can support their access to employment, education, health, transport, housing and other services and their inclusion within the democratic process. The impact of a disability or disadvantage can be moderated when environments and practices are designed to be inclusive.

Consequently, local authorities and institutions will need to create environments and opportunities for sharing common experiences so that all residents have opportunities to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of their community.

Planning for access and inclusion will enable people to be involved and to take their place as valued members of the community. It will support them to participate fully in, and engage independently with their environment and their community.

'The impact of a disability or disadvantage can be moderated when environments and practices are designed to be inclusive and barrier free'.

The basic requirement for good, inclusive access is that communities and environments are barrier free. A service or facility is accessible and inclusive when:

- It is easy to find out about.
- It is easily understood by everyone.
- It is easy to get to.
- It is easy to use.
- People who use it feel they are welcome.
- People will get the right assistance when needed.
- People are confident that every reasonable effort will be made to meet the their requirements.



Definitions: Disability, Access and Inclusion

Disability

The Discrimination Act 1992 provides for a wide-ranging definition of the term disability which covers any impairment of a physical, intellectual, psychiatric, neurological, or sensory nature. Under this Act disability means:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions or the total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness or capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body, or a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- presently exists, or previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition); or
- is imputed to a person.

Access

Refers to any outcome that is achieved by the removal of ‘barriers’ or obstacles that may impede an individual’s rights to engage in a chosen activity in a manner that is equitable and dignified. ‘Barriers’ can include obstacles in the built environment as well as communication or attitudinal obstacles in the social environment.

Inclusion

Refers to an environment where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. A socially inclusive society is one which recognises and supports the intrinsic value of all human beings by creating and sustaining conditions that foster equity, empowerment, awareness, competence and the integration of a person into the community.

Legislation

The NSW and Federal Parliaments have enacted legislation which recognise the right of people to equality before the law and makes discrimination based on disability, gender, nationality, age, marital status, religious affiliation or sexuality, unlawful.

This legislation includes:

Disability Discrimination Act 1992	The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it illegal for any person, business or authority to discriminate on the basis of a person's disability. The legislation ensures that people with a disability have the same opportunities to access employment, education, transport, accommodation and buildings as other members of the community who do not have a disability.
NSW Disability Services Act.1993	The NSW Government is currently reviewing the Disability Services Act 1993 with a view to replace it with the proposed Disability Inclusion Bill 2014. The proposed Bill takes into account the likely changes that will flow from the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and will, for the first time, make it mandatory for councils to prepare a Disability Action Plan.
NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977	The Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 prohibits racial, sexual and other types of discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for all people. The Act covers discrimination in employment, education and other areas on the grounds of sex (including, breastfeeding and pregnancy), race (including colour, ethnicity and national identity), marital and domestic status, disability, homosexuality, age, transgender status and carers' responsibilities (in employment only).

In addition to the above legislation, disability standards have been prepared to set out the required accessibility guidelines for public infrastructure and buildings. These include:

Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002	apply to the providers of any structure or facility that is used by passengers in conjunction with travelling on a public transport service. New bus stops and associated infrastructure such as shelters must comply with the Standard, as should existing bus stops that undergo substantial refurbishment or alteration.
Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010	The Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010 set performance requirements and provide references to technical specifications to ensure dignified access to, and use of, buildings for people with disability.

The Role of Local Government

The purpose and functions of local governments in NSW are governed by the NSW Local Government Act 1993.

The Act is very comprehensive. It outlines in detail how the affairs of councils are to be conducted, and incorporates a charter which identifies 14 principles to guide their operations. One of these principles requires councils to exercise their functions in a way *'that is consistent with social justice principles of equity, access and participation'*.



'Councils are also required, in consultation with their communities, to develop and adopt a Community Social Plan based on the principles of equity, access, and participation'

The aim of the Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan 2013-2032 (HCSP) is to set out the aspirations and goals that the community wishes to pursue and how these will be achieved. The HCSP is a high level plan that sets the essential direction of Council activities and decision making.

The HCSP documents the need to advocate for or provide accessible transport and pathway networks and infrastructure and human services which can meet contemporary needs and expectations. It also recognises the value of the social and cultural character of the Hawkesbury and the importance of bringing the community together to connect people and neighbourhoods.

''Council established an access committee in 1993 and adopted it first access policy in 1994"

Since that time Council has worked with the committee and the community to progressively eliminate barriers which prevent residents from accessing services and facilities and participating fully in community and civic life. Some of the access and inclusion projects that Council has supported include:

- The production of Windsor Mobility Map and Access and Inclusion checklists.
- Installing hearing loops in key community facilities.
- Funding NAIDOC Week, Harmony Day and Refugee Week celebrations.
- Providing grants to encourage service providers and business to improve the accessibility of their premises.
- Funding community events and programs which bring people together.
- Making public amenities, playgrounds, community buildings, parks and reserves more accessible.

Consulting the Community

People with disabilities have reported that having a disability impacts on their educational opportunities and their participation in community activities, and the labour force. The time taken to care for someone with a disability can also limit a carer's ability to work, and their opportunity to take part in community activities or further studies.

It is not surprising therefore that, as documented in the *National Disability Strategy (NDS) Consultation Report*, people with disability and their families feel that they are "shut out of our way of life" and "shut out of buildings, homes, schools, businesses, sports and community groups"[1].

In the Hawkesbury, the experience of people with disability or those caring for them is similar to that reported in the NDS Report. In preparing this Plan, residents were asked to share their experience of living in the Hawkesbury and the challenges they faced in accessing services and facilities and participating in community and civic life.

People felt that the main barriers to inclusion within the City of Hawkesbury related to transport and physical access - particularly the lack of footpaths, appropriate signage and accessible amenities and sporting facilities.

"the main barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities related to public transport and accessible footpaths and amenities"

People also experienced difficulties in finding out information about available services while the lack of accessible transport options was identified as the main barrier to people gaining employment and work experience.

Services identified as accessible		Services which need to improve their accessibility	
✓	Library	×	Sports/Recreation Facilities
✓	Regional Gallery	×	Council Meetings/Forums
✓	Regional Museum	×	Public Transport
✓	Child Care Services	×	Public Toilets
✓	Youth Services	×	Toilets in Private Establishments
✓	Health and Medical Services	×	Information about Services and Facilities
✓	Seniors Centre	×	Car Parks
✓	Peppercorn Place	×	Footpaths
✓	Neighbourhood Centres		

Source: Access and Inclusion Survey, June 2012

For people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, easy-to-read signs and people-friendly information about services and facilities were the key to improving access.

"easy-to-read signs and people- friendly information were the main ways to improve access and inclusion for people from different backgrounds"

[1] SHUT OUT: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia. NDS Consultation Report. National People with Disabilities and Carer Council. 2009

To complement the information gathered from the 2012 on-line access survey, Council engaged Elton Consulting to hold workshops with people with disabilities and service providers. The purpose of the workshops was to provide input into the preparation of the Access and Inclusion Plan.

The Consultation Outcomes Report (Appendix 1) documented the key issues from the workshops, including suggestions for how Council could improve access and inclusion outcomes for residents. Council also received representations from indigenous and multicultural groups about ways of promoting access and inclusion within the community.



Key issues and suggestions included:

An Accessible Built Environment

- The need for more accessible toilets within Windsor and Richmond CBD.
- Increase the number of disability parking spaces in Windsor and Richmond.
- Improve the accessibility of footpaths and kerbs in the older parts of Windsor.
- Tactile indicators at Richmond Station.
- Increase number of accessible buses.
- Advocate for more disabled taxis.
- Improve safety of crossing points between bus stops and rail stations.

Participation in Community Life

- Improve transport options to assist agencies to take clients to social outings.
- Provide grants to purchase car seats to help transport children with a disability.
- Improve access at public pools.
- Install adaptive equipment at the library.
- Limited opening times of toilets in parks preventing their use for social outings.

An informed and aware Community

- Council to support an expo to promote services for people with disability.
- Promote the network of available services which are based in Penrith but cover the Hawkesbury.
- Encourage commercial facilities to improve accessibility of their premises.
- Educate local businesses about the need to keep footpaths clear of displays, screen and barriers.
- Recognition of indigenous heritage.
- Celebrate community diversity.

Employment and Learning

- Implementing an awards program to recognise local businesses that are supportive of people with disabilities.
- Finding out information about services for children making the transition to pre-school, school and post-school services.
- Advocating for government funding to create supported employment within the Hawkesbury and increasing local employment opportunities for people with a disability.

Doing Business with Council

- Improving the navigability and accessibility of Council's website.
- Making it easier for people to speak at Council meetings and to have their say.

Access and Inclusion Plan 2014 -2017

This Action and Inclusion Plan identifies the key strategies and actions that Council intends to prioritise over the next three years and the outcomes that are expected from the implementation of these actions.

The key issues and findings from the community consultation process have informed the content of the Plan.

The Plan uses the focus areas identified from the community consultations to provide a framework for the Plan.

Focus Area 1: An Accessible Built Environment

- Creating accessible, people friendly and welcoming public places and making it easier for people to get to the places they want to go using safe and connected pathways, road networks and community transport.

Focus Area 2: Participation in Community Life

- Removing the barriers and constraints that prevent people from access the services and facilities they need and making sure that people have their say on the issues that affect them.

Focus Area 3: An informed and aware Community

- Making it easy for people to find out about services and facilities and how to use them and building a community that understands the importance of creating an accessible built environment and an inclusive society.

Focus Area 4: Employment and Learning

- Working together so that people, regardless of their personal circumstances, can participate in learning throughout their lives and gain skills and knowledge that need to find and maintain employment.

Focus Area 5: Doing business with Council

- Making sure that people can have confidence in their dealings with Council and with Council staff.

Focus Area 1: An Accessible Built Environment

- Creating accessible, people friendly and welcoming public places and making it easier for people to get to the places they want to go using safe and connected pathways, road networks and community transport.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
1.1. Make toilets in Windsor and Richmond CBDs more accessible.	Implemented ongoing program to upgrade public toilets to improve accessibility - in last 12 months upgrades have been completed to toilets in Smith Park, Richmond and Macquarie St. Car Park in Windsor.	Works have been programmed to upgrade and improve accessibility of public toilets in Kable Street and Macquarie Park in Windsor and Pound Paddock in East Richmond.	To complete audits of all Council owned public toilets to identify and implement works necessary required to meet accessibility requirements of 2010 Access to Premises Standard.
1.2. Increase disability parking spaces in Windsor and Richmond.	Audited Council car parks against Development Control Plan (DCP) standard to establish that car parks achieved or exceeded DCP standard for number of disabled parking spaces.	Re-audit public car-parks against 2010 Access to Premises Standard. Investigate demand and possible location for additional spaces (beyond Standard), and prepare report for Council consideration.	Maintain required standard for the provision of designated disability parking spaces and where reasonable provide spaces in excess of standard to meet documented demand.
1.3. Improve the accessibility of footpaths and kerbs in the older parts of Windsor.	• Implemented an annual footpath and kerb ramp construction and maintenance program. • Prepared Mobility Plan to prioritise works to improve pedestrian access and mobility.	Review Mobility Plan and undertake audit of Windsor CBD to prioritise kerb ramp and footpath upgrades for Council consideration for inclusion in annual works program.	Progressively upgrade footpaths and kerb ramps in town and business precincts in accordance with priorities identified in 2010 Mobility Plan.
1.4. Install tactile indicators at Richmond Station.	Representations have been made to Transport for NSW who have advised that tactile indicators had been installed at Richmond Station	In conjunction with operators, undertake tactile audits of four major shopping centres in Richmond and Windsor to identify and advocate for required improvements.	Ensure installation of tactile indicators in accordance with Access to Premises Standard in all new developments and where Council undertakes major works to buildings and public spaces.
1.5. Increase the number of accessible buses for people with a disability.	No actions to date (full compliance with Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport not required for buses until 31 December 2022).	Write to local bus service providers to seek information in relation to current and planned progress for compliance with Disability Standards.	Achieve full compliance with Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport for operators servicing Hawkesbury LGA by 31 December 2022.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
1.6. Advocate for more accessible taxis.	Council in conjunction with Peppercorn Services Inc. has previously investigated the feasibility of acquiring a taxi licence to operate accessible community taxi service.	Make representation to relevant agencies to canvass need for additional accessible taxi coverage for Hawkesbury LGA.	Continue to advocate for sufficient accessible taxis to be available to meet demand for this service.
1.7. Improve the safety of crossing points between bus stops and rail stations.	Transport for NSW have completed upgrades to transport interchanges at Richmond and Windsor.	Undertake access and safety audits to identify works required to improve safety of transport interchanges and make representations to Transport for NSW.	Work with stakeholders to achieve and maintain full compliance with Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport by 31 December 2022.

Focus Area 2: Participation in Community Life

- Removing the barriers and constraints that prevent people from access the services and facilities they need and making sure that people have their say on the issues that affect them.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
2.1. Improve community transport coverage to enable agencies to take clients on social outings	Council funds Peppercorn Services Inc. (PSI) to operate Community Access Program to increase available community transport options for residents and community groups.	Consult with PSI and agencies to identify other options for augmenting available resources to increase capacity of agencies to transport clients to social outings.	Work with local agencies to advocate for sufficient government funding to be made available to service providers and local residents to meet transport needs.
2.2. Provide grant funding to purchase car seats to help transport young children with a disability.	Funding is currently available (upon applications) within Council's Community Sponsorship Program (CSP) for the purchase of car seats.	Promote the availability of funding under the CSP (and other non-Council grant programs) for the purchase of accessibility equipment to the community services sector.	Maintain provision of financial assistance under the Community Sponsorship Program.
2.3. Improve the accessibility of public pools.	Recent access audits of public polls have identified the improvements required to upgrade accessibility of the amenities and change rooms within these facilities.	Works have been programmed to reconfigure the amenities and change rooms at the Oasis Swim Centre in South Windsor and the amenities at Richmond Pool.	An increase in participation of people with disabilities in sporting and recreation activities and an increase in their satisfaction with the accessibility of sporting and recreation facilities.
2.4. Increase the opening times of public toilets in parks so that they can be used for outings.	Due to vandalism and maintenance concerns access to amenities in sporting reserves (managed by Sports Council) are limited to the sporting groups who use these facilities.	Work with the Sports Council to identify options for providing service providers and disability groups with access to toilets and change rooms within sports reserves.	An increase in participation of people with disabilities in sporting and recreation activities and an increase in their satisfaction with the accessibility of sporting and recreation facilities
2.5. Install adaptive equipment in library to improve access for the visually impaired.	Council has an extensive library of talking books and large print books for people with low vision. Items are added to this collection on an annual basis.	Investigate cost and feasibility of purchasing adaptive technologies for use by people with low vision for inclusion within capital works program for Council consideration.	An increase in the use of library services by people with visual impairments and an increase in their satisfaction with library services and facilities.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
2.6. Advocate for more respite accommodation services.	Council has not made any recent representations in relation to the need for respite accommodation services.	Investigate the current availability of respite accommodation services. Determine respite accommodation needs of the local community.	Support service providers and local agencies to meet requirements of Disability Services Act / Disability Inclusion Bill to provide respite and accommodation services.
2.7. Investigate feasibility of installing MLAK Master Key System to public facilities.	Council has previously investigated the option of installing the MLAK system but did not proceed to implementation.	Investigate the cost and feasibility of implementing the MLAK master key system and how it might be able to the progressively rolled out and prepare a report for Council consideration.	An increase in the use of public facilities by people with disabilities d an increase in their satisfaction with their access to these facilities.

Focus Area 3: An informed and aware Community

- Making it easy for people to find out about services and facilities and how to use them and building a community that understands the importance of creating an accessible built environment and an inclusive society.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
3.1. Council to support an expo to promote services for people with disability	Council has provided financial support for Nepean Disability Expo in Penrith; and for Family Expo in South Windsor (organised by Peppercorn Services Inc.).	Liaise with Peppercorn Services to discuss options for using Family Expo as vehicle for a broader service expo – to include services for families with a child with a disability.	Work with service providers and local agencies to build a visible, well promoted and connected disability service network.
3.2. Increase the visibility of out-of-area disability services.	Council's on-line directory enables agencies to list and promote their services. Council's home page hosts an events calendar and a link for agencies to post events.	Upgrading events calendar and linking calendar to on-line community booking system. Investigate demand for community workshop on promotion and marketing.	Work with service providers and local agencies to build a visible, well promoted and connected disability service network
3.3. Encourage business to improve accessibility of their premises.	Council has adopted access and inclusion checklist for use by community groups and business to assess accessibility of premises.	Roll out checklist to business precincts and distribute grants to assist business to upgrade accessibility of their premises.	Accessible business precincts and increased awareness of the importance of accessible built environment and inclusive community.
3.4. Educate business about need for footpaths to be clear of barriers.	Councils' Regulatory Services Branch undertake enforcement action when advised of footpath obstacles.	Identify locations where footpaths are commonly obstructed. Conduct awareness campaign targeting these precincts.	An accessible built environment where businesses are aware and act to eliminate blocked footpaths and other access barriers.
3.5. Recognition of indigenous heritage	Council recognises traditional owners at Council meetings. Dharug Elder undertakes a Welcome to Country at civic events. Council funds NAIDOC week celebrations.	ATSI flags have been installed in Council chambers and outside Council Offices. Acknowledgement of Traditional Land Owners message to be added to entry signs.	A community which recognises and celebrates the indigenous heritage and culture of the Hawkesbury.
3.6. Celebrate community diversity.	Council financially supports Harmony Day and Refugee Week and other community events that celebrate community diversity.	Council to declare itself a Refugee Welcome Zone and will continue to financially support events that celebrate community diversity.	A community which recognises and celebrates its diversity and the contribution of residents from different backgrounds.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
3.7. Include information on access issues in Council tent at Hawkesbury Show.	Council promotes activities and community awareness campaign at the Show – this has included the Windsor Mobility Map.	Develop an access and inclusion information and awareness raising promotion and campaign for the Hawkesbury Show.	An increase in community awareness of the importance of an accessible built environment and inclusive civil society.

Focus Area 4: Employment and Learning

- Working together so that people, regardless of their personal circumstances, can participate in learning throughout their lives and gain the skills and knowledge they need to find and maintain employment.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
4.1. Implement awards program to recognise businesses who support people with disabilities.	Council is a sponsor of the Hawkesbury Local Business Awards. Council has previously conducted a separate business access award.	Investigate options for awards program for local business providing work experience and employment for people with disabilities and prepare report for Council consideration.	A community which supports people with a disability to participate in work experience and gain employment.
4.2. Improve provision of information about pre-school, school and post-school services for children with disabilities.	Service providers are able to include information about their services on Council's on line directory.	Work with local agencies to investigate this issue to determine the types and reasons for information gaps. Identify options for improving information flows.	Work with service providers and local agencies to provide information for parents about transition to school and transition to work programs.
4.3. Advocate for funding for local supported employment services.	Council has previously (in partnership with Peppercorn Services Inc.) operated a funded transition to work program. Council has not made any recent representations on the need for supported employment services.	Investigate the current provision of supported employment services for people with disabilities and prepare report for Council considerations as to possible actions to advocate for these services.	Work with service providers and local agencies to advocate for sufficient funding to be made available to enable people with disabilities to participate in local supported employment programs.

Focus Area 5: Doing business with Council

- Making sure that people can have confidence in their dealings with Council and with Council staff.

What were we asked to do by Community	What has been done	What we plan to do in next 3 years	What we want to achieve in the long term (in 10 years)
5.1. Improve navigability and accessibility of Council website.	Council is implementing a program of web-site upgrades. Compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) achieved - home-page, links and all new uploaded PDF documents complaint with WCAG 3.0.	Continue to improve and upgrade web-site in response to customer feedback and industry trends. The focus for next three years will be to increase range of business functions that can be transacted on-line.	An accessible and convenient on-line information portal which maximises the range of business functions and customer enquiries that can be transacted on-line.
5.2. Making it easier for people to speak at Council meetings and to have their say.	Requirements for addressing council meetings are set down in Code of Meeting Practice. Council has implemented an on-line community consultation tool (Engagement HQ).	Complete audit of Council Chambers (and review code of meeting practice) to identify options to improve access for people with disabilities for Council's consideration. Promote Engagement HQ.	Increase the participation of people with disabilities and people from different cultural and language backgrounds in Council's consultative processes.

Implementation and Monitoring

Council is committed to achieving the actions and long-term objectives set out in the Access and Inclusion Plan. To do this effectively, a process will need to put into place to monitor and report on progress in implementing these actions.



The Plan does not list individuals who will be responsible for delivering on the actions within the Plan. This is a conscious approach as achieving an accessible built environment and an inclusive community is a complex and challenging undertaking.

No one person or agency has the expertise or funding to provide everything a person with a disability or a carer, or a person from a different cultural background, will need to fully participate in the life of the community. Networks and partnership between agencies will be integral to achieving the actions and objectives within this Plan. To this end, Council will commission the Hawkesbury Access and Inclusion Committee to oversee and report on the implementation of this Plan.

"Council will commission the Access and Inclusion Committee to oversee and report on the implementation of this Plan"

This does not mean that the Committee will be responsible for its outcomes. The Committee will liaise and consult with Council staff and stakeholders about each of the actions within the Plan and how they can best be achieved. In doing this, the Committee may be required to prepare advice for Council's consideration or request that Council staff undertake the necessary steps to complete an action.

It is likely that additional outlays may be required to achieve some of the actions within the Plan. These requests will need to be considered by Council (and other stakeholders) relative to other priorities and works. In this context, effective consultation with stakeholders and well-researched advice will be critical to the decision making process.

To track progress in the implementation of the Plan, the Committee, in conjunction with Council staff, will prepare an annual progress report which will be publicly reported to Council.

The Committee will also prepare a final report (at the expiration of the Plan in 2017) together with advice as to challenges encountered in implementing the Plan and which issues might provide a focus for the preparation of the next three year Access and Inclusion Plan.



Appendix A

Consultation Outcomes Report

Client
Hawkesbury City Council

Project
Access and Inclusion Plan Consultation Outcomes report

Date
September 2012

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1 Introduction

In August and September 2012, Hawkesbury City Council organised some workshops to consult with people with a disability and disability service providers about the issues facing people with a disability living in the City of Hawkesbury. The purpose of the workshops was to provide input to the preparation, by Council, of the Hawkesbury Access and Inclusion Plan.

The workshops were facilitated by Chris Manning, from the social policy firm Elton Consulting. This report presents a summary of the outcomes of the workshops.

1.1 Outline of workshops

Three workshops were organised by Council, with two for people with a disability living within the City of Hawkesbury (one in Kurrajong and one in Windsor) and one for representatives from local services and agencies supporting people with a disability (held in Windsor).

The workshops were advertised in the local press and through information distributed by service providers and members of Council's Access and Inclusion Committee.

The workshops took the form of a presentation on the background to Council's Access and Inclusion Plan by Meagan Ang, Council's Community Programs Co-ordinator, followed by a discussion of issues relevant to the Plan, structured loosely around some key themes. These themes included:

- The built environment, transport and physical access
- Information and awareness
- Inclusion and participation in community life
- Employment and training
- Doing business with Council

Participants were also advised of the process for the development of Council's Access and Inclusion Plan, and the further opportunities they would have for input to and comment on the draft Plan.

1.2 Workshop attendance

While promotion of the workshops had been extensive, unfortunately levels of attendance were very low.

There were no participants for the first workshop, scheduled to be held at Kurrajong on the morning of 30 August 2012.

Two people with a disability attended the second workshop, held at Windsor on the morning of 1 September 2012.

Six representatives from disability services attended the service provider workshop, held in Windsor on 30 August 2012.

2 Workshop outcomes

2.1 Workshop with people with a disability

Both of the participants in the workshop for people with a disability had vision impairments, so the workshop outcomes reflect particularly on the needs of this disability group.

The following issues were raised by participants:

- The poor state of footpaths in some parts of the Hawkesbury LGA is a major concern for people with a visual impairment, who require a continuous accessible path of travel to move easily around the City. Issues include:
  - There are no footpaths in some part of the City
  - Poor maintenance, tree roots in footpaths and hazards from repairs where the surface has been left uneven or inconsistent make access very difficult
  - The ends of paths do not always line up with paths on the other side of the road
  - The ends of paths can sometimes lead the person into traffic
  - There is a need for paths in busy areas to have a white line to follow, to help avoid walking out into traffic
  - Beeps at signalised pedestrian crossings sometimes do not last long enough to complete the crossing, or do not work at all
  - Cars parked in driveways across footpaths block access.
- Overhanging obstacles such as tree branches, signage and public phone boxes that do not extend to ground level present further barriers to people with a visual impairment.
- Other barriers to accessibility are associated with cafes and shop displays extending across footpaths. Displays and "clutter" within shopping centres can also make movement through them difficult, especially where passageways are narrow and crowded. It was felt that Council could play a greater role in educating local businesses to promote access. Placing screens and barriers around footpath and shopping mall café areas would also be helpful.
- There is a general lack of tactile indicators at critical entries around the City. Where tactile indicators have been installed, they sometimes give confusing messages – too many, facing in different directions or facing the wrong way.
- Certain floor and wall colours and treatments in public spaces can also assist or hinder the movement of people with a visual impairment. Council knowledge of such matters could be used to raise awareness within shopping centres and other public places.
- Council needs to ensure that the services it offers are accessible for people with a visual impairment. Of particular importance is the need for adaptive equipment using new technologies at the library to enable people with a visual impairment to use the catalogue, computers and other library resources. The availability of such equipment at the library then needs to be promoted, to ensure that people are aware of it and that it is well used. This points to a need for a general library strategy to be developed around access and inclusion.
- Another Council service that is difficult to use for people with a vision impairment is the Council website. Difficulties are associated with the use of particular colours and an inability to download content in different formats for adaptive technologies.
- Vision impaired people face difficulties finding out what services and facilities are available to support them. This is made worse in the Hawkesbury area by the small number of people with a vision impairment. Council could play a role in gathering data about the numbers of people in the area with a vision impairment, and use this data to target information about available services.
- Lack of employment and work experience opportunities for people with a vision impairment within the Hawkesbury area is a major issue. Most opportunities are a long way away; people with a vision impairment have to rely on public transport and this makes access to employment very difficult. A need was identified for support from Council to find local employment and work experience opportunities, both within Council itself and within local businesses.
- Public transport also presents some major barriers for people with a vision impairment. Timetable disconnects between buses and trains present some particular difficulties where there is no safe and easy crossing between railway station and bus stop. Displaying numbers at the rear, as well as front, of the bus would also be helpful. It was felt that Council could play a role in advocating to Westbus on these issues.
- It was also felt that Council could play a greater role in supporting and promoting a local social support group for people with a vision impairment, as it is too far to travel to existing

groups run at Vision Australia in Burwood, or in Penrith, particularly given difficulties with public transport in the Hawkesbury area. More generally, it was felt that Council could play a greater role in addressing the recreational and sporting needs of people with a vision impairment.

2.2 Workshop with service providers

This workshop focused on two main themes:

- How can Council better support people with a disability within the City of Hawkesbury, seeking service providers' perspectives as advocates for the needs of their clients
- How can Council better work with and support the disability service sector within the City of Hawkesbury

Key issues raised in relation to the first question include the following:

- There is a need for more accessible toilets within the main part of the Windsor town centre. Distances between the existing accessible toilets are considered to be unreasonable, and do not support people with a disability being able to readily enjoy the shopping precinct
- Several commercial facilities were identified as not being accessible for people with a disability, who are otherwise keen to use them. They include:
  - The Macquarie Arms Hotel in Windsor (heritage listed)
  - Richmond Cinema
  - GoLo in Windsor and the Reject Shop in Richmond, where the aisles are sometimes too congested to allow a person in a wheelchair to move through the shop.

  It is recognised that these are private sector facilities where Council has limited influence, but it was felt that ways in which Council might encourage these facilities to better meet the needs of people with a disability should be explored.
- There is an insufficiency of designated parking spaces available for people with a disability within Windsor at weekends, when the town centre is most busy. There is also felt to be an inadequate number of designated parking spaces within Richmond, especially near the Seniors Centre and close to the railway station.
- The accessibility of footpaths and kerbs in some of the older parts of Windsor remains a problem, with tree roots within footpaths and steep heritage gutters particular issues.
- Issues with regard to public transport include:
  - Lack of tactile indicators at Richmond Station
  - Not all buses are accessible for people with a disability
- The vast geography and dispersed pattern of settlement within the Hawkesbury LGA make it difficult for agencies to provide community transport for their clients, and particularly to include all in social outings. The shortage of agency buses for picking up clients leaves many socially isolated.
- There is a need for improvements to make Council's swimming pool more accessible for people with a disability. This includes improvements to change facilities and hoist / water chair arrangements. This need has been recognised within Council and the YMCA, who operates the facility, and options have been identified. Implementation of the recommended options is dependent upon funds becoming available.
- In some parks, the toilets are kept locked and keys are distributed only to sporting groups. This precludes organisations using these parks for client picnics and outings.
- Council's website is confusing and difficult to navigate for many people with a disability. It would be good to have more direct access to information on issues of relevance to people with a disability.
- Many parents in the Hawkesbury area experience difficulties in finding information about available services and options for their children making transitions to pre-school, school and post-school services.
- It was felt that the main barriers to inclusion within the City of Hawkesbury related to transport and physical access. Generally, attitudes to people with a disability were perceived to be warm and friendly, and there is not a major need for community education and awareness initiatives.
- There are a number of local businesses with the Hawkesbury LGA that have been particularly supportive of people with a disability, in terms of offering work experience and employment. It was suggested that Council could have awards to recognise and encourage such support, as occurs in the Blue Mountains.
- The key barrier to people with a disability gaining employment and work experience is transport. There is no supported employment within Hawkesbury LGA and people need to be able to travel to centres within Blacktown. Similarly,

people have to go to Blacktown for TAFE training, and most employment opportunities are also outside Hawkesbury LGA. At the same time, most people with a disability want to work close to home. It was felt that Council could play a role in advocating for government funding to create supported employment within Hawkesbury, and to explore other ways to increase local employment opportunities for people with a disability.

- Transport for people with a disability is made worse by the fact that there is only one disabled taxi in the area and this can be difficult to reach. It was suggested that Council could play a role in advocating for more disabled taxis.

- It was felt that the Council requirements concerning members of the public speaking at Council meetings presented barriers for people with a disability, as the process is made overly complex and intimidating.

In terms of how Council can better work with and support the disability service sector within the City of Hawkesbury, issues included the following:

- There is a need to better promote the services that are available for people with a disability within the Hawkesbury LGA, particularly for the benefit of families with a child with a disability. The lack of local services means that these families often have to travel out of the area to find services. It was suggested that an expo of disability services would be beneficial.

- It was further suggested that Council could use the launch of its updated Community Directory to have a service expo across all service sectors, recognising that specific expos for different service sectors would not be sufficiently large to be successful. Staging this will require working closely with service providers.

- There is a big need for respite accommodation services to be provided within Hawkesbury LGA, as currently all such services are outside the LGA, or are not affordable for many families. It was felt that Council could advocate to government for resources for this purpose.

- It was suggested that Council's Community Sponsorship Fund could assist community groups and services with the purchase of car seats to help with the transport of young children with a disability.

- It was noted that many of the disability services that cover the Hawkesbury area are based in Penrith LGA, and these services do not attend the local service forum so are not part of the local service network. It was felt that Council could do more to promote the network of services available. Suggestions included better use of the "What's On" section of the Council website, and regular feature articles in the local newspaper. It was noted that Penrith Council produces a monthly "What's On" that is very popular.



HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL
Access and Inclusion Plan 2014-2017