



Blacktown City Council

Disability Inclusion Action

Plan 2017-2020

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ADA	Anti-Discrimination Act
AS	Australian Standards
AUSLAN	Australian Sign Language
BCA	Building Code of Australia
BCC	Blacktown City Council
CA	City Assets
CL	City Living
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CS	Corporate Services
DD	Design & Development
DIAP	Disability Inclusion Action Plan
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DSA	NSW Disability Services Act 1993
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FCS	Finance and Corporate Strategy
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
NSW	New South Wales
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
PPIA	Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998

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Message from the Mayor

A socially just community is one where everyone has fair and equal access to services that are essential to achieving and maintaining a decent lifestyle. It is important to acknowledge that some people need more support than others. People with disability are recognised by Blacktown City as being in need of this additional level of support.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been developed to make access to Blacktown City's services and facilities easier for people with disability (and for their carers).

Blacktown City is committed to making access for people with disability the same as for people without disability.

Blacktown City acknowledges the input from its Access Advisory Committee in helping to develop this plan.

Councillor Stephen Bali

Mayor of Blacktown City

Purpose

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will provide a framework to assist people with a disability to participate fully as members of the Blacktown City community, affording them the same access to Council facilities and services as everyone else.

Definition of Disability

The definition of disability as recorded in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and neurological or learning disabilities, and refers to the “malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person’s body” as constituting a disability as well as the presence of disease-causing organisms. The Act provides the broadest framework for ensuring that people with disability are not discriminated against.

The Disability Discrimination Act definition includes that a disability may: presently exist, previously have existed (but no longer exists), may exist in the future or is imputed to a person.

Blacktown City recognises and respects the rights of people with disability not to disclose or discuss the nature of their disability (according to the Privacy Act).

What is a Disability Inclusion Action Plan?

A Disability Inclusion Action Plan sets out how an organisation proposes to meet the needs of people with disabilities who reside in, work in or visit the City. Its purpose is to:

- Help ensure that Blacktown City complies with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), the Disability Services Act 2014 and the Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014 and provide a strategy for implementation of programs aimed at removing disability discrimination
- Provide a policy framework to enhance accountability for Blacktown City when delivering accessible and equitable services to the Blacktown Community
- Play an important role in how we deliver services, develop our facilities and work with our staff
- Enable consultation with people with disability in the development of the Plan.

Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin this Action Plan:

- We will ensure that all people have fair and equitable access to the economic resources and services essential to meeting their basic needs and improving their quality of life
- We will engage with local communities to understand their needs and aspirations and to give people opportunities for participation and consultation about the decisions affecting their lives
- We recognise the need to adopt a whole of City organisational philosophy where access is incorporated within appropriate plans and services
- We will focus on strategies which will have a positive impact across the whole City, geographically and by social group
- We will assume a leadership and advocacy role in developing programs that increase access to services and facilities for people in Blacktown City
- We will work with partners to promote relationships with Government, private business and communities across Blacktown City
- We will continue to support local organisations to provide excellent services to seniors and people with disability
- We will continue to educate and train our staff in the principles of access and equity and social justice.

Methodology

This plan has been developed following:

- A review of Blacktown City's current services and infrastructure for people with disability
- Research into relevant Acts and Policies, statistical data and a literature review of disability issues
- Consultation with Blacktown City Directorates, Blacktown Disability Community, Blacktown Access Advisory Committee and support agencies
- The submission of the final Disability Inclusion Action Plan for adoption.

The following documents were considered in the development of this plan:

- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards
- Government Information Public Access Act 2009
- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014 NSW
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Background

Australia has a population of approximately 23.5 million people with almost 20% of the population having some form of disability.

The occurrence of disability in the population increases with age. People are living longer, therefore people with disabilities are living longer too. By 2051 the ABS estimates that 25% of the population will be 65 years or over. This compares with 12% in 1997.

4.6% of the Australian population has a profound or severe disability.

A local perspective

Blacktown City is a dynamic place where residents celebrate the history, creativity and achievements of the City and its people. Blacktown is home to over 340,000 residents across 48 suburbs, and the people are acknowledged as the City's greatest asset. Community members are encouraged and supported to actively participate in civic life at neighbourhood and City levels. Their active participation results in well-coordinated and meaningful planning and decision-making for the community.

Need for assistance

In 2011, 13,829 people or 4.6% of the population in Blacktown City reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to a severe or profound disability. This information will be used in the planning of local facilities, services such as daycare and occasional care, and in the provision of information and support to carers. Disability statistics help service providers to measure the prevalence of people who need support in the community, and along with information on 'Unpaid Care to a Person with a Disability', how that support is provided.

Please note: A person's reported need for assistance is based on a subjective assessment and should therefore be treated with caution.

Population

According to statistics from the 2011 Census, the percentage of Blacktown City's population requiring assistance with core activities (4.6%) is in line with the percentage across Australia as a whole (4.6%). However, there are some critical differences.

In Blacktown City a much larger proportion of the population falls into the following groups:

- persons aged 85 and over (60.7% compared to 47.7% for Australia)
- persons aged 80 to 84 (38.0% compared to 26.3%)
- persons aged 75 to 79 (24.1% compared to 16.3%)
- persons aged 70 to 74 (15.9% compared to 10.3%).

In 2012, nearly one-quarter (23.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in private dwellings in Australia had a disability. After adjusting for differences in the age structure of the two populations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were 1.7 times as likely as non-Indigenous people to have disability (ABS 2014). As Blacktown City has a high proportion of people in this demographic group, we expect that there would be a high level of need.

Emerging groups

In 2016, Blacktown City was the second largest and the fastest growing local government area in New South Wales. There was an estimated 350,000 residents and we have a projected population of 520,000 by 2036. The city is growing rapidly through urban development in the North West Growth Centre and established centres such as Blacktown, Mt Druitt, Rooty Hill and Seven Hills.

In line with this growth pattern, between 2006 and 2011 there was a noticeable increase in people reporting a need for assistance in Blacktown City in the following age groups:

- 85 and over (+569 persons)
- 65 to 69 (+440 persons)
- 60 to 64 (+438 persons)

Unpaid Carers

In Australia 10.9% of people aged 15 and over recognise themselves as unpaid carers. In Blacktown City, twenty suburbs report a percentage that is higher than this (Whalan being the highest at 13.8%).

Social Profile 2016 findings

The Blacktown City Social Profile 2016 was developed in partnership with the community, government departments and local community organisations. It is a key reference document for the City's community strategic plan.

The study found the following:

- 16% of the population identify as having disability
- Almost 25,000 carers provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, long-term illness or old age
- In suburbs with a higher percentage of people from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, there is a higher percentage of people in need of assistance.

Social Gradient

Residents with a disability say that having a home, living close to work, supported accommodation and having carers that provide support are all important, however, many reported cost barriers when living on a disability pension such as paying bills and buying essential goods which often means that they go without.

Strengths

- Convenience and availability of shops and services
- Availability of recreational, sporting, social, religious and cultural activities
- Many residents report that their neighbourhood is a friendly place with community spirit
- Residents felt that they could rely on their neighbours in times of need
- Service providers say there are great disability services that respond to needs, provide a network of support, and teach people with disabilities about their rights and responsibilities, safety in the community and safety in the home.

Issues

Local Environment

- A lower percentage of people with a disability felt safe walking down the street than was the case for people without a disability
- Residents are concerned about antisocial behaviour in their neighbourhoods, around shopping centres, parks and transport interchanges
- Untidy streets with too much litter
- Community perceptions of high crime levels, making community safety a real concern
- Lack of maintenance of parks, equipment, roads, footpaths, trees and waterways.

Social Exclusion

- Service providers report concerns about social isolation and mental illness for those with disability

- Compared with the whole population, people with a disability participate in recreational activities less than those without a disability
- Residents report access for people with limited mobility and in wheelchairs is still challenging in many areas of the city
- Discrimination continues to be an issue for some of our residents with a disability
- Services note a lack of understanding of the issues surrounding vision impairment
- Young people with disability want to be included into mainstream services.

Employment

- Residents report that access for people with limited mobility and in wheelchairs is still a barrier to getting a job
- Residents and service providers note that work provides an opportunity to be occupied, have job satisfaction and a social outlet. It also provides money and income
- Employment services say there is a double disadvantage experienced by unemployed people with disability.

Transport

- People with disability say they have great difficulties getting around as either pedestrians or public transport users because the physical environment is often full of obstacles, and directional signage is not useful for the vision impaired
- Half of the residents commented on the lack of reliable, accessible and affordable public transport
- Some residents say they lack the confidence to use public transport and need support
- There is wide spread concern about speeding vehicles on local roads and what is perceived as a 'hoon' culture amongst some drivers in our community
- There is widespread concern about traffic especially issues with congestion.

Services

- Most services say that they are at capacity and do not have the resources to meet residents' needs
- Many services report facing uncertainty in regards of funding. This is impacting on service provision, clients and staff
- There is some apprehension from disability services that new funding models will reduce client focus (National Disability Insurance Scheme)
- Services are concerned that the competitive tender funding model is seeing organisations working against each other and reducing partnership approaches
- Services for older people provided by Home and Community Care say there needs to be greater funding in the city for aged day care centres, dementia support and community aged care packages
- Job certainty is a real concern with many staff on contracts until changes in funding models is completed by the state government
- There continue to be challenges on sharing information with the community about the services available to them. This particularly impacts those who are disengaged and isolated
- The need for information in community languages.

Blacktown City's Commitment

Blacktown City is committed to being inclusive, equitable, safe and accessible for people with disability, now and in the future.

This will be achieved through:

- Continuous consultation with people with a disability who work in, live in, or visit the City to create a dialogue between Blacktown City staff and community members regarding community interests, issues and concerns
- Improving access to the City's services and facilities
- Ensuring services and facilities can be accessed in a dignified and safe manner by everyone
- Promoting awareness and understanding of access and inclusion issues in Blacktown City
- Creating opportunities for people with disability to take part in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport on an equal basis with everyone else
- Increasing disability awareness among Blacktown City staff
- Supporting employment of people with disability within Blacktown City by providing career pathways and opportunities for people with disability.

Strategy Statement

To work with residents, Government agencies and local communities to be welcoming and inclusive, helping individual residents achieve their potential.

Community Engagement

An accessible community is one where community members can freely communicate with Council. Blacktown City has a reputation for working with communities and stakeholders in the development of its policies, plans, and services. Our communities are involved in many ways – from formal responses to plans on exhibition, participating in Advisory Committees to help us shape policies, helping us design new facilities or providing customer feedback about our services.

In July 2010, Blacktown City adopted a Community Engagement Strategy which provides the framework for Council to consult the community and includes a Community Engagement Tool Kit and an Implementation Framework. This Plan has been developed using the Community Engagement Strategy. Additionally, community engagement principles will underpin the implementation of the Plan.

Barriers to access

Blacktown City recognises these barriers may be physical, procedural or social. They include access to buildings, infrastructure, transport and information.

“An Accessible Community can be described as a community providing people with equal opportunities in the community to access transportation systems, physical environment, communications systems, technological systems, political, cultural, bureaucratic, corporate, social institutions and employment practices.”

(Blacktown City Disability Directory)

All employees have the right to a workplace free from unlawful discrimination and harassment and the responsibility to act to prevent this occurring in the workplace.

Under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977, it is against the law in NSW for any employer, including the Government, to discriminate against an employee or job applicant because of disability. Council is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity as will be evidenced in all issues regarding the employment relationship. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, it is unlawful to treat people with disability differently than people who do not have disability.

Blacktown City recognises the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which states that:

- Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers hindering their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
- Disability issues should be an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development
- Persons with disabilities should be actively involved in the decision making processes involving them.

Evaluation and Implementation

Whilst the Plan has a 'whole of City' organisational access as its philosophy, its implementation will be allocated to the appropriate Directorate within Blacktown City. Disability Inclusion Action Plan Indicators will be included in the Social Plan. The Access Advisory Committee will monitor progress of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan with the assistance of the Community Access Worker, who will liaise with the appropriate Directorate employee responsible for the required actions. The Directorate will submit quarterly reports to be addressed by the Access Advisory Committee on outstanding issues and progress.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be registered with the Disability Council NSW.

Blacktown City's Directorates

The following Directorates have responsibility for implementing this Plan:

- Design and Development – oversees planning for the City
- Corporate Services – provides governance and corporate business support services
- City Living – provides facilities and services to the City
- City Assets – designs, constructs and maintains the City's assets

Blacktown City Access Advisory Committee

Formal Committee

The Blacktown City Council Access Advisory Committee is a recognised Committee of Blacktown City Council. The Committee is open to residents of Blacktown and relevant human service providers and seeks to address the needs of people with disability within Blacktown City.

Aims of the Access Advisory Committee

The aim of the Access Advisory Committee is to make access to services, facilities and opportunities available on an equitable basis to Blacktown residents who have disability. Two Councillors are nominated as the Council delegates to the Committee.

ACTION PLAN

GOALS	ACTIONS	TARGETS	TIME FRAME	DIRECTORATE
Accessible transport and parking	Continue annual public transport forum including accessible transport agenda.	Forum held and agenda item included.	Annually	City Assets
	Monitor accessible car spaces in car parks across Blacktown Local Government Area and ensure accessible path of travel is provided to and within all related buildings.	Car parks reviewed. 98% Complete	Annually	City Assets
	Assessing compliance of bus stops to the requirement of 'Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (2002).	All bus stops assessed and improvements identified.	Ongoing	City Assets
	Review and update policy for Blacktown Accessibility Bus.	Policy updated and adopted by Blacktown City.	Annually	City Living
Accessible environments within Blacktown Local Government Area	Maintain footpaths and kerb ramps across Blacktown Local Government Area.	All footpaths are inspected in line with service level requirements.	Annually	City Assets
	Mobility maps to be distributed to Libraries and community agencies across	A minimum of 200 maps distributed each year.	Annually	City Living

	Blacktown City and displayed on Blacktown City Disability Web Page.	A minimum of 30 hits to Blacktown City website per year.		
Blacktown City will ensure that all new Council assets are designed to be accessible	Access to buildings is provided beyond the minimum requirements of the BCA, Australian Standards and relevant regulations and legislation.	All new buildings are designed to satisfy access requirements.	Annually	City Assets
Accessible Blacktown City leased premises	Facilities upgraded to increase accessibility.	One facility upgraded per year.	Annually	City Living
	Promote The Sargents Centre facility and sensory room to disability services.	Sensory room bookings to increase to accommodate a minimum of five agencies per year.	Annually	City Living
Continually expand and update existing range of services to assist residents with disability	Promote Blacktown City Access Advisory Committee.	Information stalls held at two events per year.	Annually	City Living
Assist people with disability to access Blacktown City Council Services	Update Blacktown City's Disability Web Page and Disability Directory.	Directory/web page updated each year.	Annually	City Living
	Community Access Worker to promote Blacktown City services to the disability community.	A minimum of 100 community members to use the Sargents Centre per quarter.	Annually	City Living

Blacktown City-wide policy for access and equity to all public external and internal environments	Disability Inclusion Action Plan adopted by Blacktown City.	Disability Inclusion Action Plan to be reviewed every four years.	2016 - 2020	City Living
Accessible Library resources	Availability of services and technologies to assist people with disabilities.	All branch libraries include resources to assist people with disabilities. Maintain availability of resources in different community languages.	Annually	City Living
	Purchase of books and other Library resources which are accessible for people with disabilities.	Large print and spoken word resources comprise at least 4% of the total Library collection.	Annually	City Living
Wide framework to facilitate participation of residents with disability	Promote International Day of People with Disability.	To hold events across Blacktown City to increase public awareness and participation of people with disability.	Annually	City Living
Accessibility, communications and correspondence within Blacktown City and to the public	Improved accessibility to Blacktown City publications, signage and documents.	Appropriate documents to be translated into Braille.	Annually	City Living
Accessible Community Gardens	Continue to promote the Blacktown City Showground Community	Information included on any new promotional material including	Ongoing	City Living

	Garden as an accessible community garden.	flyers, website and banners.		
To provide further opportunities for the inclusion of children with additional needs in Blacktown City childcare centres	Gather data to ensure that children with additional needs are accessing childcare services in proportion to need.	Set targets for enrolment linked to local need.	Ongoing	City Living
	To support staff, through training and funding opportunities, to include children with additional needs, especially where the family has identified that further assistance is required.			
	To explore further funding opportunities to support the increased costs of providing care to children with additional needs.			
	To work with agencies to provide access to early childhood programs for children with additional needs.			
Human Resources Practices and Procedures	Review all Recruitment and Selection documentation to ensure that it does not contain any	All appointments are merit-based with no proven incidences of discriminatory conduct or content	Annually	Corporate Services

	discriminatory content.	corrections in relation to the recruitment and selection process/ documentation.		
Workforce Management	Gather data relating to number of people with disability employed by Blacktown City.	Information obtained and results produced.	Annually	Corporate Services
Appropriate workplace environments for staff with disability	Establish procedures for adjustment to assist new and existing staff with disability.	Develop induction checklist which incorporates special needs to assist people with disability in the workplace environment.	Ongoing	Corporate Services
Blacktown security & Blacktown Customer Information Centre personnel are supportive and understanding of staff and residents with disabilities	Make access awareness instruction available for all security and BCIC staff.	Attendance of designated staff at access training.	Annually	Corporate Services

With thanks

We would like to thank the following organisations for their contribution to the development of the Disability Inclusion Plan:

- Pecky's Limited Disability Services
- TNC Inc.
- Self Advocacy Sydney Inc.
- Blacktown City Council Access Advisory Committee
- The S355 Committee to the Sargents Centre
- Blacktown Community Transport
- Lethbridge Park Community Kitchen

APPENDICES

Disability Standards for Access to Premises

The Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards were introduced on 1 May 2011. They provide the basis for improved arrangements for disability access in the Building Code of Australia. The Standards cover accessible lifts, stairs, ramps, toilets and corridors and include office blocks, shops, hotels, motels and publicly accessible buildings. The Standards may be accessed on www.ag.gov.au.

The Australian Suite of Standards AS 1428 - Design for Access and Mobility are as follows:

- **AS 1428.1**
General requirements for paths of travel, circulation, amenities
- **AS 1428.2**
Requirements for additional fit out of facilities, circulation spaces, gradients
- **AS 1428.3**
Requirements specifically for children
- **AS 1428.4**
Requirements to assist people with vision impairment and includes tactile ground surface indicators
- **AS 2890**
Parking
- **AS 1735**
Lifts
- **AS 4299**
Adaptable Housing

Government Information Public Access Act 2009

Public Access to Blacktown City Information

Our primary aim in implementing the Government Information Public Access Act 2009 is to promote a better understanding in our community. One way of achieving this aim will be through the improved breadth and depth of the information that we will be making available to you on our website and at our Blacktown City Information Centre and libraries. We will be actively encouraging your participation in the periodic review of our policies and functions. You are welcome to give us your comments and suggestions on any of the material that we publish. We will consider for possible inclusion any public interest issues that you may wish to nominate that are not currently published.

Our Community Engagement Strategy is available to help you understand how we consult with the community in our decision-making process. We promise to deal with your individual requests for information courteously and promptly and to provide you with advice and assistance if necessary.

For further information please access Blacktown City Council's websites:

- http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Your_Council/Access_to_Information_Reports_and_Registers
- http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Your_Council/Access_to_Information_Reports_and_Registers/Frequently_Asked_Questions
- http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au/Your_Council/Integrated_Planning_Reporting/Community_Strategic_Plan

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

This is an initiative of the Australian Council of Governments. The National Disability Strategy sets out a ten year National plan for improving life for Australians with a disability, their families and carers. The Commonwealth, State and Territory and Local Governments developed the strategy under the Council of Governments (COAG).

The National Disability Strategy was launched on Friday 18 March 2011 and covers a long term plan in six priority areas:

- Inclusive and accessible communities
- Rights, protection, justice and legislation
- Economic security
- Personal and community support
- Learning and skills
- Health and wellbeing.

Blacktown City representatives will attend local government forums at Regional, State and National level to ensure that we remain at the forefront of the implementation of the National Disability Strategy. To access a copy of the strategy or for more information please visit www.dss.gov.au.

Disability Inclusion Act 2014 NSW

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (the Act) and the Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014 (the Regulation) became legally binding on 3 December 2014.

The Act requires the NSW Government to develop a four-year State Disability Inclusion Plan to guide how all government organisations work towards inclusion. The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan was launched on 26 February 2015

At the next level, it requires NSW Government departments, local councils and other public authorities (set out in the Regulation) to develop and implement Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

Specifically, the Act sets out to:

- make it clear that people with disability have the same human rights as other people
- promote the inclusion of people with disability by requiring government departments and local councils to engage in disability inclusion action planning
- support people with disability to exercise choice and control through individualised funding wherever possible; and
- provide safeguards for people accessing NSW funded disability supports and services, including new employment screening requirements and the need for disability accommodation providers to report abuse or neglect of people with disability to the Ombudsman

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS is an insurance scheme which helps people with disabilities to access mainstream and community assistance. It recognises informal care and funds reasonable and necessary supports, including early intervention, for its participants. Participants are people in the Scheme with permanent disability which has a substantial impact on their daily life. This includes people with mental health conditions.

The Scheme will enable NDIS participants to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports. The Scheme will help participants to increase their independence and social and economic participation. To participate in the NDIS they need to meet the disability or early intervention requirements, as well as the age and residence requirements.

They need to:

- Have a permanent disability which results in substantially reduced ability to undertake regular activities
- Be aged less than 65 years when they make an access request
- Be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen who holds a Protected Special Category Visa.

Contact NDIS on 1800 800 110 (www.ndis.gov.au)