



**Edward  
River**  
COUNCIL

## DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2017



Prepared by Strategy to Action March 2017

*Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided in this document is accurate and current at the time of writing. Strategy to Action accepts no responsibility for inaccuracies or omissions. In addition, we advise Council to maintain awareness of changes to legislation, Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework documents and Council policies which may impact on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.*

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## 1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Edward River Council would like to acknowledge the contribution made by people with a disability, their carers, service providers and members of the business and the wider community. Their willingness to participate in the consultation sessions and respond to the survey has enhanced the value of the information incorporated into the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and the resultant actions to be implemented by Council.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Edward River Council was established on 12 May 2016, in the Riverina region of New South Wales, with the amalgamation of Deniliquin Council and the surrounding Conargo Shire. Council's affairs are currently under the guidance of an Administrator. Council elections will be held in September 2017 and the new Council will approve a new Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. The Actions of the DIAP will be aligned with this Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

Council's administration centre is at the main town of Deniliquin and covers the localities of Blighty, Boorooban, Conargo, Mayrung, Morago, Pretty Pine and Wanganella. Edward River Council covers an area of 8,881 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 8,972.

Deniliquin is located at the intersection of the Riverina and Cobb Highways approximately 725 kilometres south west of Sydney and 285 kilometres north of Melbourne. The town is divided in two parts by the Edward River, an anabranch of the Murray River, with the main business district located on the south bank.

The town services a productive agricultural district with prominent grain, rice, wool and timber industries.

The town has 3 public primary schools (Deniliquin South PS, Deniliquin North PS, Edward PS), 1 Catholic primary school (St Michael's PS), 1 public high school (Deniliquin HS) and 1 independent K-10 school (Deniliquin Christian School). It has a TAFE NSW Campus, which is part of the Riverina Institute of TAFE. Deniliquin is also the base for the NSW Department of Education South West Riverina regional office.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), which has been developed by Edward River Council, defines strategies and provides a planning framework to promote inclusion and equity for people with a disability, so they may fully participate in, and contribute to, social, business and community life. The DIAP will enhance and complement the existing service provision within the area.

## 3. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

### DEFINITION

In the context of the DIAP, 'disability' means a functional limitation or impairment, including cognitive, physical, mental, sensory and functional deficits, which may be present from birth, acquired by accident or illness or due to the process of ageing. The impairments or deficits may be substantial or seemingly minor, temporary or permanent.

### LEGISLATION

Direct service provision for people with a disability by specialist and mainstream services (both government and non-government) is underpinned by legislation and policy including but not limited to:

- [\*Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability\*](#)
- [\*Australian Government NDIS Act 2013\*](#)
- [\*Australian Government Aged Care \(Living Longer Living Better\) Act 2013\*](#)
- [\*NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977\*](#)
- [\*NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014\*](#)

## **Disability Inclusion Action Plan**

The most recent legislation and amendments reflect a shift towards the view that, while a disability may affect the way that a person interacts with others and their environment, it should not define a person and it should not limit their capacity to become an integral part of the community. Although the rights of a person with a disability have been defined as the same rights as those of all people since the early 1990s, it is understood that upholding these rights must include promotion of individual choice about what is important to them, universal access to services and facilities and inclusive communities where individuals can fully participate in social, business and community life.

These cultural and philosophical developments are embedded in the *Australian Government NDIS Act 2013* and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* which are complementary pieces of legislation dealing with funding of specialist supports and community responsibility and response respectively.

The *NDIS Act 2013* defines how reasonable and necessary supports are provided for all people with a disability. The Act is administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) which is rolling out the NDIS in 2017-2018.

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* promotes the view that 'inclusion' is not only a goal for service providers and public and private sector organisations, it is a responsibility of the whole community. It legislates for the rights of people with a disability to full participation in every-day life, with enhanced community connection, independence, empowerment and wellbeing. It is the role of local government through a **Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)** to promote and support inclusion in their communities.

The Edward River Council DIAP will have four (4) Focus Areas:

1. Positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Liveable Communities (including physical access to buildings and facilities, and transport)
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes (which is about availability and accessibility of information regarding services).

## **4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **ROLE OF COUNCIL**

Council's role in implementation of the DIAP will include

- ❖ **As Service Provider:** Council has a strong commitment to delivering the services needed by its communities, and ensuring that Council resources are responsibly managed. Council's role as a service provider aims to assist in building the long term health of the Shire.
- ❖ **As Leader:** Council acts as a role model for others, through its own actions, strategic organisational responses and way of doing things. In its dialogue with the communities and other stakeholders, Council can act to draw together diverse interests and strive towards attaining greater consensus on sustainable outcomes for the Shire.
- ❖ **As Advocate:** Council seeks to improve services, facilities and opportunities for the local government area by lobbying agencies and other levels of government. In discussions with others, there are opportunities to reinforce the local sense of identity and self reliance, and collaborate on achieving sustainability.
- ❖ **As Facilitator:** Council assists interaction amongst stakeholders, and forms strategic alliances aimed at promoting sustainability initiatives focussing on elements including social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance, which demonstrate positive ways of moving forward.

### **EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITY & PROJECT COORDINATION**

Edward River Council supports the development and implementation of the DIAP. The General Manager has delegated responsibility to the Manager, Environmental Services, for overall development of the DIAP and coordination of community consultation.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Edward River Council engaged **Strategy to Action** to carry out the development of the plan through facilitation of consultation, collation and analysis of results, identification of priorities, preparation of the **DIAP Report** (this report) and development of goals and actions for alignment with Council's Integrated Planning Framework.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for implementation and resourcing of the DIAP will be across all sections of Council as identified in **Function Mapping Section 5**. The actions and goals will be linked to the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program once these have been developed following the election of a new Council.

Integrated Planning and Reporting strategic objectives will address social, environmental, economic and governance issues which are identified by the community. The four focus areas for the DIAP may be positioned within those:

### IPR-themes

Social

Environmental

Economic

Governance

### Focus Areas for DIAP

⇒ Liveable communities Focus Area 2

⇒ Positive community attitudes and behaviours, Focus Area 1

⇒ Liveable communities Focus Area 2

⇒ Supporting access to meaningful employment, Focus Area 3

⇒ Improving access to services through better systems and processes,  
Focus Area 4

## 5. FUNCTION MAPPING-MULTI-DISCIPLINARY INPUT

	STAFF RESPONSIBILITY	FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE	PROVISION OF GOODS & SERVICES	INFORMATION DIRECTORIES	PARTNERS, AGENCY COLLABORATION	PLANS & POLICIES, BROCHURES, DOCUMENTATION	COUNCIL COMMITTEES	OTHER
	FUNCTION AREA: COMMUNICATION: Communication with residents, community, visitors; promotion of council projects, events and activities; internal communication.							
ASSETS	MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER			- Website - Other digital media applications - Newsletters	-	-	Deniliquin Promotion Advisory Group	-
POTENTIAL			-	Ensure event advertising includes information about disability access, toilets and parking	-	-	-	-
	FUNCTION AREA: PEOPLE AND SAFETY: HR, recruitment, promotion of wellbeing in the workplace							
ASSETS	MANAGER PEOPLE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE	-		Wellbeing campaigns/promotion		- EEO Policies - Recruitment policies and process - HR Policies		- Wellbeing training - Staff orientation

**Edward River Council**

	STAFF RESPONSIBILITY	FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE	PROVISION OF GOODS & SERVICES	INFORMATION DIRECTORIES	PARTNERS, AGENCY COLLABORATION	PLANS & POLICIES, BROCHURES, DOCUMENTATION	COUNCIL COMMITTEES	OTHER
POTENTIAL				Wellbeing campaigns could include information about inclusion and anti-discrimination		Review EEO policy to ensure that it promotes inclusive recruitment	- Access and Inclusion Committee (See Action Plan below) - Deniliquin Community Safety and Crime Prevention Advisory Committee	
	FUNCTION AREA: CUSTOMER SERVICE: Library management, customer service, administration office							
ASSETS	MANAGER PEOPLE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE					Customer service strategy		Customer service training
POTENTIAL			Risk management for events to include the access risks for people with a disability	Customer service staff have knowledge of disability services (or where to find it) and access to local tourism venues		Ensure strategy includes training for customer service staff in respectful and inclusive communication		

**Disability Inclusion Action Plan**

	STAFF RESPONSIBILITY	FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE	PROVISION OF GOODS & SERVICES	INFORMATION DIRECTORIES	PARTNERS, AGENCY COLLABORATION	PLANS & POLICIES, BROCHURES, DOCUMENTATION	COUNCIL COMMITTEES	OTHER
	FUNCTION AREA: TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Tourism maintenance of digital information; Website, community promotions, local business chamber, Local business training and seminars, township market schemes, Visitor information, external Council events, Gallery and exhibitions.							
ASSETS	MANAGER TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Visitor Centre	Visitor information	- Website, social media, links - Community promotions	- Chamber of Commerce - Local businesses	- Tourism brochures - Town maps	- Deniliquin Tidy Towns Committee - Memorial Park Users Advisory Committee - Deniliquin Community Garden Advisory Committee	
POTENTIAL				- Include inclusion as criteria in approvals and planning for events	-	-	-	
	FUNCTION AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: Roads, Activity Centres, Council buildings, building advice, compliance							
ASSETS	MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES		- Roads - Council buildings	Public Forums	Building advice		-	

**Edward River Council**

	STAFF RESPONSIBILITY	FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE	PROVISION OF GOODS & SERVICES	INFORMATION DIRECTORIES	PARTNERS, AGENCY COLLABORATION	PLANS & POLICIES, BROCHURES, DOCUMENTATION	COUNCIL COMMITTEES	OTHER
POTENTIAL			Audit of access to Council buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information about making businesses more accessible</li> <li>- Make Tradies' and Renovators Guide available</li> </ul>	Tradie's Advice for universal access			
FUNCTION AREA: ASSETS: Emergency management, road and asset inspections, engineering support, road safety, community traffic safety, bus shelters, disability/tactile maintenance								
ASSETS	MANAGER ENGINEERING AND ASSETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bus shelters</li> <li>- Tactile indicators</li> </ul>	Emergency management	Engineering support	Road safety, community traffic safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asset inspection schedules</li> <li>- Maintenance schedules</li> <li>- Maintenance policies</li> </ul>		
POTENTIAL		-			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information about road safety for people with a disability, including those using mobility scooters and/or mobility aids</li> <li>- Transport Forum</li> </ul>			
FUNCTION AREA: OPERATIONS: K&G construction and maintenance; footpaths and cycle paths; roadside furniture; open spaces; Sports Ovals; Public toilets; Playground; swimming pools; Council buildings								

**Disability Inclusion Action Plan**

	STAFF RESPONSIBILITY	FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE	PROVISION OF GOODS & SERVICES	INFORMATION DIRECTORIES	PARTNERS, AGENCY COLLABORATION	PLANS & POLICIES, BROCHURES, DOCUMENTATION	COUNCIL COMMITTEES	OTHER
ASSETS	MANAGER OPERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pedestrian ramps and crossings</li> <li>- Footpaths and cycle paths</li> <li>- Swimming pools</li> <li>- Public toilets</li> <li>- Playgrounds</li> <li>- Council buildings</li> <li>- Sports ovals</li> </ul>			Sports clubs	Management of sporting ovals		
POTENTIAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improvements to ramps and crossings</li> <li>- Public toilet improvement</li> <li>- Linkages for paths</li> <li>- Swimming pool improvements</li> <li>- Inclusive and safe playgrounds</li> </ul>			Collaborate with sports clubs/groups for an inclusion focus for sports participation and spectating.		Sports Council to include inclusion goals	

**6. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

A meeting with Council staff provided a basis for identification of functions and areas for possible improvement, also identifying strategies that are in place to improve access and inclusion throughout the Council area.

### ***Edward River Council***

In seeking to more fully understand and identify the barriers to inclusion and seek solutions, information and input was sought from stakeholders. An online and hard copy survey was distributed with a total 16 responses from people with a disability (3), carers (1), community members (9), service providers (3), sporting or leisure clubs (0).

A workshop for service providers was held on 28 February 2017, with 15 service providers attending. The group included health professionals, job agencies, specialist disability service providers. . A public forum on 27 February 2017 was attended by a good cross section of people with a disability, carers including parents of young children with a disability, interested community members and Council staff. 21 in all attended the public forums.

Drop in sessions were held on 28 February 2017, with people with a disability and carers, which provided an opportunity to drill down on some of the issues and seek suggestions for improvements.

In all 41 people have provided input in the identification of the barriers to full participation, including four (4) Council staff.

Stakeholder	Engagement Processes	Issues identified	Suggested Actions
<p><b>People with a disability and their carers and families:</b> Inform about DIAP and Council's role, Consult about barriers, Involve in determining priorities, Collaborate in setting priorities, Empower to provide feedback.</p>			
<p>People with a disability and Carers; interested community members</p>	<p>Community Forum-27 February 2017-8 participants</p>	<p><b>Attitudes and Behaviours:</b> Attitudes of people in customer service 'by-passing' or ignoring the person with a disability thereby reducing their independence and confidence, and limiting their choices.</p> <p>Motels and visitor accommodation advertise disability access, but it isn't really accessible. People don't realise how difficult a small lip on a pathway can be.</p>	<p>Education of community and businesses;</p> <p>Promote community as welcoming people of all abilities;</p> <p>Access Inclusion committee to promote/instigate inclusion awards.</p>
		<p><b>Liveability and Access:</b> access to pool, change rooms are inadequate, only wheelchair access to heated pool/hydrotherapy pool which is not always open (needs to be manned); Hydrotherapy pool too small; new steps into pool were not advertised.</p> <p>Access into shops; kerb ramps too steep; ramps into shops need rails; parking spaces not wide enough.</p> <p>Parks have limited access to public toilets, barbeque areas, seating, shade and playgrounds etc., because of the difficulty grassed and gravel surfaces are for people in wheelchairs, or using mobility aids.</p> <p>Some footpaths in town are in very poor condition and some streets don't have footpaths at all so that people in wheelchairs or mobility scooters use the roads which is a safety risk.</p>	<p>Unisex/disability/family change room.</p> <p>Council to consult people with a disability (Access Inclusion Committee?) during planning of new projects.</p> <p>Improve kerb ramps and crossings. PRIORITY</p> <p>'Connections' in public spaces-PRIORITY</p>
		<p><b>Employment:</b> Best practice by Council-lead by example.</p>	

Stakeholder	Engagement Processes	Issues identified	Suggested Actions
		<p><b>Systems and Processes:</b> Need to have information available in formats other than the website.</p> <p>Need to have information available for vision impaired, i.e. reasonably sized print, compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0</p>	<p>Link to community directory maintained by Intereach on Council website.</p>
<p>People with a disability and Carers, service providers</p>	<p>Surveys February-March 2017 Support person or carer 1  People with a disability: 5</p>	<p><b>Attitudes and Behaviours:</b> People with a disability lack confidence and may need some supports initially; Information regarding opportunities for participation in events and activities is not readily available.</p> <p><b>Liveability and Access:</b> Lack of suitable and affordable transport; inadequate amenities at facilities; inadequate disability parking; event organisers do not consider the physical needs of people with a disability.  Some roads and footpaths are very uneven; carpark behind Concept is very uneven and full of potholes. Visibility at some crossings is poor; Walking path along McLeans Beach needs to be clear of debris.</p> <p><b>Employment:</b> Job agencies have limited supports available; Skills and experience are not recognised</p>	<p>People can become more inclusive by: Talking to individuals.</p> <p>Local organisations could provide information that has caused concern and follow through.</p> <p>Footpaths generally in poor condition and need a lot of work; Several more disability parks needed at supermarkets and in CBD; Access from road to footpaths is not always smooth and can be tripped on; Could ramps be funded?</p> <p>Tourist operators do not understand the needs: Visitor accommodation including motels, hotels and caravan parks do not have adequate bathrooms; Parking bays not wide enough; Businesses need to understand people with a disability better.</p> <p>Businesses can be supported to employ people with a disability by: Consultation with individuals; Workplace conditions could be more flexible, with suitable access and transport arranged; mentoring and financial incentives for people to employ people with a disability</p>

## Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Stakeholder	Engagement Processes	Issues identified	Suggested Actions
		<p><b>Systems and Processes:</b></p> <p>Best way to find information is from an existing service provider; Tourist Information Centre, website, health professionals</p>	<p>Best ways to find information: In the local paper x 2 and on the radio; Access to the internet; Get information from my Doctor;</p>
<p><b>Specialist Disability &amp; Mainstream Providers:</b> Inform about DIAP and Council's role, Consult about barriers; Involve in determining priorities, Collaborate in making changes to ways that services are delivered</p>			
<p>Specialist and mainstream service providers</p>	<p>Service provider forum: 28 February 2017</p>	<p><b>Attitudes and Behaviours:</b> Organisations and clubs want to do the right thing, but they don't know where to start. People need to be able to get more information about the needs of people with a disability.</p>	<p>Council could partner with organisations like Kurrajong-Waratah to promote a mentoring program to support businesses.</p> <p>Access Inclusion Committee to include in terms of reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion awards</li> <li>• Oversight of implementation of DIAP</li> <li>• Identification of local priorities and 'connections' &amp; audits of open spaces to make links</li> </ul> <p>Training for Council staff "Look at it from my side";</p> <p>Council support for national awareness campaigns through existing processes such as Residents Newsletters.</p>
		<p><b>Liveability and Access:</b></p> <p>Kerb ramps are too steep; Difficult to find out which is the best way to go unless you have tried out lots of different ways.</p> <p>Pool facilities are inadequate; change facilities are appalling.</p>	<p>Identification of hot spots in areas of high use.</p> <p>Council to lobby for more accessible transport in preparation for the NDIS.</p> <p>Council approval for events to require information about access, and not just minimum. Risk Assessments for Council</p>

Stakeholder	Engagement Processes	Issues identified	Suggested Actions
		<p>Transport ok, but not enough wheelchair accessible transport and booking can be a rigmarole. Will be more difficult when the NDIS rolls out.</p> <p>Access to sporting and other leisure events is not always appropriate, and people do not know beforehand what it will be like.</p> <p><b>Employment:</b></p> <p>Most organisations, including Councils are pretty good about carer's leave.</p> <p>People need to understand and value the contribution that people with a disability can make. Focus on abilities.</p> <p><b>Systems and Processes:</b> Directory is not up to date.</p> <p>Information about tourist facilities including accommodation is not correct, disability access is not appropriate.</p> <p>Visitor/Info Centre does not have accurate up to date information because the businesses are not aware of the needs.</p>	<p>initiated events (e.g. Australia Day) to include the risk, that people with a disability may not be able to participate.</p> <p>Council HR team could liaise with High School careers advisors, and support team to identify opportunities for students with a disability for work placement within Council.</p> <p>The links and pathways including disability toilets could be included on the town map.</p> <p>Access and Inclusion awards could promote 'proper' disability access through advertising those facilities that met the target for full participation.</p> <p>Could a work placement/student do something like a disability audit for some areas?</p>
<p><b>Community members, businesses, social and interest groups and organisations, sporting and service clubs:</b> Inform, Consult</p>			
<p>Surveys February-March 2017</p>	<p>Interested Community members 7 Sporting or leisure club 0</p>	<p><b>Attitudes and Behaviours:</b></p> <p>Organisations and agencies do not recognise the skills that people with a disability may have; People with a disability may lack confidence.</p>	<p>People with a disability should inform people about their needs, communication is important; More information needs to be provided to organisations and businesses; Provide information through the media; People need to understand that</p>

## Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Stakeholder	Engagement Processes	Issues identified	Suggested Actions
			disability can cover a wide range of things, not just a particular issue; Education, Council-sponsored programs; State Government assistance.
		<b>Liveability and Access:</b> Inadequate amenities at facilities; Event organisers do not take the needs of people into consideration; lack of suitable and affordable transport; inadequate disability parking; lack of understanding about how people with a disability can be included; Some businesses do not cater for people in wheelchairs.	
		<b>Employment:</b> Job agencies have limited supports available; employers are unsure about how to modify a workplace; skills of people with a disability are not recognised.	Traineeships; government funding and more information needed; increased tolerance; thinking outside the square
		<b>Systems and Processes:</b> Health professionals, an existing service provider, internet/website or Council website.	Local media (newspaper and radio)
<b>Council staff:</b> Inform, Consult, Involve, Empower			
Helen Flisher – Human Resources/Risk Manager Steve Wilson – Projects/Assets Officer Ariane Fehring – Library Co-ordinator		<b>Attitudes and Behaviours:</b> Internal orientation for staff could include understanding of need for internal and external customers. Also promote an understanding that disability is not always visible. Creation of Access and Inclusion committee/group with Councillor and community representation. Audit of facilities and identification of priorities for physical access.	
		<b>Liveability and Access:</b> Kerb ramps may need to be reviewed in the Edward River Council area. 50-50 funding no longer available for kerb ramps (funding now managed by Transport NSW), but it is for pedestrian	

Stakeholder	Engagement Processes	Issues identified	Suggested Actions
<p>Julie Rogers – Manager Environmental Services</p>		<p>refuges. Refuges are 100% funded on State Roads. Retrofitting of tactile indicators is extremely expensive. Public buses have wheelchair access and lifts can be let down at bus shelters. Community transport funding is available for social activities for transport disadvantaged. Question over ADHC funding for transport for people with a disability with the introduction of the NDIS. Community transport drivers would be a good source of information in relation to disability parking, and access to various facilities/services.</p>	
		<p><b>Employment:</b> EEO policy and recruitment processes could be reviewed to ensure that people with a disability are encouraged to apply. There are very few job agencies that are available, and Council does not recruit through them as a rule. However personal relationships developed with service providers does provide an avenue for understanding Council’s application processes.</p>	
		<p><b>Systems and Processes:</b> Council’s website is currently being updated and will be more accessible. Development of a communication strategy to make information available in a variety of ways. Possibility for links on website to community directories maintained by external service providers.</p>	

## 7. PRIORITIES AND SOLUTIONS

### SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

Returned surveys and consultation meetings presented a clear picture of priorities with some suggestions and solutions. Information was gathered from local service providers, people with a disability and volunteers at the Visitor Centre and Heritage Centre. These volunteers were able to provide a good insight into the difficulties faced in these circumstances and had a highly developed understanding of needs and of the concept of inclusion.

**Attitudes and Behaviours:** A general lack of understanding of needs was identified, so that businesses would put in a disability ramp, but not think about access after the ramp. People say things like, “It doesn’t matter at the Golf Club because people with a disability don’t play golf” without understanding that if there is no access or suitable inclusion for a person with a disability, their whole family, or their group of friends misses out. And of course, people with disabilities do play golf. A woman whose mobility had become more limited said that she could no longer take her grandchildren to the playground because she was unable to make her way from her car to the playground, and there was no seat nearby for her to sit and watch the children. Priority was to raise awareness and for education of the community including businesses and tourism operators and encourage thinking about needs of people with a disability [ACTION 1.2] It is important for Council staff to understand what inclusion means to people [ACTION 1.3]. An Access and Inclusion Committee would be able to promote an understanding through some activities and provide information to Council about ongoing needs. [ACTION 1.1]

**Liveability:** Priorities were identified as kerb ramps and crossings, and links and connections so that people with mobility issues had a clear, unobstructed and smooth pathway to follow. [ACTION 2.1 & 2.2] Although there were lots of good paths, disability parks, and ramps, often the links were missing particularly in recreational and leisure spaces such as the beautiful parks in Deniliquin. There are some key public spaces that need to be improved [ACTION 2.4]. Many people found it difficult to get to the barbeques, to the playgrounds, to the public toilets because of the intervening surfaces of grass or rough gravel. [ACTION 2.4]. There is a need for some improvements to the pool facilities [ACTION 2.3]. Transport is an issue across the area for people with a disability to enable full participation [ACTION 2.5].

**Employment:** Council has an opportunity to be a leader in this area, by seeking opportunities for work placement for students with a disability and to ensure that their recruitment procedures do not discriminate against people with a disability. [ACTION 3.1]. Respondents were not aware of the incentives and supports available from mainstream employment agencies, and/or from disability employment agencies and more information about this would be beneficial to businesses and Council [ACTION 3.2].

**Systems and Processes:** Priorities were identified as supporting the maintenance of an up to date directory of services. Promote the provision of information about disability access at events and activities [ACTION 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3]. There needs to be better information available for tourists and visitors [ACTION 4.3].

## 8. ACTION PLANNING

### FOCUS AREA 1 DEVELOPING POSITIVE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role & Responsibility	Outcome	IPR Reference
<p>1.1 Facilitate the creation of an <b><i>Access and Inclusion Committee</i></b>, incorporating Councillor and community representation, with terms of reference to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of hot spots in relation to a connected pedestrian &amp; wheelchair accessible route through the main town areas</li> <li>• Provide advice to Council on ongoing improvements to public spaces for comprehensive access by people with a disability: e.g. barbeques, pool and pool facilities</li> <li>• Coordinate annual “Inclusion Awards” for businesses including tourism operators to promote best practice and raise awareness</li> <li>• Provide reports and feedback on the implementation of the DIAP and other Council projects</li> <li>• Collaborate in the development of an orientation program for Council staff, e.g. “Look at it from my side”</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>	<p><b>As Facilitator and Advocate</b></p> <p><b><i>Environmental Services, Infrastructure</i></b></p>	Access and Inclusion Committee created and approved as a Committee of Council, with relevant terms of reference.	SOCIAL & COMMUNITY
<p><b>Risk:</b></p> <p>a) Difficulty in recruiting membership with sufficient understanding of access and inclusion</p> <p>b) No funding allocation for Inclusion Awards</p>	<p><b>Rating:</b></p> <p>a) <b>HIGH</b></p> <p>b) <b>HIGH</b></p>	<p><b>Risk Management:</b></p> <p>a) Seek support for membership and recruiting from local service providers</p> <p>b) Allocate a Council contribution on an annual basis and seek local business partnership to support awards, or build into existing business awards event</p>		

## Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role & Responsibility	Outcome	IPR Reference
1.2 Provide incentives and support for inclusive and socially connecting activities through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including criteria for inclusion into approval for events using Council facilities</li> <li>Including risk management for lack of access at events provided by Council</li> </ul>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>As Provider and Leader</b>  <b>Communications and Engagement, People and Customer Service</b>	Approval application documents have been amended to include 'inclusion' criteria  Risk management forms for Council-organised events include 'lack of access for people with a disability' as an identified risk.	SOCIAL & COMMUNITY
<b>Risk:</b> a) Risk management items may be seen as difficult or incur unforeseen cost		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>MOD</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Identify ways to reduce risk that is reasonable and practical and aligns with existing risk management practices	
1.3 Incorporate an understanding of the needs of people with a disability and inclusion into orientation for Council staff	<b>High</b>	<b>As Provider</b>  <b>People and Customer Service</b>	Orientation program and relevant policies include requirement for 'inclusion' by Council staff	
<b>Risk:</b> a) Staff may be resistant as they may not see it as their area or responsibility		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Promote inclusion across Council at every opportunity, so that it becomes part of Council's culture; encourage staff to discuss inclusion as a fundamental value of Council operations	

\*In seeking to allocate a risk rating, reference is made to the Hierarchy of risk<sup>1</sup>. **The risk may relate to outcome of the strategy i.e. the outcome not being achieved, or to** Council as a financial risk, a legal or industrial liability, WHS risk, or risk to Council's reputation.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix 3

FOCUS AREA 2 CREATING LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role & Responsibility	Outcome	IPR Reference
2.1 Creation of Access and Inclusion Committee-see above.	<b>High</b>	<b>As Facilitator and Advocate</b>	As above	SOCIAL & COMMUNITY
<b>Risk: As above</b>		<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b>	
2.2 Incorporate those kerb ramps and crossings that have been identified as high risk and high use into works programs.	High	<b>As Provider</b>  <i>Infrastructure</i>	Works and/or maintenance programs and budgets identify kerb ramp and crossing upgrades OR  Four year strategic plan for kerb ramp and crossing upgrades	ECONOMIC
<b>Risk:</b> a) Implementation costs are not included in budget b) There may be an injury or accident and liability to Council if issue not addressed		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b> b) <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) and b) Prioritise according to safety risk and level of usage and include those in budget allocations for works and maintenance	
2.3 Review and audit access and facilities at the Swimming Pool and develop a plan for upgrades to ensure best possible access by all people within four (4) years.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>As Provider</b>  <i>Operations</i>	Strategic plan developed for upgrades to swimming pool and its facilities.  Budget allocated for staged improvements OR Funding applications submitted for improvements	SOCIAL & COMMUNITY
<b>Risk:</b> a) Cost is not feasible within budget b) Upgrades may not meet requirements		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b> b) <b>MOD</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Careful planning and concept designing which can be used for budget allocations and/or submissions for external funding b) Ensure plans comply with Australian Standards, AND consult with local pool users	
2.4 Review and audit access to key local public spaces so that people of all abilities can enjoy and participate at the facilities. Develop a works plan prioritising upgrades which can be completed within four (4) years. Identify need for and seek external funding for the most important. Utilise advice and recommendations from <i>Access and Inclusion Committee</i> as evidence base for	<b>Medium</b>	<b>As Provider</b>  <i>Infrastructure</i>	Strategic plan developed for improvements for key public spaces which incorporates priorities for inclusion and full participation.	SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

**Disability Inclusion Action Plan**

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role & Responsibility	Outcome	IPR Reference
external funding. Links and connections must be considered.				
<b>Risk</b> a) Cost outside budget allocations		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Develop a costed long term plan and allocate budget accordingly, with opportunities for external funding applications if required.	
2.5 Participate and support a regional Transport Forum which will identify local transport gaps and needs and seek solutions through coordination, cooperation and advocacy by Councils to both Victorian and NSW State governments.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>As Facilitator and Advocate</b>  <i>Economic and Business Development</i>	Participation in regional Transport Forum annually by relevant Council staff with support provided for this forum.	ECONOMIC
<b>Risk:</b> a) Forum not well attended or supported		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Develop a core of support initially of transport providers and key community members, and promote the idea within Council with a Council report	

FOCUS AREA 3 SUPPORTING ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role & Responsibility	Outcome	IPR Reference
3.1 Liaise with High School Careers Advisor and/or Special Education officer to identify opportunities for work placement for students with a disability	<b>Medium</b>	<b>As Leader</b> <i>People and Customer Service</i>	2 x meetings held with High School Work placement opportunity identified	GOVERNANCE
<b>Risk:</b> a) May be difficult to find suitable placement for student with a disability		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>MOD</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Consider a work placement as a contribution by Council rather than 'cheap labour', ensure that the relevant staff have time to plan for the placement, and recognise the value of the process to Council staff	
3.2 Lead by example and identify opportunities to employ people with a disability through liaison with employment agencies.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>As Leader</b> <i>People and Customer Service</i>	2 x meetings held with employment agencies	GOVERNANCE
<b>Risk:</b> a) Suitable positions not available		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Consider redesigning positions or parts of positions to provide opportunities for people with a disability; seek support for worksite modifications and relocation	

**Disability Inclusion Action Plan**

**FOCUS AREA 4 IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES THROUGH BETTER SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role & Responsibility	Outcome	IPR Reference
4.1 Council policy to promote/support in Resident's Newsletter or other existing avenues, any awareness raising national campaigns e.g. Autism Awareness Week	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Provider and/or Facilitator</b>  <i>Communications and Engagement Officer</i>	Five (5) campaigns identified and promoted annually	SOCIAL & COMMUNITY
<b>Risk:</b> a) Minimal		<b>Rating:</b> N/A	<b>Risk Management:</b> N/A	
4.2 Provide links to service directories on Council's website; work with <i>Intereach</i> to support maintenance of up to date information.	<b>High</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>  <i>Communications and Engagement Officer</i>	Discussion held with <i>Intereach</i> CEO regarding opportunities for collaboration and Council support for service information.  Links available on website	SOCIAL & COMMUNITY
<b>Risk:</b> a) Difficulty of maintaining current information		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Allocate appropriate resources within the responsible position, so that supports can be provided	
4.3 Ensure staff know where to find information and can direct people to the source. Visitor Information Centre, Library Services, Administration Customer service.	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Provider</b>  <i>People and Customer Service, Communications and Engagement Officer, Team Leader Library Services</i>	Staff have been trained to be able to find information.	ECONOMIC
<b>Risk:</b> a) Difficulty of finding information and disseminating it		<b>Rating:</b> a) <b>HIGH</b>	<b>Risk Management:</b> a) Allocate responsibility and resources so that this will happen	

**Edward River Council**

<p>4.4 Promote information about disability access when events and activities are advertised, approved or promoted by Council</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>	<p><b>Provider</b>  <i>Communications</i></p>	<p>Continued improvements to information available at the Library and Visitor Centre regarding service information, and accessibility of local events, activities, venues, sites and open spaces.</p>	<p>SOCIAL &amp; COMMUNITY</p>
<p><b>Risk:</b> a) Difficulty in making sure information is available and accurate</p>	<p><b>Rating:</b> a) <b>MOD</b></p>	<p><b>Risk Management:</b> a) Ensure relevant staff are aware of their responsibility in this regard</p>		

**REPORTING**

The Annual Report will include information on achievement of goals as outlined in the Annual Operational Plan. Reporting on the Operational Plan and Delivery Program is carried out six-monthly and adopted by Council.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Providing and enhancing inclusive and supportive communities, infrastructure, employment and services are priorities of Edward River Council. By engaging and consulting with key stakeholders such as those with a disability, their carers, service providers, sporting and leisure clubs, interested community members and council staff, this report has endeavoured to identify and prioritise areas of concern for people with a disability, and for their carers.

Incorporating these priorities in a planning framework enables Council to direct limited resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for people with a disability and the community as a whole. The Action Plan which has been developed will be monitored and reported on annually, as part of Council's Annual Report.

## APPENDIX 1 DIAP SURVEY



## DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN SURVEY

Edward River Council is developing a **Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)**, with the objective of ensuring that people with a disability have every opportunity to fully participate in the social, community and business life of Deniliquin and the surrounding area, towns and villages. The DIAP will have four (4) Focus Areas: 1. Positive community attitudes and behaviours; 2. Liveable Communities; 3. Supporting access to meaningful employment; 4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes.

**Are you or do you represent:** (Tick which applies)

- A person with a disability       Carer or family member  
 Specialist disability service provider       Mainstream service provider  
 Local business or organisation       Sporting, Leisure, Club       Community member

**Focus Area 1** What are some of the barriers that are faced by people with a disability seeking to participate in community life?

- Organisations and agencies do not recognise the skills that people with a disability can bring  
 People with a disability may lack confidence and find it difficult to participate without some initial supports  
 Information regarding opportunities for participation is not readily available

How can local organisations and the community in general, become more inclusive?

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**Focus Area 2:** What barriers are faced by people with a disability in accessing places, events, activities and programs in your community? (tick as many as you like)

- Lack of suitable and affordable local transport  
 Inadequate amenities at facilities  
 Event organisers do not take into consideration the physical needs of people with a disability  
 Inadequate disability parking

Are there some locations or events that could be improved in terms of access? If so in what way?

**Disability Inclusion Action Plan**

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Are there locations where footpaths and pedestrian crossings could be improved?

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**Focus Area 3** What difficulties are faced by people with a disability when looking for work? (tick as many as you like)

- Information about jobs is not readily available in appropriate formats
- Job agencies have limited support available for people with a disability seeking work
- Employers are unsure about how to modify a worksite or the job to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability
- Employers and/or local organisations seeking volunteers do not recognise the skills and experience of people with a disability

What are some ways that businesses and organisations can be supported to employ people with a disability?

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**Focus Area 4** Where do you generally find information about services for people with a disability?

- On the internet
- Edward River Council website and directory
- Other directory
- In the local paper
- From an existing service provider
- From a health professional (doctor or nurse)

What would be the best way for you to be able to find information about services or things that are happening around the region?

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Anything else that you would like to see as a priority for people with a disability to participate in everyday life?

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**Would you like to be involved in a forum where some of these issues can be addressed and solutions can be worked out?** Yes  Nb

**If you wish to be involved, please provide your name and contact details:**

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## APPENDIX 3 HIERARCHY OF RISK MATRIX

	<b>Consequences</b>				
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Catastrophic</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Insignificant</b>
<b>Almost Certain</b>	EXTREME	EXTREME	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE
<b>Likely</b>	EXTREME	EXTREME	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
<b>Possible</b>	EXTREME	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
<b>Unlikely</b>	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	LOW
<b>Rare</b>	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW	LOW	LOW

# APPENDIX 4

## CONSULTATION ADVERTISEMENT



### **Disability Inclusion Action Planning.**

In accordance with the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, the NSW Government is committed to disability inclusion in order to build a strong and equitable community.

The NSW Government supports the fundamental right of all people to make choices about how they live their lives, to access opportunities and enjoy the benefits of living and working in our society. Sometimes this can be difficult for people with a disability because of a lack of understanding by individuals and organisations, the physical difficulties of getting to and into places, finding employment that takes their special needs into account, and getting information they need.

Edward River Council is developing a **Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)** which aims to provide strategies and a planning framework for achieving these goals.

The Plan will have the objective of ensuring that people with a disability have every opportunity to fully participate in the social, community and business life of the Edward River Council area.

In the context of the DIAP, we are not just looking at people with a diagnosed or permanent disability, but anyone in the community for whom there are barriers to achieving full participation, whether these are the result of physical, cognitive or sensory disability, mental health, chronic illness or ageing.

Council will be seeking information and feedback from a range of sources during February-March through widely distributed surveys. In addition, Council's consultants, Strategy to Action, will be working with disability groups and individuals as well as service providers, to gain more detailed information about how best to continue to break down barriers for people with a disability.

For further information about this process contact Julie Rogers at Edward River Council [julie.rogers@edwardriver.nsw.gov.au](mailto:julie.rogers@edwardriver.nsw.gov.au) or Robyn Condon at Strategy to Action [robyn@strategy2action.com.au](mailto:robyn@strategy2action.com.au) 0429848765