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## **GUNNEDAH SHIRE DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2017-2021 ENHANCING ACCESS: CULTIVATING INCLUSION**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

In presenting this document to the community, Gunnedah Shire Council would like to acknowledge the Kamilaroi Aboriginal Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and in doing so, Council pays its respect to all Elders past and present as well as to the young Indigenous leaders of tomorrow.

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR MAYOR**

Dear residents of Gunnedah and surrounding communities,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 *Enhancing Access: Cultivating Inclusion*.

The Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan articulates Council's priority actions to enhance access and participation for all over the next four years, and provides us with an opportunity to assist our residents and visitors to actively engage with, and contribute to, the diverse fabric of our community.

In developing this Plan, Gunnedah Shire Council recognises the value of creating and fostering a strong, vibrant and welcoming community and is committed to becoming both a champion and advocate for accessibility and inclusion. Council's commitment and resolve to deliver on this Plan is further complemented by the actions within the Gunnedah Shire Community Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and associated performance measures embedded in our Operational and Delivery Plans.

The Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 is relevant to all areas of our operations and we look forward to continuing our conversations with the community, and in particular people with disability and their carers, in order to maximise the potential that this Plan provides.

Jamie Chaffey  
Gunnedah Shire Mayor

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## **SECTION 1: ENHANCING ACCESS, CULTIVATING INCLUSION**

### **Our Statement of Commitment**

Gunnedah Shire Council recognises that people with disability are valued members of our community and we are committed to fostering a community in which people with disability and their carers live with optimum quality of life, independence and participation, and where the equal participation, access, rights and equity principles of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* are respected.

### ***Our Vision for an Inclusive Community***

To be recognised as both an advocate and champion for the rights of people of all abilities in our community ensuring all of our residents are treated equally and respectfully and have opportunities to enjoy the benefits of full participation in a caring, proud, prosperous and inclusive community.

### ***Our Actions to Achieve this Vision***

- Deliver an organisational culture which fosters fairness and equity and strives for continual improvement in the provision of its works and services for all its residents and visitors, including those with disability
- Promote, advocate and champion the equal rights and participation of people with disability in the Shire
- Enhance our amenities and infrastructure to support best practice Principles of Universal Design
- Engage people with disability and their carers to support a continuous improvement and best practice approach to access
- Identify and remove barriers which exist to reduce access to and usage of Council's resources, services, events and facilities
- Create meaningful opportunities for persons with disability to obtain and maintain employment within Council **and the community**
- Identify and provide opportunities for our staff to access and complete training that increases their capacity to deliver a level of customer service that acknowledges the diversity of our Shire's residents
- Foster a person-centred approach to feedback and complaint handling across our service areas

## SECTION 2: OUR LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

### Defining Disability

The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) defines "disability", in relation to a person, as:

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

### Defining Discrimination

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the grounds of disability in work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and the provision of goods, facilities, services and land and promote community recognition and acceptance of the equal and fundamental rights of people with disability.

**Direct discrimination** occurs when a person with disability is treated less favourably because of their disability than another person who does not have a disability where the circumstances are the same or not materially different.

*Example: A bus or taxi driver refused a customer because they were accompanied by an Assistance Animal*

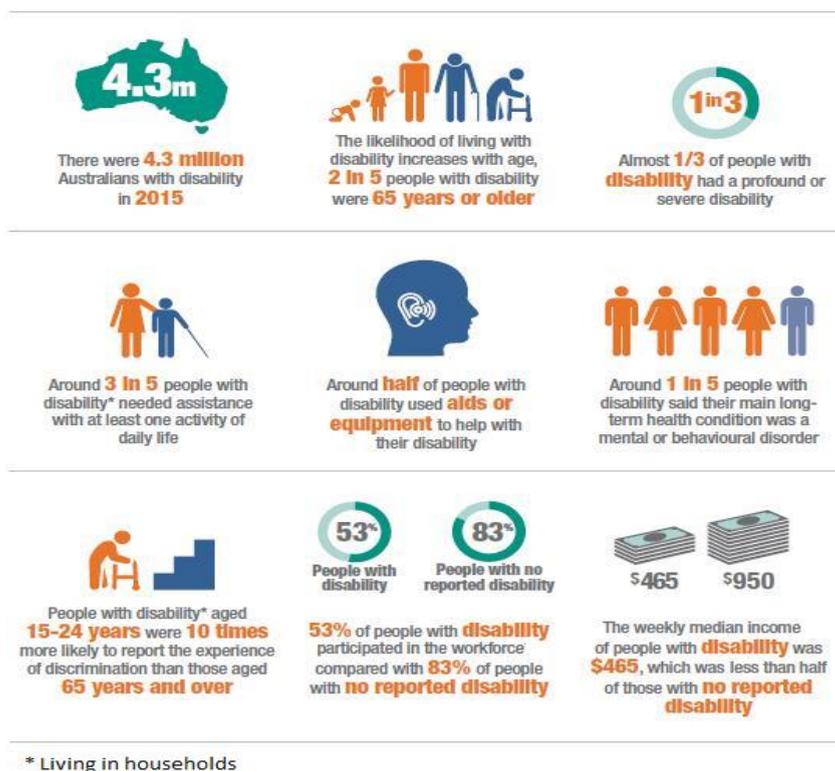
**Indirect discrimination** occurs when a person with disability is required to comply with a requirement that can be complied with by a substantially higher proportion of people without the disability, the requirement is not reasonable in the particular case, and the person with a disability is unable to comply with it. This means that "treating everyone the same" may be discriminatory.

*Example: Council holds a community engagement forum in a venue where access is only possible via a set of stairs. As a result people with disability who use wheelchairs or those who have mobility issues were unable to attend or participate.*

## The Case for Inclusion

The disability prevalence rate in Australia has remained relatively stable over time, with 18.3% of people reporting disability in 2015, and 18.5% in 2012 and 2009. In the 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) a person has disability if they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. A person with disability may face challenges accessing and participating in community life and as a result it is not uncommon for many to experience social and economic isolation.

Refer Figure 1 Below: A Profile of people living with disability in Australia in 2015



(Source: SDAC - 2015 Survey of Disability Aging and Carers)

## Experience of Discrimination for People with Disability

- Almost one in twelve Australians with disability (281,100 people or 8.6%) reported they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their disability.
- Rates of reported discrimination were similar for men (8.3%) and women (8.9%).
- Young people with disability (aged 15-24 years) were more likely to report the experience of discrimination (20.5%) than those aged 65 years and over (2.1%).
- The source of discrimination was an employer for almost half of those aged 15 to 64 years with disability who were unemployed (46.9%) or employed full-time (46.2%) and just over one third (34.6%) of those employed part-time, at the time of the survey.
- Over one third (35.1%) of women and over one quarter (28.1%) of men aged 15 years and over had avoided situations because of their disability.
- Older people (aged 65 and over) were less likely to avoid situations because of their disability (20.1%) than younger people.

## Related Legislation and Standards

In 2008, the Australian Government committed to implementing The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which recognised that people with disability have the same human rights as those without disability, and committed all layers of government:

*“to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”*

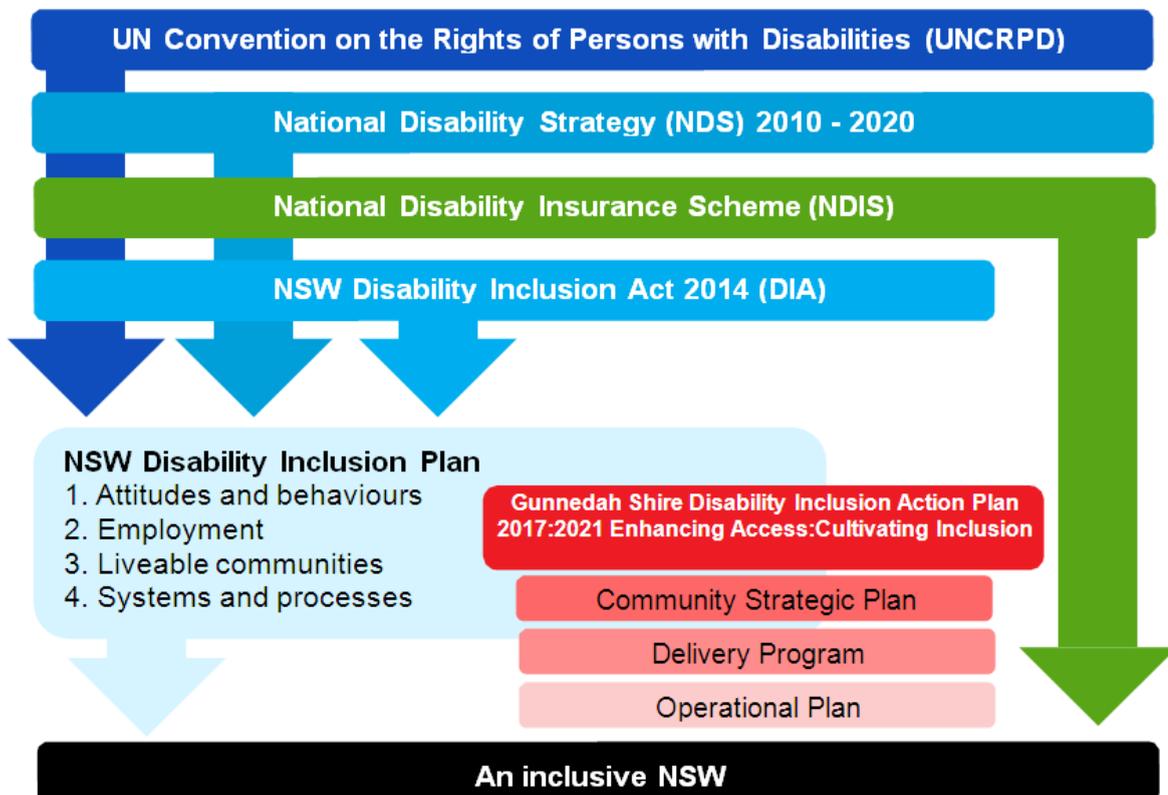
### Commonwealth Context

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

### NSW Context

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Disability Inclusion Act (DIA) 2014
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA)

Figure 2 Below: Demonstrates the relationships between the relevant policy and legislative instruments that inform the development of local government disability access and inclusion planning.



(Source: NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines Local Government)

## Access Standards

- AS 1428.1-2009 Design for access and mobility Part 1 - General requirements for access to buildings
- AS 1428.2-1992 Design for access and mobility Part 2 - Enhanced and additional requirements - Buildings and facilities
- AS 1428.3-1992 Design for access and mobility - Requirements for children and adolescents with physical disabilities
- AS/NZS 1428.4.1:2009 Design for access and mobility - Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment - Tactile ground surface indicators
- AS 1428.5-2010 Design for access and mobility - Communication for people who are deaf or hearing impaired
- AS/NZS 2890.6-2009 Parking facilities Part 6: Off-street parking for people with disabilities
- Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2010
- Guideline for promoting compliance of bus stops with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)
- Disability (Access to Premises Standards – Buildings) Standards 2010 NSW

# NSW Local Government Integrated Planning Framework

## NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 provides the legislative framework to guide state and local government disability inclusion and access planning.

The Act supports people with disability to access the same human rights as other members of the community regarding independence, choice and control in the pursuit of their goals, and the planning and delivery of their supports and services.

S.12 (3) of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires each local government area to prepare a Disability Inclusion Action Plan and outline the strategies it will adopt to cultivate social and economic inclusion in their community.

The ~~Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan~~ is effective 01 July 2017 to 30 June 2021 and addresses four (4) key focus areas:

- One: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- Two: Creating liveable communities
- Three: Supporting access to meaningful employment
- Four: Improving access through better systems and processes



Figure 3 Above: Local Government Integrated Planning and Review Cycle (Source: NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines Local Government)

## SECTION 3: WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE?

### Our Community

Gunnedah Shire is located in the Northern Inland Region of NSW, covers an area of 500,083 hectares (5,001 km<sup>2</sup>) and is bordered by the Tamworth Regional Council and the Shires of Liverpool Plains (Quirindi), Narrabri and Warrumbungle (Coonabarabran). The Shire sits at the southern end of the Nandewar Range and lies within the upper catchment area of the Namoi River. By road Gunnedah is approximately 450 kilometres from Sydney, 655 kilometres from Brisbane and just over 1,000 kilometres from Melbourne.

Gunnedah Shire has its own airport and is serviced by Tamworth Regional Airport, which has frequent flights to Sydney and Brisbane. The Shire is easily accessible to main highways and lies on the North West (Country-Link) rail line which runs daily rail passenger services to Newcastle and Sydney.

The Shire has twenty four (24) rural localities - Basin Plain, Bluevale, Boggabri (part), Booroondarra, Burburgate, Carroll Gap, Coccooboonah, Ghoolendaadi, Gulligan, Gunnembene/Crossing, Keepit, Kurrumbede, Marys Mount, Meermaul, Milroy, Mornington, Nea, Noggabri, Orange Grove, Pialloway, Pullaming, Rangari, Watermark and Willala. There are also seven (7) small villages – Breeza, Carroll, Curlewis, Emerald Hill, Kelvin, Mullaley and Tambar Springs.

The Gunnedah township is the service hub of the Shire with 55.4% of the Shire's population (7,888 people) living within the Gunnedah urban area. 12% (1,452 people) reside in the immediate surrounding rural area. (Source: ABS 2011)

### Our Demographics

- In 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples comprised 11.3% of the Shire's population compared to the NSW average of 2.5% and national average of 2.5%
- In 2011, 89.2% of our Shire's residents were born in Australia. The most common countries of birth were England 1.1%, New Zealand 0.6%. China (excludes ARS and Taiwan) 0.2%, Scotland 0.2% and Philippines 0.2%. The most common ancestries in the Gunnedah Shire in 2011 were Australian 37.6% (1st and 2nd generation), English 30.5%, Irish 8.8%, Scottish 7.6%, and German 3.2%
- In 2011, our median age was 40 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 21.1% of the population compared to 19.2% NSW and people aged 65 years and over made up 18.3% of the population compared to 14.7% NSW. 6.9% were aged 15-19 compared to the state average of 6.4%

## Our Disability Profile

- In 2011, 591 (4.6%) of people, of all ages, in the Gunnedah Shire were living in the community with profound or severe disability
- In 2011, 591 people (4.6%) of people of all ages, in the Gunnedah Shire reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to a disability, compared with 5.8% for Regional NSW (an increase of 59 since 2006)
- In 2011, 4.7% of Aboriginal people were living in the Gunnedah Shire with profound or severe disability
- In 2011, 88.6% of people identified as not needing assistance compared to 89.0% in regional NSW (an increase of 255 since 2006)
- In 2011, 6.5% of people did not state as needing assistance with core activities compared to 5.2% for regional NSW (an increase of 254 since 2006)
- In 2011, 1078 (11.3%) people aged 15+ years were providing unpaid assistance to persons with disability
- In 2011, 81 people were providing unpaid assistance to Aboriginal people with disability
- In 2016, 531 NSW Mobility Parking Scheme Permits were issued in Gunnedah as at 31 December 2016 (509 Individual, 11 Organisation, 11 Temporary)

## Our Council

In 2017 Gunnedah Shire Council recorded a workforce of 171 full time equivalent staff. 6.3% of the workforce identify as having a disability of some type and/or of caring for family with disabilities. The majority of our workforce resides in our Shire while a smaller portion resides in the adjoining Tamworth Shire. 9.39% of Council's employees identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in comparison to an average of 6.98% across other rural Councils in NSW. Culturally and linguistically diverse employees increased from .5% to 2.2% with 2.76% indicating English as a second language. 6.63% of our workforce has also indicated a need for additional literacy support.

Council operates from a range of locations, including

- Council Administration Building, 63 Elgin Street, Gunnedah
- Visitor Information Centre, 80 Chandos Street, Gunnedah
- Civic Cinema, Gallery and Cultural Precinct, 80 Chandos Street, Gunnedah
- Town Hall, Cnr Conadilly and Chandos Streets, Gunnedah
- Shire Library, 291 Conadilly Street, Gunnedah
- Shire Depot, Bennett Road, Gunnedah
- Waste Management Facility, Quia Road, Gunnedah
- GoCo, 80 Marquis Street, Gunnedah
- Sewage Treatment Plant, Kamilaroi Highway, Gunnedah
- Saleyards, Kamilaroi Highway, Gunnedah

## Key practices which support access and inclusion

- ✓ Council incorporates access requirements via the delivery of its Development Control Plan (DCP) and Local Environment Plan (LEP), Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, Building Code of Australia, Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), Premises Standard, Transport Standard, and numerous other pieces of legislation. Council's disability access obligations regarding Australian and NSW planning and development legislation are met
- ✓ Council is an Employer of Choice and promotes a safe, healthy and dynamic working environment
- ✓ Council delivers a range of programs and initiatives that focus on ensuring anew residents and families are welcomed in our community
- ✓ Council's commitment to providing and maintain~~ing~~ safe and serviceable public facilities and infrastructure including roads, footpaths is reflected in its Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 and **Strategic** Asset Management Plan
- ✓ **Council continues to engage trainees in the workplace in order to support the provision of career paths for the youth in rural NSW**
- ✓ Discriminatory terminology and language is not acceptable in our workplace and is not evident in employment documentation
- ✓ Merit selection panels reflect a balanced gender composition
- ✓ Staff are selected for higher duties based on their skill set and performance
- ✓ Council encourages staff to access to a confidential Employee Assistance Program for professional support.
- ✓ Conditions of employment include flexible working hours and arrangements with the capacity to seek approval to work from home
- ✓ Council convenes a Leadership Forum on a bi-monthly basis with access and inclusion topics a feature of the development program
- ✓ Council reconvened the Access Working Group in March 2017 to support the actions within the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, with the Working Group taking a key role in the ongoing implementation of the Plan.

Council documents which already support the principles embedded within the Plan include:

- Advertising Signage on Public Infrastructure Policy 2017
- Bike Plan 2017
- Communications and Media Engagement Policy 2015
- Economic Development Strategy 2014
- Employee Assistance Program
- Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan
- Flexible Working Arrangement Policy
- Footpath Occupation Policy 2016
- Harassment and Workplace Bullying Policy 2009
- Local Environmental Plan 2012
- Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan 2016
- Workforce Management Plan 2017-2023

## SECTION 4: WHAT WE HEARD YOU SAY – A SNAPSHOT

In order to develop the Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan, a robust community engagement process was implemented. Community engagement processes were delivered by Council's Community and Social Planner, and GoCo Community Hub Worker, with input from over 340 people including Councillors, Council staff, GoCo staff, individual members of the Access Working Group and Inclusive Playground Working Group, disability support sector, community service providers, people with disability and the residents within the broader Gunnedah Shire.

- ➔ Presentation to Council's Senior Managers Group
- ➔ Information Report to Council
- ➔ Dissemination of information to Village Hall Committees and Progress Associations
- ➔ Linkages with Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 Engagement Opportunities
- ➔ 1 x Inclusive Playground Survey (119 Participants)
- ➔ 1 x Community Inclusion Survey (31 participants)
- ➔ 1 x Employee Inclusion Survey (18 participants)
- ➔ 'Postcard to the Mayor'- Connecting Children to Council Project (14 youth with disability and their teachers)
- ➔ 2 x Community Workshops (25 attendees)
- ➔ 3 x Community Cafes (6 individuals)
- ➔ 22 x conversations with Disability Support Sector (58 individuals)
- ➔ 15 x conversations with Community Organisations (21 individuals)
- ➔ 17 conversations with People with Disability and their Carers (26 individuals)
- ➔ 12 conversations with Council Staff and Departmental Stakeholders
- ➔ 1 x Workshop with Councillors (7 attendees)

Feedback from our community, staff and Councillors indicated strong successes across all four (4) focus areas. Those participating in the consultations indicated support for the way in which Council interacted and engaged with people with disability, and acknowledged the significant inroads made by Council, over the past five (5) years into promoting access and inclusion.

While community satisfaction with Council's services in relation to access and inclusion overall was strong, employment and infrastructure rated as the two (2) key priority areas for enhancements. The consultation process highlighted the barriers that still remain for people with disability and their carers when accessing information and services, and when getting around our community.

Topics that featured heavily in our conversations with you:

- ✗ getting into local shops and businesses
- ✗ the width, design and connectivity of pathways
- ✗ gradients of footpaths
- ✗ pedestrian crossings
- ✗ accessibility friendly signage and tactile indicators
- ✗ accessible parking spaces
- ✗ physical access to venues and facilities, in particular parking and passenger drop-off points set down zones and the width of doorways
- ✗ access to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Council Administration and GoCo buildings
- ✗ cinema seating arrangements options for people with disability
- ✗ access to front of house and backstage areas in halls within the Cultural Precinct
- ✗ interpretive signage, sign language, interpreting and assistive technologies such as audio induction loops, captioning and audio-description services
- ✗ all abilities play equipment and recreational spaces
- ✗ access to long term employment opportunities

You recognised:

- ✓ the significant contribution that people with disability make to the diverse and vibrant fabric of our community
- ✓ that a wide variety of services in our community already contribute to enhancing access for all
- ✓ that there is a shared will in our community for our Shire to be welcoming and inclusive for people of all abilities
- ✓ that the Gunnedah Shire is a great place to live and raise a family, and that the community is a caring one
- ✓ the potential for Gunnedah Shire Council to become a champion and advocate for access and inclusion, not only in our Shire but at a regional level

You reminded us:

- ☆ that attitudes to people with disability should not be determined by fear or ignorance
- ☆ that embedding access and inclusion into the mindset of Council staff will be a key to delivering on the actions within the Plan
- ☆ of the need for further infrastructure enhancements to make it easier for people with disability to move around the Shire and to access events, activities and community life
- ☆ of the need for Council to collaborate with and provide incentives to the local business sector and the Gunnedah & District Chamber of Commerce and Industry to enhance access and participation opportunities within the Gunnedah Central Business District
- ☆ of the need for Council to ensure that information is made available to the public in an array of alternative formats and languages
- ☆ that access to designated disability parking and non-compliance is an important and ongoing issue for people with disability
- ☆ that employment opportunities for people with disability in our Shire are limited and focussed effort on increasing access to long term employment, traineeships, work experience and volunteering opportunities is a must
- ☆ that a collective effort is required to raise awareness within the community of the access issues faced by people with disability and their carers

## Our Scorecard Overall:

### *Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours*

- ✓ Council staff are respectful to customers with disability
- ✓ Council makes genuine efforts to consult with, and engage the community to achieve better service outcomes
- ✓ Council provides a range of direct services to support people with disability, the frail aged and their carers
- ✓ Council and GoCo websites comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2 (WCAG2)
- ✓ Council's regular page in the local paper is viewed positively
- ✓ Council's lifeguards provide good customer service and support people with physical disability to access the pool
- ✓ Council supports and promotes Gunnedah Sheltered Workshop's waste management and recycling service
- ✓ Council provides accessible meeting areas for community meetings, events and activities
- ✓ Areas within Council already actively promote, advocate and champion for the equal rights of people with disability.

### *Creating liveable communities*

- ✓ Council maintains its parks, gardens, playgrounds and sporting fields to a high standard
- ✓ Council's streets and paths are always clean and tidy ~~and the street sweeper does a great job~~
- ✓ Council makes genuine efforts to consult and engage the community to achieve better service outcomes
- ✓ Council implements the Companion Card Scheme in all of its venues
- ✓ Council utilises opportunities to reduce public expenditure by accessing grant funding, to accelerate infrastructure enhancement
- ✓ The allocation of alcohol free and alcohol prohibited zones has added to a sense of safety for members of our community who have disability or who are frail or aged
- ✓ People with disability have opportunities to access and participate in Council's services, events and programs.
- ✓ Library provides Brain Training to support people with intellectual disability
- ✓ Library now has large print book, audio, Bolinda and e-book collections, as well as a special computer and desk for people with visual impairments
- ✓ The Gunnedah Creative Arts Centre ~~inclusive of The Civic~~, has an access ramp
- ✓ Council has an active Youth Council with 14 members
- ✓ The services provided by Council, particularly in the areas of the Library, GoCo, Community Transport, youth, arts, culture, the cinema, community events and celebrations is valued
- ✓ GoCo Community Transport provides valued support for people with disability who are transport disadvantaged
- ✓ Council supports a strong portfolio of initiatives and events that reflect the diversity of our community i.e. AGQuip, Porchetta Day, Grandparents Day, NAIDOC Week, International Day of People with Disability
- ✓ The Inclusive Playground project at Wolseley Park is a positive and exciting one for the community
- ✓ The recently reformed Gunnedah Access Working Group will provide a valuable opportunity for Council to support access and inclusion efforts in our Shire
- ✓ A draft 'Missed Business Guide' ~~has been developed~~ by Council to support local businesses and The Chamber ~~to~~ **will** enhance inclusion and patronage of people with disability to their business

## Our Scorecard Overall:

### *Supporting access to meaningful employment*

- ✓ Council is an equal opportunity employer, ~~and has an Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan~~
- ✓ Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan incorporates appropriate measures to meet legislative obligations and other employment related responsibilities
- ✓ Council provides 'Valuing Diversity' training program to all staff and has included the content into its Induction Program
- ✓ Council encourages staff to access webinars and remote location training tools to build skills and knowledge
- ✓ Council encourages and supports staff to achieve a work-life balance and provides capacity for staff to connect to its systems via a remote access portal
- ✓ Council implements a 'no tolerance' policy for Workplace Bullying and Harassment
- ✓ Council staff are bound by a Code of Conduct to 'foster an environment that is respectful for all staff and customers
- ✓ Traineeships, work experience and volunteer opportunities are provided to people ~~with disability~~ of all abilities
- ✓ In 2017 at least 5 staff at Council identify as having disability. All said they are treated equitably and had encountered no barriers to their employment at Council.
- ✓ People with disability ~~are treated equitably when employed,~~ and have access to opportunities for career development.
- ✓ A policy of "reasonable adjustment" has been implemented in the workplace, with numerous examples of equipment being provided for individual staff members with a physical disability to assist them to perform their duties.
- ✓ Council routinely accommodates the learning and literacy styles of its diverse workforce through the provision of different training environments and access to specialist support
- ✓ Council delivers the Gunnedah Community Scholarship Fund to encourage young people to pursue university level education and to encourage their return to the Gunnedah Shire

### *Improving access to services through better systems and processes*

- ✓ Customer service locations are easy to access and staff are welcoming
- ✓ The community stated that Council customer service staff were helpful and treated people with disability courteously
- ✓ Council provides numerous 'have your say' opportunities to maximise feedback
- ✓ GoCo has a new website which meets accessibility requirements
- ✓ Council provides a number of ways to provide feedback, complaints and complements

Based on what you told us, Council will:

- 1.1. Take a leadership role in the promotion of diversity and inclusion principles within our community
- 2.1. Identify and remove barriers which exist to reduce access to and usage of Council's resources, services, events and facilities
- 2.2. Increase the inclusivity and accessibility of parks, playgrounds, sporting fields and riverine precincts through the Principles of Universal Design and infrastructure enhancements
- 2.3. Enhance opportunities for residents and visitors of all abilities to access the Gunnedah CBD Shopping Precinct
- 2.4. Increase and enhance visitor experience through the promotion of our Shire as a welcoming, inclusive community
- 3.1. Increase inclusive volunteer, work experience and long term paid work opportunities for people with disability
- 3.2. Provide professional development training and learning opportunities, to ensure managers and staff remain aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding access and inclusion
- 4.1. Deliver Council communications that are accessible to all
- 4.2. Support Council staff and other internal stakeholders to gain the appropriate knowledge and skills to engage effectively with people with disability

## SECTION 5: OUR ACTIONS

### FOCUS AREA 1: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

**Goal Promote positive community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability both internally and externally, and deliver an organisational culture which fosters fairness and equity in the provision of its works and services**

Strategy	Action	Internal Champions	Measuring Our Success	Timing	Budget
1.1. Take a leadership role in the promotion of diversity and inclusion principles within our community	Incorporate disability awareness training for new staff and Councillors	Access Working Group BSAG Manager GoCo Manager Communications & Cultural Services Manager Human Resources	Disability awareness training is included in the Induction Program  # of attendees	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Develop and implement training for relevant frontline engagement staff to better represent the reality of people with disability in media and other communication mediums.	BSAG Manager Human Resources Manager Communications & Cultural Services	100% of relevant staff completed training  Customer feedback on quality of content developed	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Provide Auslan training to frontline customer service staff to increase their capacity to engage effectively with people who are hearing impaired or deaf.	BSAG Manager Human Resources Manager Communications & Cultural Services	Key customer service staff are identified and attend basic Auslan training  2 community satisfaction surveys and 'pulse' checks conducted annually and results promoted	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Feature stories regarding disability access and inclusion in internal and external communications	Manager GoCo Manager Communications & Cultural Services Webmaster	4 items featured annually (Shire Flyer/all staff emails, GoCo Newsletters)	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Develop a shared library of appropriate and positive images for use in Council publications and strategic planning documents	Community & Social Planner Manager GoCo Manager Communications & Cultural Services Webmaster	Shared image library is developed and known to staff	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Develop a suite of documents, flyers and posters to support a disability awareness and education campaign for the broader community	Access Working Group Community & Social Planner Manager GoCo Manager Communications & Cultural Services Webmaster	# of documents developed  2 campaigns delivered annually	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Collaborate with community groups and disability support sector to promote positive attitudes towards people with disability i.e. disAbility Expo	Community Hub Worker Community & Social Planner Manager GoCo Manager Community & Cultural Services	# of media engagement activities delivered  # of accessibility focussed events supported	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework

## FOCUS AREA 2: COMMUNITY LIVEABILITY

**Goal Work to continuously improve accessibility, inclusivity and liveability within the Gunnedah Shire**

Strategy	Action	Internal Champions	Measuring Our Success	Timing	Budget
2.1. Identify and remove barriers which exist to reduce access to and usage of Council's resources, services, events and facilities	Engage with people with disability and their carers, to support a continuous improvement and best practice approach to access	Access Working Group GoCo Manager Communications & Cultural Services Councillors	Access Working Group provides Report to Council on achievements at least twice annually  # of compliments and complaints	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Incorporate information on local disability support services in new resident brochures and on Council's community directories and websites	Manager GoCo Manager Communication & Cultural Services	# of 'hits' on the 'access and inclusion' landing page  Community Directories contain information on the availability of local disability support services  Information on Gunnedah Shire Council community funding programs is accessible to all	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Review procedures and practices for events, activities and exhibitions held within the Cultural Precinct to ensure people with disability can exercise their right to access facilities, services and resources, both as audiences and as participants.	Arts & Cultural Officer Events & Venue Officer Manager Communications & Cultural Services Youth Development Officer	Accessible booking and ticketing options  # of patrons using Companion Cards  # of accessibility focussed events held  Information is available in accessible formats about the availability and accessibility of events and venues	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Develop an Inclusive Events Guide for internal and external use, inclusive of an 'Accessibility Checklist'	Access Working Group Events & Venue Officer Manager Communication and Cultural Services Webmaster	Guide developed and promoted to all clubs and associations funded by Council or using Council venues  Guide available on Councils website	Year 1	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Maintain the currency of the Shire's information in the National Public Toilet Map	Manager Public Facilities Community & Social Planner Webmaster	Public Accessibility Toilet Map current for our Shire	Annually	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Implement the use of the Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) system for accessible public toilets, and ensure information and locations are available to the public	Community & Social Planner Manager Public Facilities Webmaster	MLAK system implemented throughout the Shire	Year 1	Existing CSP/IPR Framework

Strategy	Action	Internal Champions	Measuring Our Success	Timing	Budget
2.2. Increase the inclusivity and accessibility of parks, playgrounds, sporting fields, poetry and riverine precincts through the Principles of Universal Design and infrastructure enhancements	Provide access to training on Principles of Universal Design and access standards to relevant staff, Councillors, as well as members of the Access Working Group and Inclusive Playground Working Group	Access Working Group Inclusive Playground Working Group Manager Building & Environment Manager Public Facilities Manager Works	# of training sessions delivered  # of attendees	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Undertake audit of existing hearing loops and assistive technology at Council facilities, including the Shire Library, customer service centres, Training Room, Council Chambers and The Civic cinema	Access Working Group Manager Public Facilities	# of Access Audits completed	Year 1 Annually	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Implement actions within the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2013-2022 to ensure footpaths, crossings, parks, public buildings, community infrastructure, village halls and other public places are maintained to safe and accessible standards	Access Working Group Manager Public Facilities Manager Works	Prepare a gap analysis of existing infrastructure  Feasibility Study undertaken to install Lift at the Council Administration building  Annual Report to Council	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Costings to be identified  Future Grants
	Undertake audit of Shires tactile and wayfinding signage at key venues	Access Working Group Manager Public Facilities	# of audits undertaken  Evidence of tactile signage at key venues	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Costings to be identified  Future Grants
	Seek opportunities to progressively upgrade older Council owned assets to meet Access to Premises Standards and relevant modern day best practice approach	Access Working Group <del>BSAG</del> Community & Social Planner Manager GoCo Manager Public Facilities Manager Works	# of grants sourced  # of enhancements made  Older buildings and venues are accessible to customers and clients in wheelchairs	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Costings to be identified  Future Grants
	Incorporate accessibility requirements when reviewing the Gunnedah Shire Development Control Plan (DCP) and Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	Access Working Group Manager Planning & Development	% of legislative obligations regard accessible infrastructure met or exceeded	3 Yearly	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	<del>Incorporate accessibility into all new public or business premises, including those being re-zoned for a change of use</del>	<del>Manager Planning &amp; Development Manager Building &amp; Environment</del>	<del>DCP and LEP implemented Disability legislation and standards obligations are met by Council</del>	<del>Year 1 Ongoing</del>	<del>Existing CSP/IPR Framework</del>

Strategy	Action	Internal Champions	Measuring Our Success	Timing	Budget
2.3. Enhance opportunities for residents and visitors of all abilities to access the Gunnedah CBD Shopping Precinct	Promote accessibility principles to local shops and businesses within the Gunnedah CBD and throughout the Shire	Manager Economic Development Community & Social Planner	# of interactions promoting accessibility to Chamber  #of compliments and complaints	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Promote Council's Section 356 Community and Sporting Small Grants Fund, to enhance local organisations capacity to access funding that increases opportunities for inclusion and infrastructure enhancements	Community & Social Planner Manager Economic Development Webmaster	# of inclusion focussed Section 356 received annually	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Utilise Council's Business Partner Program to build the capacity of local businesses to access funding to increase opportunities for inclusion and infrastructure enhancements	Community & Social Planner Manager Economic Development Webmaster	Business Partner Program Policy reviewed to incorporate Access Incentives , and program promoted to Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce and Industry  # of Business Partner Program applications received annually  Missed Business Guide finalised and made available to local businesses	Year 1 As required Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Review locations and infrastructure for designated access parking bays throughout Shire	Access Working Group <del>Manager Building &amp; Environment</del> Manager Planning and Development Manager Works	# of infringement notices issued  Signage installed and reflects enforcement	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Undertake access audits of footpaths, crossings, parklands, public buildings, community infrastructure, village halls and other public places for compliance and include priority recommendations arising from accessibility audit in the development of annual capital works program	Access Working Group Manager <b>Public</b> Facilities	# of Audits completed  Mobility Map developed	Year 1 Annually	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
2.4. Increase and enhance visitor experience through the promotion of our Shire as a welcoming, inclusive community	Design and build an Inclusive Playground within Wolseley Park	Access Working Group Inclusive Playground Working Group Manager Economic Development	Development of Concept Plan  Identification of potential funding partners and grant sources  Development of detailed design plans	Year 1  Ongoing  Year 2	\$10,000 allocated within existing CSP/IPR Framework  Costings to be identified  Future grants

### FOCUS AREA 3: EMPLOYMENT

#### Goal Create meaningful opportunities for people with disability to obtain and maintain employment within Council

Strategy	Action	Internal Champions	Measuring Our Success	Timing	Budget
3.1. Increase inclusive volunteer, work experience and long term paid work opportunities for people with disability	Establish a program to provide meaningful work placement and volunteer opportunities for people with disability	All Departments Manager Human Resources	Program developed and implemented. Number of people with disability completing placements.  Council's volunteer register reflects positions that support people with disability	Year 2 Ongoing	To be included in Year 2 funding cycle
	Investigate opportunities to support permanent engagement of people with disability within Council beyond traineeships and work placements	Manager Human Resources	# of permanent appointments of people with disability annually	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Review Council's recruitment processes to ensure both informal and formal barriers to employment of people with disability are removed.	Manager Human Resources	% of relevant policies reviewed and updated  # of people with disability employed by Council	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Develop and utilise accessibility statement for all job adverts	Manager Human Resources	% of job adverts containing Accessibility Statement	Year 1	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
	Investigate the use of an alternative online recruitment system that uses plain English and meets relevant standards (i.e. WCAG2.0)	Manager Human Resources Manager Information Services Webmaster	Meeting compliance for WCAG2.0 or relevant standard.  Options for online application system investigated and reported.	Year 1	Existing CSP/IPR Framework
3.2. Provide professional development training and learning opportunities, to ensure managers and staff remain aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding access and inclusion	Identify and provide opportunities for Council staff to access and complete training that increases their capacity to deliver a level of customer service that acknowledges the diversity of our workforce and Shire residents	Manager Human Resources Senior Managers Group	# training successfully delivered to all relevant existing staff  # training supplied through induction process to all new relevant staff	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing CSP/IPR Framework

## FOCUS AREA 4: SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

**Goal Provide a person centred approach to feedback and complaint handling across our service areas**

Strategy	Action	Internal Champions	Measuring Our Success	Timing	Budget
4.1. Deliver Council communications that are accessible to all	Maintain compliance of Council's website and intranet to relevant accessibility standards, (e.g. WCAG2.0)	Manager Information Services Webmaster	Website meets and where possible exceeds relevant standards  All new software and hardware procured demonstrate accessibility compliance	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing IPR Framework
	New or revised publications and brochures are available in an accessible easy to read format and large print versions are available	All Departments Manager Communications & Cultural Services Webmaster	People with disability can access Council's customer feedback and complaints processes  # of compliments and complaints	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing IPR Framework
	Incorporate strategies and measures into the Community Engagement Framework to increase opportunities for people with a disability to engage with Council	BSAG Community & Social Planner Manager Communications & Cultural Services Manager GoCo	Strategies and measures developed and included in Community Engagement Policy  2 community satisfaction surveys and 'pulse' checks undertaken annually and results promoted	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing IPR Framework
	Implement access to Telephone Interpreting Services in Councils customer service locations	Manager Communications & Cultural Services	# of compliments and complaints  # of customers accessing service	Year 1	Existing IPR Framework
4.2. Support Council staff and other stakeholders to gain the appropriate knowledge and skills to engage effectively with people with disability.	Maintain currency of GoCo website and the Access and Inclusion portal on Council's website	Community & Social Planner Manager GoCo Webmaster	Website information contains accurate and relevant information for people with disability	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing IPR Framework
	Provide professional development training opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge of access and inclusion	BSAG Manager Human Resources Manager Communications & Cultural Services Senior Managers Group	# of staff across all Council work areas who have attended disability awareness training during each financial years	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing IPR Framework
	Liaise with people with disability and the disability support sector to determine best practice approach to seeking input of Council systems and processes.	Access Working Group Community Hub Worker Community & Social Planner Manager Communications & Cultural Services Manager GoCo	# of compliments and complaints	Year 1 Ongoing	Existing IPR Framework

## SECTION 6: MAKING OUR PLAN HAPPEN

### IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN AND MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

#### **Endorsement**

- The Gunnedah Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 was placed on Exhibition for a twenty-eight day (28) period at the Gunnedah Shire Council Administration Building, Shire Library, GoCo and other customer service locations. Copies of the Plan were distributed broadly throughout the community to encourage robust discussion and comment. Feedback gathered within the Exhibition period was incorporated into the Plan prior to its final endorsement by Council.

#### **Document Champion**

- Staff across all areas of Council's business will be champions for access and inclusion. The Executive Management Team will be responsible for supporting appropriate strategies that relate directly to Council operations and facilities.

#### **Implementation**

- The responsible Directorate for monitoring the implementation and progress of this Plan is the Planning and Environmental Services Department. The Gunnedah Shire Access Working Group will support the implementation of the Plan through its bi-monthly meetings. The Community and Social Planner will take a lead role in the provision of relevant information to the Gunnedah Shire Access Working Group and to internal Council stakeholders, to enable members and Council staff to make informed decisions on future access and inclusion initiatives.

#### **Resources**

- The Plan was developed with consideration to the existing resources of Council and in the context of its integrated planning process. Some actions within the Plan have a focus on continuing to improve what Council does well and do not require additional funding. While other actions have a focus on enhancements. Consideration was given to the need for future and ongoing collaboration of internal stakeholders, and for the ongoing identification of additional funding sources, grant opportunities and partners.

#### **Communication and Media**

- Council will, utilise its resources to market the existence of the Plan to its internal and external stakeholders in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. A copy of the Plan will be provided to NSW Disability Council.

#### **Reporting and Review**

- Over the next four (4) years, the Plan will be monitored and evaluated via the performance measures listed within the Action Plan. A Progress Report will be provided to the Executive Management Team by 30 June each year, with key results to be included in Council's Annual Report. A Progress Report will be provided annually to NSW Minister for Disability Services. The Plan expires 30 June 2021.

## SECTION 7: APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Disability Inclusion Action Plan Checklist

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN CHECKLIST	TICK
<b>Planning</b>	
Have people with disability been consulted in the disability inclusion action planning process?	✓
Are there strategies and actions to provide access to buildings, events and facilities?	✓
Are there strategies and actions to provide access to information?	✓
Are there strategies and actions to support employment of people with disability?	✓
Are there strategies and actions to encourage and create opportunities for people with disability to access the full range of services and activities available in the community?	✓
Does the Plan use appropriate terminology that respects the dignity and autonomy of people with disability?	✓
Have you provided a report on your disability inclusion action planning consultation with people with disability to the Disability Council NSW?	✓
Do actions and strategies support the goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014?	✓
Has a copy of the disability inclusion action planning documentation been given to the Disability Council NSW?	Pending Post endorsement of the Final Plan
Is the disability inclusion action planning documentation publicly available?	✓
Has the Plan been provided in accessible formats?	✓
<b>Reporting</b>	
Is progress towards achievement of the action planning goals included in the Gunnedah Shire Council Annual Report?	Pending as per reporting cycle
Have FACS and the Minister for Disability Services been provided with a copy of the section of the Gunnedah Shire Council Annual Report that details implementation of disability inclusion action planning?	Pending Post endorsement of the Final Plan

## Appendix 2 – Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
AS	Australian Standards
Auslan	Australian Sign Language
BCA	Building Code of Australia
BSAG	Business Systems and Governance
CBD	Central Business District (Gunnedah)
Chamber Council	Gunnedah & District Chamber of Commerce and Industry Gunnedah Shire Council
CSP	Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027
DCP	Development Control Plan
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
DIAP	Disability Inclusion Action Plan
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
GoCo	GoCo (On the Go Community Care)
HR	Human Resources
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)
IPR	Integrated planning and reporting framework, incorporating Council's operational and delivery program and community strategic plan
LEP	Local Environmental Plan 2012
MLAK	Master Locksmiths Access Key system which enables people with disabilities to gain 24 hour access to a national network of public facilities/amenities
NSW	New South Wales
PAMP	Pedestrian Access and Mobility Map
PEDS	Planning and Environmental Services Department
PWD	People with Disability
Universal Design	Refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disability and people with disability.
SAMP	Strategic Asset Management Plan
SDAC	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2015)
The Plan	Gunnedah Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 Enhancing Access: Cultivating Inclusion
WCAG 2.0	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2

## Appendix 3 – Acknowledgements

The following documents and websites were consulted in the preparation of this document:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics collections on disability data  
[www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4430.0Chapter2002012](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4430.0Chapter2002012)
- Australian Government (2013), Social Inclusion in Australia: How Australia is Faring – 2nd Edition [www.socialinclusion.gov.au](http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au)
- Australian Human Rights Commission. [www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Discrimination Regulations 1996
- Disability Inclusion Act 214 – Overview of the Act , Family and Community Services, 2015
- Disability Planning across Local Government in NSW: Final Report 29 October 2013
- Gunnedah *Disability Action Plan*
- Gunnedah Shire *Bike Plan*
- Gunnedah Shire *Community Strategic Plan 2017:2022*
- Gunnedah Shire Council *Economic Development Strategy*
- Gunnedah Shire Council *Pedestrian Access and Mobility Map*
- Gunnedah Shire Council *Strategic Asset Management Plan 2013:2022*
- Gunnedah Shire Council *Workforce Management Plan*
- Gunnedah Shire *Open Space Strategy 2009*
- Gunnedah Shire Council *Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 2015*
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: Advisory note on streetscapes, public outdoor areas, fixtures, fittings and furniture, 2013
- Local Government NSW : Engagement tools and techniques, Information Sheet
- Local Government NSW : NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines
- Marrickville Council : *Missed Business Guide*
- National Arts and Disability Strategy, Cultural Ministers Council, 2009
- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Northern England Regional Development Board: Research Report on Aboriginal Employment and Enterprise in the Gunnedah Region for the Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009
- NSW Public Service Commission, *Disabling the Barriers*.  
[www.psc.nsw.gov.au/sector-support/equity-and-diversity/people-with-a-disability](http://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/sector-support/equity-and-diversity/people-with-a-disability)
- Windle, K, Francis, J. and Coomber, C. (2011), Preventing loneliness and social isolation: interventions and outcomes – research briefing 39, Social Care Institute for Excellence

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