



PENRITH
CITY COUNCIL

Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26

Engagement Outcomes Report May 2022

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Summary

This Engagement Outcomes Report summarises the feedback received from the community, Council staff, and the disability sector to inform the development of Penrith City Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2022-26.

There were two opportunities for the community to formally provide feedback.

Stage One: Initial Engagement

Stage One took place between 15 November and 20 December 2021. The community was asked "What would make Penrith more accessible?".

The community was encouraged to participate through various formats to make sure it was inclusive. Overall, 199 people viewed information on Council's Your Say page titled "Make Penrith More Accessible".

Approximately, 85 individuals participated in:

- Providing feedback online via Your Say Penrith (27 participants)
- Four community group conversations (24 participants)
- 27 one-on-one conversations (in-person and over the phone)
- Email (three participants, including one group response)
- Four interagency presentation discussions

Disclosing information about the type of disability was optional. Efforts were made to make sure Council heard from a range of perspectives. Of the feedback provided, approximately half was from people with lived experience, including carers, and the other half was from people from the disability sector.

From the stories shared, 13 key themes were identified. Feedback was themed according to the prescribed four Disability Inclusion Action Plan focus areas – attitudes and beliefs, liveable communities, meaningful employment, and systems and processes.

Community insights were combined with staff feedback to prepare the draft DIAP 2022-26.

Stage Two: Public Exhibition of the draft DIAP

Stage Two took place between 11 April and 10 May 2022 using a public exhibition process to present the draft DIAP 2022-26 for comment. Public exhibition is a formal process that supports the community to provide

feedback. Participants were asked to consider how the draft reflected what the community had previously identified in Stage One, identify any gaps in the work, and share their overall satisfaction with the draft actions.

Overall, there were approximately 70 respondents; 91% were satisfied that the draft DIAP responded to community needs and priorities.

In summary, the key areas of concern for the community remained consistent between what we heard in Stage One and Stage Two engagement.

Community priorities were as follows:

- **Improve accessible public transport and pedestrian movement around Penrith** — confidence in safely moving around the Penrith area and able to get where people both need and want to go.
- **Access to information** — in a range of formats.
- **Access to arts and recreation activities** — a range of no to low-cost arts and recreation activities close by that match interests.
- **Understanding of visible and invisible disabilities** — applying considerations in all areas of Council's work.
- **Accessible buildings and facilities across Penrith** — working towards all buildings being compliant with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Guidelines and best practice. Giving consideration to the placement of adult changing places.
- **Support in emergency situations** — importance of emergency information communicated in a variety of accessible formats, specifically visual communication and Easy English.
- **Meaningful employment opportunities** — Council's influence as an employer and advocate to local businesses.
- **Consistent inclusive customer service at local businesses** — ensuring everyone can access what local businesses have to offer.

In addition to confirming that overall the draft DIAP 2022-26 reflects community needs, three new areas of community interest were raised in Stage Two engagement. These include:

1. Understanding the experience and challenges of people living with cognitive disability who are involved in the juvenile justice system
2. Need for disability audit of youth services to improve access and inclusion
3. Safe access to waterways.

Responding to Community Feedback

All feedback received was considered and a summary was shared with all Council departments.

Overall, the community sentiment indicated that the draft DIAP 2022-26 strategies and actions were on track. The 15 strategies in the draft DIAP are proposed to remain as is. Council Officers used community feedback to strengthen several actions and added new actions to better reflect community needs and preferences.

Of the draft DIAP actions:

- 46 have no change
- 6 have minor changes.

The proposed final DIAP 2022-2026 will be reported to Council in late June 2022 for consideration. All people who provided their details will be contacted when the plan is finalised.

Penrith Council appreciates that the time during the development of the DIAP 2022-26 has been particularly challenging for people with disability, their carers, and the disability sector. There have been considerable stresses for our community, including the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters which have impacted on ability to engage. We will continue to engage community members throughout the implementation of the DIAP 2022-26 so that lived experience informs everything Council does to improve access and inclusion in Penrith City.

Background

Penrith City Council is committed to improving access and inclusion for residents of Penrith City and advocating for key stakeholders to adopt approaches that strengthen access and inclusion in their work. A more inclusive Penrith City helps everyone to lead independent and meaningful lives.

Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) are legislated by the NSW Government. These plans contribute to an “all of Government” response to improve access and inclusion outcomes. They provide all councils in NSW with a consistent framework for identifying, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating access and inclusion improvements over four-year periods. Section 12 of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 mandates that disability inclusion planning should be done in consultation with people with disability.

As a public authority, Council is required to meet legislated obligations stated in:

- **International:** United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008).
- **Federal:** National Disability Strategy, Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1993.
- **State:** NSW Ageing and Disability Commission, NSW Anti-Discrimination Act, NSW Government Sector Employment Act 2013, NSW Disability Inclusion Act .
- **Local:** Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Development Control Plan.

NSW councils are accountable to the Minister for Families and Community Services and must submit a progress report at the end of each financial year. The NSW Disability Council assists the Minister in reviewing DIAPs and provides advice on their success. The contents and structure of this work follows strict guidelines to ensure inclusion and consistency across all councils.

Penrith Council's DIAP

Council is preparing a DIAP for 2022-26 which will identify how to make Penrith more inclusive so that everyone can lead meaningful, independent lives. Across the next four years, Council will work with partners to maximise resources and improve outcomes in four areas:

- **Attitudes and Behaviours** — of the community towards people with disability, which may result in limiting access to employment and/or opportunities to contribute to social, economic, and cultural life.
- **Liveable Communities** — appropriate access to transport, housing, pathways, and recreation opportunities.
- **Employment** — increasing the quality and employment rates of people with disability.
- **System and Processes** — improving access to information, services, and support.

Stage 1: Initial Engagement

What Council Did

The Stage One engagement plan was shaped with the input of key stakeholders across Council to make sure communications and methods were tailored to community needs. How intersectionality compounds experiences of disability were front of mind in planning, for example, considering the experiences and impacts for a person who has a hearing impairment and is also Aboriginal.

Stage One engagement occurred from 15 November and 20 December 2021. The community was asked “What would make Penrith more accessible?”.

The opportunity for input was promoted in various ways, including:

- Council’s social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter)
- Media release sent to local media publications
- Local services via interagencies and direct contact
- Posters in Penrith City Library’s three library branches
- Community and disability sector organisations.

Feedback was invited via a range of methods, including:

- Online via Your Say Penrith (ideas wall and feedback form)
- Community group conversations
- One-on-one conversations (in-person and over the phone)
- Email
- Interagency meeting with key sector stakeholders.

Who Did We Hear From?

We know 199 people viewed information on the Your Say page titled “Make Penrith More Accessible”.

Overall, there were 85 participants across all methods who provided feedback in the following ways:

- Online via Your Say Penrith (27 participants)
- Four community group conversations (24 participants)
- 27 one-on-one conversations (in-person and over the phone)
- Email (three participants, including one group response)
- Four interagency presentation discussions

Disclosing information about the type of disability was optional and recorded in the participant's own words. Most participants were aged 35-44 (56% of respondents), three spoke a language other than English at home, and two identified as LGBTIQ+. 60% of participants live in Penrith and Cranebrook.

The following table summarises who provided feedback:

Point of view	Total participants
People with disability	21
Carers	18
Carer with disability	4
Disability workers / other	42
Total participants	85

Engagement occurred during November and December 2021, at a time when the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were still being felt in the community. Feedback suggests that this period was a difficult time for people living with disability to connect and this is reflected in participant numbers. Council acknowledges that there is further opportunity for engagement throughout the implementation of the DIAP.

Despite the challenges of engaging during a pandemic, many people who did provide feedback were passionate and enthusiastic to see improvements to access and inclusion in Penrith. Further engagement will be necessary to ensure the success of some projects; however, the feedback gathered during the Stage One engagement was valuable for understanding the challenges and preparing the draft DIAP 2022-26 to deliver a more accessible and inclusive Penrith.

What Did the Community Say?

From the stories shared, 14 key themes were identified. Feedback was themed according to the prescribed four DIAP focus areas. Approximately 41% of responses were about liveable communities, 27% were about Council's systems and processes, 16% of responses were about attitudes and behaviours, and 15% were about employment.

Key priority issues include:

- **Inclusive transport (public and private)** — enabling people living with disability to go where they want when they want independently.
- **Safe pathway network** — including path quality, lower kerb ramps, consistent tactile dots, and wider crossing refuges enabling safe commutes to essential services, appointments, and recreation.

- **Inclusive events and programs** — ensuring people with disability and their families can participate in recreation activities including program design and clear information to plan attendance.
- **Meaningful employment pathways** and support to stay in jobs (from volunteering to work experience, traineeships, and permanent work) — supporting employers to provide quality job opportunities and have people with disability in jobs that match their skills and interests.
- **Community awareness and education** — in visible and invisible disability so that everyone is treated with respect in our community.
- **More support for carers and families** — ensuring timely and information from diagnosis, opportunities for respite, and connection with community groups.
- **Communication in different formats** — information that is clear, simple, timely, and relevant so that individuals, carers or support workers can access information relevant to their needs and interests.
- **Access to quiet and sensory spaces** — supporting people with sensory overload to participate in everyday life.
- **Upskilling businesses on accessibility** — so that they can contribute to a more inclusive society and meet all customer needs.
- **Accessible toilets and adult change facilities** (including a hoist) — ensuring access through enhanced provision of Master Locksmith Association Key-enabled (MLAK) so that supply meets demand and people with disabilities have access to clean facilities when and where they need them.
- **Community services register** — ensuring families and carers know about local providers and support groups in one place.
- **Inclusive engagement opportunities** — increase the awareness of channels used for community engagement in decision making and ensure methods are accessible and inclusive.
- **Mobility parking** — ensuring that supply matches demand for cars and communal minibus transportation in Penrith.
- **Australian Sign Language (AUSLAN) training** for Council staff, businesses, and the community — so that it's valued as a community language and customer service and signage can be inclusive of people who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

Stage 2: Public Exhibition

The draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26 was on public exhibition and open for community feedback between Monday 11 April and Tuesday 10 May 2022. Participants were asked to consider how the draft reflected what the community had previously identified in Stage One, continue to identify any gaps in the work, and share their overall satisfaction with the draft actions.

Overall, there were approximately 70 respondents; 91% were satisfied that the draft DIAP responded to community needs and priorities.

In summary, the key areas of concern for the community remained consistent between what we heard in Stage One and Stage Two engagement:

- **Improve accessible public transport and pedestrian movement around Penrith** — confidence in safely moving around the Penrith area and able to get where people both need and want to go.
- **Access to information** — in a range of formats.
- **Access to arts and recreation activities** - a range of low-cost arts and recreation activities close by that match interests.
- **Understanding of visible and invisible disabilities** — applying considerations in all areas of Council's work.
- **Accessible buildings and facilities across Penrith** — working towards all buildings being compliant with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Guidelines and best practice. Giving consideration to the placement of adult changing places.
- **Support in emergency situations** — importance of emergency information communicated in a variety of accessible formats, specifically visual communication and Easy English.
- **Meaningful employment opportunities** — Council's influence as an employer and advocate to local businesses.
- **Consistent inclusive customer service at local businesses** — ensuring everyone can access what local businesses have to offer.

In addition to confirming that overall the draft DIAP 2022-26 reflects community needs, new areas of community interest were raised. These include:

1. Understanding the experience and challenges of people living with cognitive disability who are involved in the juvenile justice system
2. Need for disability audit of youth services to improve access and inclusion
3. Safe access to waterways.

What Council Did

Council staff reached out to key community organisations prior to the public exhibition feedback period opening, with an invitation to schedule a briefing and feedback session with their staff, clients, and networks.

From the opening of the public exhibition on 11 April 2022, the opportunity for input was promoted in various ways, including:

- Council's social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter)
- Media release sent to local media publications
- Direct invitation to local services via interagencies and personal contacts
- Posters in Penrith City Library's three branches
- Business newsletters and social media
- Contacting previous participants
- Through key stakeholders' networks using content supplied by Council (such as via email lists or social media).

Council's Access Committee members assisted Council to connect with the local community during this time.

Feedback methods were tailored to suit individual needs, including:

Community group workshops (online and face to face) — 26 attendees across six sessions.

These were coordinated with local services and community leaders. Two workshops with Aboriginal people were facilitated by community members; one session was AUSLAN interpreted and one used live captioning.

Online via Your Say Penrith (feedback form and quick poll) — 17 people. Respondents could choose the focus areas they wanted to provide feedback on. They could identify how satisfied they were with the strategy and its actions and provide further comments.

Community Service briefings — 37 attendees.

Targeted sessions were held with Penrith Youth Interagency, Penrith Community Care Forum, Nepean Domestic Violence Network, and Sydney Regional Aboriginal Corporation.

Access Committee briefing — 6 attendees.

An extra Ordinary Meeting was held to discuss how community feedback had informed the draft DIAP and seek support for the public exhibition period.

One-on-one conversations (over the phone) – 5 people.

Council Officers explained the content by focus area and collated feedback in a Microsoft Form. Respondents chose which areas they wanted to comment on.

Email – 4 people.

There were four documents uploaded to Your Say Penrith and shared via direct email.

Your Say data indicates the total number of downloads per document were:

- Draft DIAP Report – 115 downloads.
- Draft DIAP Engagement Outcomes report – 82 downloads.
- Draft DIAP Detailed Action Plan – 79 downloads.
- Draft DIAP Large Print – 27 downloads.

Who Provided Feedback

During the public exhibition period, there were approximately 400 unique visitors to the Your Say Penrith page titled “Make Penrith More Accessible”. Data shows that 91% of visitors were first time visitors to Your Say Penrith.

We heard from 29 people with disability. Disclosing the type of disability was optional, with five identifying as blind/low vision, eight as deaf or hard of hearing, and three with physical disability. One person identified as a person with disability who was also a carer .

Table summarising point of view data:

Point of view	Number of participants
Person with disability	29
Carer with disability	1
Family member, friend, supporter	9
Business	1
Service provider	18
Other	7
Did not disclose	5
Total	70

One person identified as gender and sexually diverse, two from culturally diverse backgrounds, and eight were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

What Did the Community Say?

Overall, there were approximately 70 respondents; 91% were satisfied that the draft DIAP responded to community needs and priorities.

Approximately 81% of workshop participants were unfamiliar with DIAPs and were contributing their views for the first time.

Across all methods, many comments validated that the draft DIAP had responded to what was heard in the Stage One engagement. Stage Two comments provided valuable insights that will assist Council with the implementation of actions throughout the four years of the DIAP. Respondents identified two emerging issues for Council to consider. These comments are discussed in more detail below.

Respondents reiterated that it is important for Council to consider the following in all our work:

- The experiences of people with visible and invisible disability
- The experiences of our growing ageing population and acquired disability with age
- The experiences of people with disability who identify as gender and sexually diverse.

Feedback About Attitudes and Behaviours

The draft DIAP presented three strategies that focus on improving attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability among Council staff, the community, and local businesses. They were:

- Strategy 1: Increase awareness and knowledge of access and mechanisms for inclusion for Penrith City Council staff.
- Strategy 2: Raise awareness and promote the benefits of inclusion to the community.
- Strategy 3: Raise awareness and promote the benefits of inclusive customer practices with local business.

Approximately 45 respondents (64%) provided feedback on these strategies. Overall, the community was satisfied with the proposed approach. Comments were predominantly valuable insights that can be used at a project level and guide implementation of actions including:

- Opportunities to improve customer service at local businesses for people who are deaf.
- The value of developing and sharing information with local community services on the impacts and needs of people with disability who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, coming from culturally diverse backgrounds, or who identify as gender and sexually diverse to assist with their advocacy efforts.
- Value of ongoing staff training that involves people with lived experience of disability.
- Promoting the work of the Access Committee to the community, including how they have influenced decisions.

Feedback About Liveable Communities

The draft DIAP outlined seven strategies to improve access to recreation, programs, facilities, and venues, including:

- Strategy 4: Deliver accessible and inclusive community events, programs, and services.
- Strategy 5: Increase access and participation in recreational and sporting opportunities.
- Strategy 6: Support participation in the creative arts for producers, makers, and audiences with disability.
- Strategy 7: Improve accessibility within Penrith City's town centres.
- Strategy 8: Provide accessible Council buildings and facilities.
- Strategy 9: Improve accessible transport and pedestrian movement in and around Penrith.
- Strategy 10: Support people with disability to be prepared, respond, and recover from emergencies, shocks and stresses.

Approximately 59 respondents (84%) provided feedback. Comments were predominantly valuable insights that can be used at a project level and guide implementation of actions including:

- The types of activities and programs that are of interest and reiterating the importance of affordability, including for those not on the NDIS.
- The importance of accessibility around Penrith, with a particular interest in private buildings being compliant with Disability Discrimination Act Guidelines.
- Reviewing approach to provision and access to adult changing places and the importance of providing hoists.

- The importance of visual communication on public transport and an increase to the frequency and destinations of accessible bus routes.
- The communication needs of people who are deaf or have an intellectual disability in an emergency.

A new issue was raised regarding safe access to waterways.

Feedback About Meaningful Employment

The draft DIAP proposed two strategies to improve pathways to meaningful employment, including:

- Strategy 11: Increase employment of people living with disability within Penrith City Council.
- Strategy 12: Support employment of people with disability within local businesses.

Approximately 21 respondents (30%) provided feedback, raising mixed feelings about the impact of these actions. Comments were predominantly valuable insights that can be used at a project level and guide implementation of actions including:

- Ensuring the needs of people with visible and invisible disability are considered.
- Supporting volunteering in retirement to assist people with disability to stay connected and involved with the community.
- Addressing exploitation where it exists and creating pathways to meaningful paid employment and work experience.

Respondents felt strongly about the need for actions to achieve dignified employment, particularly for people with cognitive impairments.

Feedback About Systems and Processes

The draft DIAP presented three strategies to improve Council's systems and processes, including:

- Strategy 13: Increase engagement and participation of people living with disability in Council's decision making.
- Strategy 14: Embed inclusion focused outcomes in Council planning processes and program and service design.
- Strategy 15: Increase access to information.

Approximately 54 respondents (77%) provided feedback on these commitments. Comments confirmed the importance of these actions and the importance of considering visible and invisible disability during implementation. Respondents provided valuable insights that can be used at a project level and guide implementation of actions including:

- Sharing the formats they prefer to access information, such as Easy English, audio described videos, AUSLAN interpretation (written and video), and making an appointment or using live chat function on websites

Local services identified two new issues:

- Support to ensure youth services are inclusive.
- Support for people with cognitive impairments through the justice system.

Responding to Feedback and Refining the DIAP 2022-26

All feedback received was considered and a summary was shared with all Council departments.

Overall, community sentiment indicated that the draft DIAP 2022-26 strategies and actions were on track. The 15 strategies in the draft DIAP are proposed to remain as is. Council Officers used community feedback to strengthen several actions and add new actions to better reflect community needs and preferences.

Of the draft DIAP actions, 46 have no change and six have minor changes. Five new actions will be proposed for Council's consideration to respond to feedback received.

Next Steps and Enquiries

The proposed final Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 will be reported to Council in late June 2022 for consideration. All people who provided their details will be contacted when the plan is finalised.

For more information, please contact Natalie Wadwell, Community Capacity Officer by calling 4732 7513, or email Natalie.Wadwell@penrith.city