

# Disability Inclusion and Access Plan

2026-2030





## Acknowledgement of Country

Wellington Shire Council acknowledges our offices are located on the traditional lands of the Gunaikurnai nation. We pay our deep respects to their Elders past, present and future and acknowledge their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to their land and waters.



**Aunty Eileen Harrison**  
(born Australia 1948)  
Gunaikurnai  
*Celebration of our Culture, 2018*  
Acrylic on canvas 140x240cm

Collection Gippsland Art Gallery  
Purchased with the assistance of  
the Robert Salzer Foundation and  
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# Contents

<b>A Message from the Mayor</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Language</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Understanding the Policy and Service Context</b>	<b>6</b>
The Role of the NDIS and Emerging Reform	7
The Role of Local Government	8
How the Plan was Developed	9
Wellington at a Glance	10
Key Data Insights	11
Council Plan 2025-2029	12
Live Well In Wellington 2025-29	13
<b>The Action Plan</b>	<b>15</b>
Strategic Alignment, Integration and Implementation Considerations	15
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>22</b>



## A Message from the Mayor Cr Cindy Madeley

**Everyone wants to live in a place where they feel connected, where everyone, no matter their background, age, ability or circumstances, can feel part of something. That's the kind of community we're working to build - one that is inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all.**

This report is about more than meeting requirements. It's about recognising that inclusive communities are intentionally created. By removing barriers and designing with everyone in mind, we can build a place that supports a thriving local economy, protects our natural environment, and ensures a more sustainable and equitable future for everyone.

In Wellington Shire, a significant portion of the population at almost 30% self-report having a disability, with 7.1% requiring assistance with core daily activities. We believe every single one of our residents deserves the opportunity to enjoy and make full use of public facilities like parks, libraries, footpaths or community events. Access is not just about entering a building or getting from one place to another. It's also about being able to find, understand and engage with information, services and activities in ways that are meaningful and relevant to each person.

One of our guiding principles is to foster connected and accessible communities. That means promoting inclusivity, supporting social integration, and ensuring everyone has equal access to services, infrastructure and transport. We want people of all ages and abilities to feel seen, valued and supported.

This Access and Inclusion Plan is a step towards that goal. It reflects what we've heard from the community, and it sets out a practical path forward. Most importantly, it reminds us that creating a more inclusive society benefits everyone, not just those who face barriers. Because when more people can participate fully in everyday life, our whole community becomes stronger, more vibrant and more resilient.



Wellington Disabilities Group

## About the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan

**The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2026-2030 marks a renewed and innovative commitment by Wellington Shire Council to advance access, equity, and inclusion for people living with disability.**

This plan reflects contemporary community expectations and the lived experiences of people within the municipality. It demonstrates Council's commitment not only to fulfilling legislative obligations, but to actively contribute to inclusive communities where all individuals can participate fully, equitably, and with dignity.

The DIAP demonstrates that every aspect of Council has an agreed commitment and responsibility to access and inclusion. This plan was developed through a whole of council approach starting from leadership all the way through to casual staff. The DIAP encapsulates key strategies across all of Council divisions and enhances already established projects, processes and policies to ensure best practice is all aspects of Council.

## Language

Language is a powerful tool in promoting inclusion, fostering disability pride and changing community understanding and attitudes. We know language is always changing and we recognise that words are powerful and have different meaning for different people.

We have chosen to use 'person-first' and 'identity-first' language in the Wellington Disability Inclusion and Access Plan (the Plan). Person first language puts the person before the disability. Person-first language is used to emphasise a person's right to an identity beyond their disability.

# Understanding the Policy and Service Context

**The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2026-2030 aligns with key strategic frameworks including *The Australian Disability Strategy 2021-2031*, *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026*, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which collectively shape the expectations, rights and supports available to people with disability. At the same time, it has been developed in the context of an evolving national and state disability policy landscape and a rapidly shifting service system.**

Crucially, the Plan anticipates major system reforms, including the proposed introduction of foundational supports, a new approach to universal services and community engagement intended to complement the NDIS. While the full design of these reforms is still emerging, the commitment by both Commonwealth and State governments signals a significant shift toward more inclusive, locally responsive service delivery. Within this context, the role of local government in fostering accessible, inclusive communities is expected to be both reaffirmed and elevated.

## The Australian Disability Strategy 2021-2031

*The Australian Disability Strategy 2021-2031* provides the national direction for building a more inclusive society and improving life outcomes for people with disability. Structured around seven outcome areas: Employment and Financial Security; Inclusive Homes and Communities; Safety, Rights and Justice; Personal and Community Support; Education and Learning; Health and Wellbeing; and Community Attitudes, the Strategy offers a comprehensive approach to addressing systemic disadvantage and promoting equal opportunity.

Central to the *Australian Disability Strategy* is the social model of disability, which reframes disability not as an individual deficit but as the result of barriers in the environment, systems, and attitudes. This perspective underpins the design of inclusive policies and services that actively remove obstacles to participation. For local governments like Wellington Shire Council, the Strategy serves as a guiding framework to align local actions with national priorities, helping to ensure consistency and accountability at the community level. The *Australian Disability Strategy* sets a national vision for change and acknowledges the role of local governments in leading changes at a local level.



## Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026

Over the past decade, the Victorian Government's role in the disability sector has undergone a significant transition, coinciding with the phased implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS primarily operates as a mechanism for funding individualised disability supports. In parallel, the Victorian Government has progressively reduced its direct funding for various local and cross-sector disability initiatives. These include programs related to capacity building, sector development, and foundational support.

This shift has contributed to changes in the availability and delivery of community capacity building programs and supports, which have historically facilitated collaboration, workforce development, and community-based inclusion activities.

In this context, *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026* sets out a framework for an inclusive and equitable society by focusing on key reform priorities: a modernised Disability Act aligned with human rights principles; embedding co-design with people with disability; advancing Aboriginal self-determination; adopting intersectional approaches; promoting universal design and accessible communication; and building inclusive, disability-confident workforces. These priorities are supported by a commitment to data-informed planning, accountability, and system-wide transparency, but not necessarily by funding to enable genuine local translation of these aspirations.

For Wellington Shire Council, this policy and legislative environment provides both a clear obligation alongside a capacity challenge and emerging opportunities. As foundational supports are progressively introduced to address gaps in the current system, Council is in a strong position to lead the next phase of inclusive community development. This includes supporting community partnerships and enabling place-based responses that reflect local needs.



## The Role of the NDIS and Emerging Reform

Introduced in 2013 and progressively implemented across the country, the NDIS has fundamentally reshaped the way disability services are funded and delivered in Australia. It provides eligible individuals with personalised support plans centred on choice, and control over services and providers. While the NDIS has delivered meaningful benefits for many, both the *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (2023)* and the *Independent Review of the NDIS* have identified critical areas for reform. These include persistent service gaps, inequities in access, and the need for stronger safeguarding and system-wide accountability to ensure people with disability are safe, respected, and fully included in Australian society.

In response, the Australian Government is progressing a suite of reforms, including the introduction of a new tier of disability support: foundational supports. This service and systems layer is expected to include community inclusion initiatives, advocacy, early intervention, peer support, and systems navigation support, helping to close the service gap and enable greater inclusion at the local level.



## The Role of Local Government

Local governments are uniquely positioned in the development of inclusive, accessible, and equitable communities for people with disability. As the level of government closest to the community, councils play a crucial role in translating national and state policies into practical, localised actions that shape the daily lives of residents and influence the broader service landscape.

Under the *Victorian Disability Act 2006*, councils are required to prepare Disability Action Plans (DAPs) that identify and address barriers to participation for people with disability. This legislative responsibility is reinforced by the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*. Additionally, strategic guidance is provided through frameworks such as *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022-2026* and the *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*.

Although local governments typically do not deliver disability services, their role in ensuring that services, such as libraries and recreation facilities, are inclusive and accessible is vital. During emergencies such as natural disasters, councils' local knowledge and connections with vulnerable communities, including people with disability, can be critical to effective response and recovery efforts.

Councils also have direct responsibility for designing and maintaining Council-owned public buildings, parks, and community infrastructure. These assets must be planned and delivered with accessibility considerations at the forefront. Equally important is the role of councils

in fostering inclusive governance and civic participation, ensuring that people with disability have opportunities to contribute to community life and decision-making.

Local government is well-placed to foster partnerships within the local service system, advocate for service improvements, and support community education initiatives that promote inclusion and shift community attitudes. However, while councils recognise the importance of this role, limited resourcing and the absence of dedicated funding often constrain their capacity to actively support the service sector and drive systemic change. This limitation means a dynamic, innovative and resourceful DIAP needed to be developed.

As employers, and leaders within the community, councils also have a responsibility to lead by example. By implementing inclusive recruitment practices and fostering a disability-confident workplace culture, councils can provide meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability and build internal organisational capability.

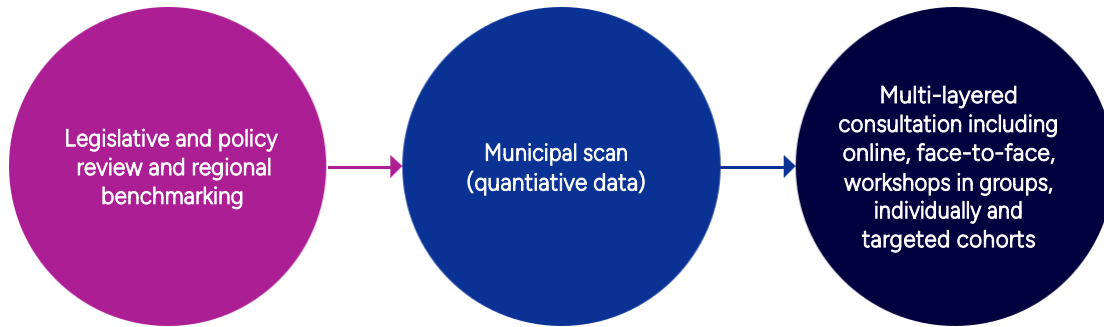
### Wellington Shire Context

Developing a Disability Inclusion and Access Plan that is responsive, targeted, and effective requires an understanding of the demographic profile, lived experiences, and structural inequalities within Wellington Shire. This plan has been informed by the *Live Well in Wellington Municipal Scan 2025-2029* and a Background Paper developed by KF Consulting that collated and analysed data specific to Wellington Shire and the broader Outer Gippsland region.

## How the Plan was Developed

The development of the DIAP has been shaped by a comprehensive, multi-layered process of consultation and analysis. This has ensured the plan is both evidence-informed and grounded in local experience.

Figure 1: Evidence base for the development Wellington Disability Inclusion and Access Plan



Consultation activities included:

- Two targeted workshops with internal Wellington Shire Council (WSC) staff; and
- Online and face-to-face engagement with people with disability, carers, former members of the Wellington Access and Inclusion Group (WAIG), and current members of the newly established Wellington Disability Advisory Committee (WDAC).

Targeted workshops with:

- People with a disability;
- Students from the Sale and District Specialist School;
- Members of the Wellington Youth Council;
- Participants from the George Gray Centre;
- Service providers and carers;
- Wellington Shire Council staff; and
- Additional online and in-person meetings with local service providers.

To complement this engagement, a benchmarking review of Disability Action Plans and interviews with other Gippsland local governments was undertaken. This was augmented by a desktop analysis of relevant legislative, policy, and sector developments across local, state, and Commonwealth contexts.

Insights from these processes were synthesised into a background discussion paper, which informed a subsequent workshop that brought together Council staff and another with people with disability, carers, and service providers to explore new possibilities and refine priorities.

The nuanced and considered feedback from all participants, together with the desktop review and regional benchmarking, has shaped a plan that is both strategic and deeply informed by local voices.

**'By implementing inclusive recruitment practices and fostering a disability-confident workplace culture, councils can provide meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability and build internal organisational capability.'**

## Wellington at a Glance

The 2025-2029 Municipal Scan, conducted as part of *Live Well in Wellington 2025-2029*, Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, forms a cornerstone of data for this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. It provides a detailed and evidence-driven understanding of the local context by identifying key demographic, social, and health indicators relevant to people with disability across Wellington Shire. This municipal analysis is complemented by further data and insight captured in the Background Paper prepared specifically to inform this Plan.

Together, these data sources present a clear picture of the disproportionate barriers and needs experienced by people with disability, and the compounded disadvantage created by intersecting factors such as age, cultural identity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

These findings reinforce the critical importance of applying an intersectional lens to all actions and strategies within this Plan.

'These data sources present a clear picture of the disproportionate barriers and needs experienced by people with disability, and the compounded disadvantage created by intersecting factors such as age, cultural identity, gender, and socioeconomic status.'

Indicator	Wellington Shire Data	Victorian Data
Total population in 2021	45,639	Approx. 6,500,000
Women	49.6%	50.8%
LGBTQIA+ residents in 2023	9.6%	11%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in 2021	2%	1%
Residents born overseas in 2021	11%	30
Proportion of people who had a self-reported disability in 2023	25.7%	19.9%
People needing assistance with core activities in 2021	7.1%	5.9%
NDIS participants in Outer Gippsland as at 30 September 2024	2,897	182,330
People with autism	994*	64,028
People with intellectual disability	528*	25,322
Average NDIS plan budgets	Stroke \$233,000 Acquired Brain Injury \$166,000 Cerebral Palsy \$158,000	
NDIS plan utilisation	Autism 65% Down Syndrome 80% Visual Impairment 87%	

\*Outer Gippsland, including Wellington Shire

## Key Data Insights

- **Disability Prevalence** – An estimated 25.7 percent of Wellington residents self-identify as living with a disability – substantially higher than the Victorian average of 19.9 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- **Assistance Requirements** – 7.1 percent of residents report needing assistance with core activities, increasing to 9.5 percent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.<sup>2</sup>
- **Age Distribution** – While support needs increase with age, data also capture the presence of disability in younger cohorts, underlining the need for responsive and age-appropriate supports across the lifespan.
- **Gendered Violence** – Around 65 percent of Australian women with disabilities have experienced violence since the age of 15, compared to 45 percent of women without disabilities.<sup>3</sup>
- **Workplace Harassment** – In the workplace, 54 percent of women with disabilities report having experienced sexual harassment in the past five years, compared to 38 percent of men with disabilities.



<sup>1</sup>Live Well in Wellington 2025-2029 Municipal Scan

<sup>2</sup>Profile.id.com.au/wellington-Vic

<sup>3</sup>Respect Victoria (2022) Prevalence of violence against women with disability

People with disability experience structural and systemic disadvantage that impacts every aspect of life:

- **Employment** – Unemployment affects 18.8 percent of people needing assistance, with a further 8.8 percent actively seeking part-time work. These figures point to significant barriers to labour market participation and financial independence;
- **Housing** – There is a shortage of affordable and accessible housing options, contributing to increased social isolation and associated health risks;
- **Education** – People with disability are less likely to attain tertiary qualifications, reflecting persistent barriers in education access and retention;
- **Transport** – Limited availability of accessible public and community transport restricts participation in work, education, healthcare, and social life;
- **Early Childhood** – Rural isolation contributes to delays in diagnosis and limited access to early intervention services, often due to long waiting lists and service gaps;
- **Youth** – Adolescents with disability are more likely to disengage from education and experience adverse mental health outcomes;
- **Working-Age Adults** – Adults frequently encounter long-term unemployment, underemployment, and inadequate access to workplace accommodations;
- **Older People** – As residents age, many experience compounded health and accessibility issues. Limited specialist services in the region make it difficult to manage complex health conditions associated with ageing and disability;
- **Mental Health** – Rates of psychological distress are high. People with disability face increased exposure to risk factors such as social isolation, stigma, and discrimination;
- **Chronic Illness** – There is a disproportionately higher incidence of chronic conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and musculoskeletal disorders; and
- **Access to Healthcare** – Timely and equitable access to healthcare is limited, resulting in increased rates of preventable illness and avoidable hospital admissions.

These findings underscore the urgent need for coordinated, inclusive, and targeted action across local government planning, service delivery, infrastructure, and community engagement. The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan directly responds to these needs by embedding equity, participation, and accessibility at the heart of its strategic priorities.

## Council Plan 2025-2029

In August 2025, Council adopted the *Council Plan 2025-2029*. Created in close collaboration with the community the Council Plan sets out the work of Council for the next four years and outlines how Council will work toward the Community Vision 2041 while responding to challenges and opportunities facing the shire.

The Council Plan has four strategic objectives;

1. **Healthy and Connected Communities** – Vibrant, healthy, connected and inclusive communities. Quality services are accessible to everyone.
2. **Dynamic and Diverse Economy** – An economy that enables sustainable growth, enhancing the social environment, lifestyle and unique characteristics of our communities.
3. **Infrastructure, Spaces and Places** – Strategically planned, designed and well-maintained infrastructure, spaces and places.
4. **Natural Environment** – A healthy natural environment, protected and nurtured for generations to come.

Each Strategic Objective is supported by:

- Four Strategies;
- A set of Major Initiatives and Actions; and
- Strategic Indicators for measuring success.

The *Council Plan 2025-2029* has informed and shaped the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan and where possible the DIAP actions will be leveraged through the Major Initiatives and action in the Council Plan. This alignment ensures that inclusion and accessibility are heavily embedded in all current and future Council work.

'This alignment ensures that inclusion and accessibility are heavily embedded in all current and future Council work.'





**Priority 1  
Safe and Respectful**

**Objectives**

- Reduce gendered violence.
- Embed gender equality.
- Reduce harm from alcohol and other drugs.
- Reduce harm from tobacco and vapes.
- Reduce harmful industry influence.



**Priority 2  
Mental Health & Wellbeing**

**Objectives**

- Build connection to culture, Country and community.
- Celebrate and include all communities.
- Boost mental health knowledge and support.
- Reduce isolation and strengthen connections.



**Priority 3  
Healthy & Active**

**Objectives**

- Improve and create social and physical environments that support healthy eating.
- Improve and create social and physical environments that support active living.

**Priority Groups**

LWIW is a whole-of-community strategy that seeks to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents. However, it explicitly recognises that certain population groups face disproportionate barriers to achieving optimal health and wellbeing. Among these groups are people with disability, whose experiences are often compounded by other factors such as low income, gender inequality, and cultural or racial marginalisation.

For this reason, the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan applies an intersectional lens – acknowledging that disability does not exist in isolation but frequently intersects with other forms of disadvantage. This approach ensures that strategies are responsive to the complex and layered realities of individuals’ lives and recognises the need for integrated, cross-sector and industry collective action to overcome systemic and structural barriers that people with a disability often experience.

**Continuous Improvement**

The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan applies the LWIW *Cycle of Continuous Improvement* to ensure ongoing responsiveness and accountability:

1. **Review** what has been done, what has worked, and what can be improved.
2. **Identify** current gaps, emerging needs, and opportunities for action.
3. **Plan** next steps in collaboration with the community and stakeholders.
4. **Act** by implementing and monitoring initiatives, then feeding results back into the cycle.

By adopting this cycle, the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan ensures that best practice is continually pursued through structured annual reviews and iterative refinement of the Action Plan.



# Live Well in Wellington Guiding Principles



## Inclusion

We address the health and wellbeing needs of diverse groups in Wellington, ensuring their voices are heard and promoting access, fairness, participation, and rights.



## Equity

We ensure everyone has a fair chance to achieve optimal health by providing access to opportunities and support without barriers related to age, gender, socioeconomic status, culture or sexual orientation.



## Evidence-Informed

We base our decisions on strong data and best practice. We use data-led insights, consider the social determinants of health, and engage with the community, to ensure our actions are informed by evidence.



## Partnership

We are committed to strong partnerships to achieve long-term health outcomes, recognising the experts each partner brings and aligning efforts across Wellington for collective impact.



'LWIW is a whole-of-community strategy that seeks to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents.'

## Live Well In Wellington 2025-29

*Live Well in Wellington* (LWIW) is Wellington Shire Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for 2025-2029. It sets out Council's collective vision for a healthy, safe, and equitable community. The *Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2025-29* is intentionally aligned with the LWIW Plan. This alignment ensures that the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan supports and reinforces Council's broader strategic objectives around health, equity, and inclusion, maximising the impact of both plans and embedding disability inclusion across all areas of Council's work.

The Guiding Principles, Priority Groups and Continuous Improvement cycle outlined in the LWIW also form a core part of the DIAP.

## Guiding Principles

The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan has adopted the LWIW guiding principles because they reflect Council's shared values and approach to community wellbeing.

These guiding principles shape the lens through which all aspects of the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan actions are designed and implemented. The principles of inclusion and equity affirm that every resident, regardless of ability, has the right to equitable access to services, infrastructure, and opportunities that support full participation in community life. For the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan, this means addressing the physical, social, and systemic barriers that limit the participation of people with disability.

The principles of partnership and evidence-informed practice guide how Council listens, learns, and takes action. The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan has been shaped through meaningful co-design with people who have lived experience of disability, and in close collaboration with carers, service providers, and community organisations. In doing so, it reflects both data and local insight, ensuring that actions are not only evidence-informed but also relevant, inclusive, and responsive to community needs.

The principle of climate health highlights the growing imperative to consider the impacts of climate change on people with disability. For the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan, this means maintaining a disability-inclusive lens in emergency planning, supporting resilient infrastructure, and ensuring equitable access to health-promoting environments and climate initiatives.

Together, these principles ensure the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan is a strategic, future-focused plan embedded within Wellington Shire Council's broader commitment to equity, wellbeing, and sustainable community development.

# The Action Plan

The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan actions set out the practical steps Wellington Shire Council will take over the next four years to promote access, inclusion, and equity for people with disability. These actions are organised under each of the priority areas identified in the LWIW Plan and are aligned with corresponding LWIW strategies to ensure strategic alignment and maximise collective impact.

The Action Plan is not static – it is designed to be dynamic and responsive. Actions will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant in the context of evolving community needs, service environments, and policy settings. Guided by the Cycle of Continuous Improvement, this review process will support adaptation and refinement where needed, accountability, and create evaluative data to support a review at the conclusion of the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan.

## Strategic Alignment, Integration and Implementation Considerations

The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan outlines a clear set of actions to strengthen disability inclusion across all aspects of Wellington Shire Council's operations and within the broader community. It builds upon Council's ongoing inclusion work and responds to identified gaps. The Plan presents an opportunity to embed a disability-inclusive lens some of the Council's existing strategic planning, service delivery, infrastructure development, and community engagement practices.



Nonetheless, several implementation challenges must be acknowledged. These include constrained resourcing, misaligned planning cycles across various Council strategies, and the risk of raising community expectations that may not be fully achievable without resource investment and State or Commonwealth funding. To mitigate the impact of these factors, the Disability Inclusion and Access Plan is deliberately aligned with existing Council frameworks – most notably the LWIW Plan. This approach supports the embedding of inclusive practice into core Council functions and enables more efficient use of available resources.

While not all Disability Inclusion and Access Plan actions map neatly to the LWIW strategies, some language has been adapted from other plans or strategies, to reflect the focus on people with a disability. This approach amplifies the importance of existing Council actions and commitments. The focus issues for some actions appear across multiple strategies with varied framing. This doesn't signal duplication but rather reinforces the strategic importance of the action to address barriers and challenges for people with a disability. In doing so, it reinforces Council's commitment to integrating inclusion across all aspects of its work, ensuring that disability inclusion is not treated in isolation but embedded within policy, planning, and operational activities.



Priority 1: People living with a disability are safe and respected

Action	Business Unit	Strategic Alignment	Timeline
<b>We will support local prevention initiatives that raise awareness of gendered violence</b>			
1.1	1.1.1 Facilitate and strengthen the Wellington Prevention of Family Violence Network.	Community Development Gender Equality Action Plan LWIW	Ongoing
	1.1.2 Ensure the specific needs, experiences, and risks faced by people with a disability are recognised, and embedded in prevention initiatives.	Community Development People and Capability	Short Term
	1.1.3 Support gendered violence training and capacity building incorporating intersectionality for community organisations, clubs, and businesses.	Community Development Facilities and Emergencies	Long Term
<b>We will promote safe and inclusive public spaces, events, and facilities that are welcoming to all and provide opportunities for connection and visibility</b>			
1.2	1.2.1 Collaborate and celebrate dates of significance with a focus on priority groups such as International Day of People with a Disability, IDAHOBIT, Seniors Festival, NAIDOC week.	Community Development	LWIW Ongoing
	1.2.2 Improve accessibility of Council run events.	Economic Development Community Development	Council Plan Short Term
	1.2.3 Improve the quality, accessibility and safety of open spaces for people with a disability in Wellington Shire through the Open Spaces strategy.	Parks and Natural Environment	Council Plan Long Term
	1.2.4 Roll out disability awareness training to Committees of Management accessing Council owned infrastructure.	Facilities and Emergencies	LWIW Short Term
<b>We will apply an intersectionality lens to planning, policy and service delivery within Council</b>			
1.3	1.3.1 Develop a plan to attract, develop and retain people from diverse backgrounds including those with a disability.	People and Capability	Council Plan Long Term
	1.3.2 Develop a process for Council data to be disaggregated to recognise intersectionality, both internally and externally.	Community Development People and Capability	Council Plan GEAP Short Term
	1.3.3 Training provided to WSC staff regarding gender equality, sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination to include a lens of intersectionality that explicitly includes people with a disability.	People and Capability	Council Plan Ongoing
	1.3.4 Undertake Gender Impact Assessments for all relevant Council policies, strategies and events, with any data analysis to include disaggregated reporting for people with a disability.	Whole of Council	GEAP Ongoing
<b>We will ensure our communication is inclusive and accessible</b>			
1.4	1.4.1 Ensure all Council communications and public information are available in Plain English and adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to enable access for people with disability across digital platforms.	Communications and Customer Service	Council Plan Ongoing

Action	Business Unit	Strategic Alignment	Timeline
<b>1.4</b>			
<b>1.4.2</b> Enhance the Middle of Everywhere website by ensuring alt text is added to images to describe their content.	Economic Development	Council Plan	Short Term
<b>1.4.3</b> Enhance Middle of Everywhere website by using captions and transcripts for audio and video content.	Economic Development	Council Plan	Short Term
<b>1.4.4</b> Enhance Middle of Everywhere website by adding accessibility icons to services and events, communicating the accessibility of the environment.	Economic Development	Council Plan	Short Term
<b>1.4.5</b> Ensure all Council-led advisory committee minutes are available on Council platforms to encourage transparency.	Community Development Communications and Customer Service	Council Plan	Short Term
<b>We will be a community leader in inclusion and accessibility</b>			
<b>1.5</b>			
<b>1.5.1</b> CEO and CMT to set and discuss baseline gender equality targets for Wellington Shire Council and what this will look like into the future, including gender diverse people with a disability.	CMT	GEAP Council Plan	Long Term
<b>1.5.2</b> CEO and CMT to complete a pay equity analysis within WSC to include analysis of pay gap for people with a disability.	CMT	GEAP	Long Term
<b>We will provide inclusive and accessible community funding opportunities</b>			
<b>1.6</b>			
<b>1.6.1</b> Integrate disability access and inclusion education into Council's grant programs by providing applicants with clear guidance materials, including checklists, inclusive design principles, and examples of good practice.	Facilities and Emergencies	LWIW	Ongoing
<b>1.6.2</b> Create and/or strengthen Council policies and sponsorship arrangements to minimise promotion of harmful industries such as gambling, alcohol, tobacco, and vaping.	Facilities and Emergencies Community Development	LWIW	Ongoing
<b>We will advocate to State and Federal government for the best interest of Wellington communities</b>			
<b>1.7</b>			
<b>1.7.1</b> Leverage Council's policy, planning, and advocacy roles to promote the development of affordable, accessible, and universally designed housing that meets the needs of people with disability.	Community Development Planning and Building	Council Plan	Long Term
<b>1.7.2</b> Identify opportunities to advocate for improved public transportation across the Shire. Where advocacy opportunities are identified, engagement with the WDAC to be included to ensure the higher needs of people with a disability are also identified.	CMT	Council Plan	Ongoing
<b>1.7.3</b> Advocate for improvement of accessibility and safety to the active and road transport networks that are State owned.	Built Environment	Council Plan	Long Term
<b>1.7.4</b> Review Council advisory committees and implement a plan to address critical gaps in community voice, knowledge and advocacy for priority groups	Community Development	LWIW Council Plan	Long Term

Priority 2: People living with a disability are connected and supported

Action	Business Unit	Strategic Alignment	Timeline	
<b>We will support learning across the lifespan of Wellington residents</b>				
2.1	2.1.1 Continue the Central Registration Service to ensure young children access 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten across Wellington.	Community Development	Gender Equality Action Plan LWIW	Ongoing
	2.1.2 Support local initiatives that link young people with a disability into employment, work experience and volunteering, and traineeships.	Economic Development	Council Plan LWIW	Ongoing
<b>We will encourage volunteering, mentoring, and peer support as pathways to connection</b>				
2.2	2.2.1 Build capacity of volunteers by developing resources and delivering education and training that focuses on accessibility and inclusion.	Community Development Facilities and Emergencies	LWIW	Ongoing
<b>We will build our confidence as an inclusive workplace</b>				
2.3	2.3.1 Pursue traineeship and apprenticeship arrangements to support more diverse entry into non-traditional career pathways, with on a focus on under-represented groups, including people living with disability.	Economic Development People and Capability	Council Plan	Ongoing
	2.3.2 Enhance the recruitment process by providing recruitment panels with targeted guidance and briefings on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias that explicitly address barriers faced by people with disability to ensure fair, inclusive, and accessible hiring practices.	People and Capability Community Development	Council Plan LWIW	Long Term
	2.3.3 Review and strengthen Council's procurement policy to identify opportunities for advancing socially responsible procurement practices, with a focus on creating inclusive opportunities for priority groups, including people with disability.	Finance	Council Plan	Long Term
<b>We will use infrastructure and planning processes to create welcoming spaces that bring people together</b>				
2.4	2.4.1 Where possible utilising existing resources and budgets, include universal design in all new major projects and upgrades, ensuring that accessibility is considered from planning to construction of infrastructure.	Whole of Council	Council Plan	Long Term
	2.4.2 Prioritise community facilities upgrades where the physical condition and accessibility has been identified as a key constraint for people with a disability.	Facilities and Emergencies	Council Plan LWIW	Ongoing
	2.4.3 Actively involve people with a disability in decision making about the future of community, through advisory processes.	Whole of Council	Council Plan	Ongoing
<b>We will foster inclusive opportunities for social participation in local places and spaces</b>				
2.5	2.5.1 Deliver targeted workshops designed to educate business owners on how to make their premises more accessible and inclusive for all members of the community.	Economic Development	Council Plan	Long Term

Action	Business Unit	Strategic Alignment	Timeline	
2.5	2.5.2 Facilitate opportunities for all community members to connect to Country, local history, heritage, and the environment.	Community Development	WIW	Ongoing
<b>We will include diverse representation in Council materials and public communications</b>				
2.6	2.6.1 Create and annually maintain a digital directory of providers, groups and activities with a disability lens.	Economic Development Community Development	Council Plan	Short Term
	2.6.2 Review and expand on the Middle of Everywhere events portal and include steps organisers can take to make events more accessible and appealing to older audiences (transportation, seating, toilet facilities).	Economic Development	Council Plan	Ongoing
	2.7.3 Ensure all messaging and communications are available in accessible formats, including plain language and formats compatible with assistive technologies, to ensure accessibility for people with disability.	Communications and Customer Service	Council Plan	Ongoing

### Priority 3: People living with a disability have opportunities to be healthy and active

Action	Business Unit	Strategic Alignment	Timeline	
<b>We will encourage healthy food provision in council-owned and managed facilities and events</b>				
3.1	3.1.1 Support community members, groups and services to develop and grow ideas and projects that include people with a disability.	Facilities and Emergencies Community Development Culture and Leisure	LWIW	Ongoing
	3.1.2 Develop information for people with a disability, business and tourism partners about the availability of a Changing Places facility at Wellington Aqua Energy Redevelopment.	Culture and Leisure	Council Plan	Short Term
<b>We will provide accessible opportunities for people to be active</b>				
3.2	3.2.1 Invest in and promote walkable and rideable neighbourhoods for people with a disability through the implementation of the Urban Paths Plan.	Built Environment Community Development	Urban Paths Plan	Long Term
	3.2.2 Develop and deliver local campaigns to raise awareness of healthy eating and physical activity, with messages tailored for people with a disability.	Community Development Communications and Customer Service	LWIW	Ongoing
	3.2.3 Create a plan to annually review through a prioritisation model equitable access to Council-managed facilities, programs, and services, through the lens of disability with the aim of removing barriers.	Whole of Council	Fair Access Policy	Long Term

# Conclusion

The *Disability Inclusion and Access Plan 2026-2030* provides a clear roadmap for translating Council's commitment to access, equity, and inclusion into practical, measurable outcomes. It seeks to foster a community where people with disability can participate fully, feel valued, and thrive across all areas of civic, social, and economic life.

Informed by local data, community consultation, and alignment with key strategies including the LWIW the Plan serves as a roadmap for embedding inclusive practice across Wellington Shire Council's operations. It reinforces that inclusion is not the responsibility of a single team or function, it requires shared commitment and coordinated action across all levels of Council and throughout the wider community.

Achieving genuine inclusion means confronting systemic barriers, respecting the diverse experiences of people with disability, and supporting communities where everyone feels safe, welcome, and supported to live well.

The Disability Inclusion and Access Plan outlines specific actions to advance this goal, from inclusive employment practices and accessible infrastructure to embedding lived experience in decision-making.

Ultimately, this plan reflects Council's belief that disability inclusion strengthens the social fabric of the entire community. It is both a statement of intent and a practical guide to action, setting the course for long-term cultural and structural change that benefits all.



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# Acronyms

**ABS**

Australian Bureau of Statistics

**CARMs**

Culturally and Racially Marginalised communities

**DAP**

Disability Action Plan

**DIAP**

Disability Inclusion and Access Plan

**DFFH**

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Victoria)

**ID**

Informed Decisions (demographic and spatial data platform)

**LGA**

Local Government Area

**LWIW**

Live Well in Wellington (Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)

**NDIS**

National Disability Insurance Scheme

**WDAC**

Wellington Disability Advisory Committee Group

**WSC**

Wellington Shire Council



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