



## Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2023-2027

### **2023-2027**

*A sustainable and inclusive community*



# Acknowledgement of Country

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Kiama Municipal Council acknowledges the Wodi Wodi people on Dharawal country as the traditional custodians of the land on which our Municipality is located. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to our community.

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## Message from the Mayor

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I'm proud to introduce our Council's updated Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). Building on our past achievements like the Dementia Friendly Program and accessible Council initiatives, this plan focuses not only on physical access but also on enhancing communication, transport, and community activities for those with disabilities.

In alignment with the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, this plan, crafted with insights from those with lived experiences of disability, showcases our commitment to make Kiama inclusive and accessible. Our goal is holistic inclusion, embracing universal design principles in all Council domains, from health to infrastructure.

Our vision is a Kiama where everyone, irrespective of age, background, culture or ability, can thrive. By implementing this plan, we're taking strides to ensure universal participation and accessibility in our community.

**Neil Reilly**  
**Mayor, Kiama Municipal Council**

# Definitions

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## Disability

A person who has a long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others.

*Disability Inclusion Act (NSW) 2014*

## Inclusion

Inclusion is where everyone is treated equally and has an active role in society. Hence, an inclusive society for people with disabilities is one where they: are respected; have equal access to services and facilities, and; are provided the same opportunities as those without a disability.

*Disability.royalcommission.gov.au*

## Accessibility

Accessibility is when consideration is taken to the development or modification of products, services, sites and facilities, so that they can be approached, used and participate safely by people of all abilities. This can apply to parking, entrance to buildings, floor spaces, language, document visibility, online content etc.

*modified from [cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth)*

## Liveability

A city, town or region is more likely to be liveable if there are high levels of health and welfare, safety, economic opportunities, access to transport, opportunities for recreation and attractiveness, and low levels of pollution. People are supported to enjoy good physical and mental health, fulfil social relationships, and have a high level of life satisfaction and happiness.

*Reports.envcomm.act.gov.au*



# Background

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The Kiama Municipal Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2023-2027, reflects Council's vision for an accessible and inclusive community. It builds on achievements from the previous DIAP and defines new and ongoing targets that support people with a disability and their carers to be recognised, heard, valued and supported to live, work and play equitably in our community.

The DIAP was developed in close consultation with residents, visitors and organisations who understand lived experience of temporary or permanent mental and physical disability; and with Council staff and management. It outline Council's commitment and leadership to strengthen the voices of people with a disability, remove barriers to access and participation and enhance liveability for Kiama's diverse community.

Council's role in access and inclusion include:

- Provide a range of facilities, services and events that make the Municipality a place for people to live, work and play.
- Develop and implement DIAP that meets the changing needs and expectations of the Municipality.
- Build Council and the community's capacity through education, professional development opportunities and policy development for a knowledgeable, resourceful, accessible and inclusive community.
- Regulate and monitor compliance to legislation.
- Partner with community organisations and other levels of government on initiatives that benefit the community.

Regular and systematic review of DIAP will take place, informed by the relevant Commonwealth and State government legislation and by Council policy and reporting requirements.

# Strategic Framework

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Council's new DIAP aligns with the Principles of Social Justice, Kiama Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, and is informed by the principles outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025.

## Principles of Social Justice

- **Equity:** Everyone should have a fair opportunity to participate in the future of the community, particularly for those in vulnerable circumstances.
- **Access:** All people should have fair access to services, resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life.
- **Participation:** Everyone should have the maximum opportunity to genuinely participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- **Rights:** Equal rights should be established and promoted, with opportunities provided for people.

## The Kiama Community Strategic Plan's (CSP)

The CSP provides an overarching framework for Council to 'embracing diversity of thought, experience and ideas', acknowledging 'our differences add vibrancy and character' to our Municipality. The DIAP is directly aligns with the following CSP aims and strategy:

### Aims

- A strong sense of community and belonging, where social and cultural life flourishes.
- Our families, friends and visitors feel welcome and included.

### Strategy

- Providing spaces, services and initiatives that foster a proud, inclusive and connected community for all.

## The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Principles

- Focusing on abilities and not disabilities
- Fundamental rights for all people
- Genuine dialogue and participation
- Improving access and participation
- Prudent use of resources
- Recongnising the benefits of collaboration
- Principles of Universal Design
- Access is everyone's business

### **The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025**

The Plan identifies priority actions that guide the improvement of the accessibility and inclusivity of organisations, programs, services and facilities. It follows the NSW Government's four recommended focus areas, including:

- Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- Creating accessible and liveable communities
- Supporting access to meaningful employment and economic participation
- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

Keeping in mind these important principles and focus areas, Council has completed the disability inclusion action planning process as required by the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW).



# Legislative Requirements

People living with a disability, their families, carers, and those who support them have a legal right to access service, and facilities. These rights are part of State and Commonwealth policy and legislations which makes it illegal to discriminate against a person with a disability. They include:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 (UNCRPWD)
- Australian Disability Strategy (ADS)
- NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA)
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and related Disability Standards for Access to Premises – Buildings (2010)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS)
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- NSW Government Sector Employment Act 2013
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Disability (Access to Premises – Building) Standards 2010)

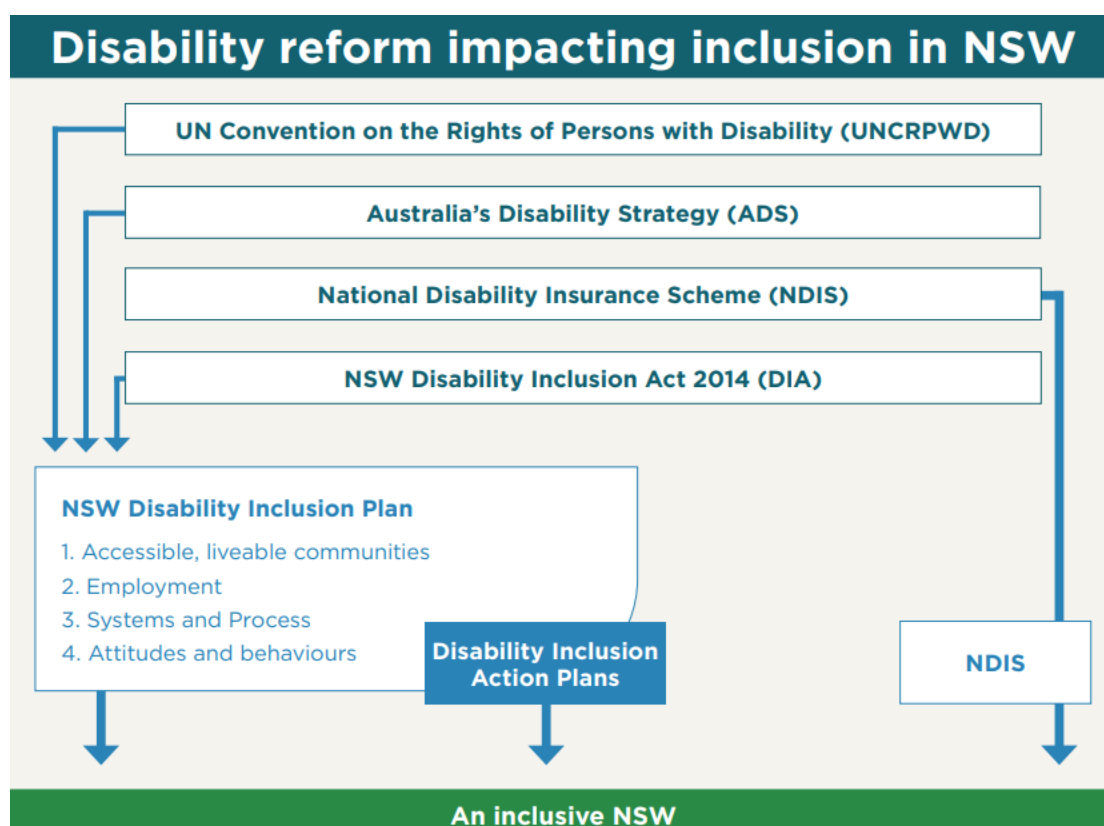


Figure 1. Legislations and Policies that inform the development of DIAP in NSW.

## Context

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1 in 5 Australians have disability – a very large proportion of our society. Most people will experience some type of disability in their lifetime and many of us are also carers and support people, friends or family members with disability. As a society, there is a need to ensure that community attitudes are inclusive, environments are accessible, the workforce is diverse and organisational processes are user friendly.

About 23,000 people live in the Kiama LGA (ABS Census Data/REMPPLAN), with the median age of residents being 48 years. This is higher than the average compared to the NSW average age of 38 per cent. Over its 258 square km area, there are nearly 2,000 businesses, many of whom would have customers and other stakeholders with disability. Of the total population in Kiama in 2021, 5.2% had a need for assistance with core activities due to a profound or severe disability. This means people needing help or assistance in one or more of the three core activity areas of self-care, mobility and communication due to a disability, long term health condition (six months or more) or older age. This result shows an increase of 23 % since this data was previously captured in 2016, demonstrating that people needing assistance in the local area is on the rise.

The prevalence of disability also increases as we age. In 2021, the average age of people living in Kiama was 48 years.

Of the 23,074 residents in Kiama in 2021:

- 16.5 % were aged 60-69 years (most common)
- 12.8 % were aged 50-59 years
- 12.6 % were aged 70-79 years

The 70-79 age bracket is the range that has grown the most since the data was previously captured in 2016, showing a 34 % increase.

# What Are We Already Doing

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Council has been progressively working to enhance access and inclusion for people with disability through programs and services and provision of accessible facilities. The following are highlights of recent achievements and outcomes:

## **Attitudes and behaviours**

- Delivery of Dementia Friendly program.
- Promotion of accessible features of Kiama area.
- Disability awareness training for staff.

## **Liveable communities**

- Installation of additional accessible toilet and change facilities.
- Promotion of accessible tourism and accessible cabins at holiday parks.
- Upgrade Council website and improvements to information provision in accessible formats on Council's communication platforms, including user testing.

## **Employment**

- Offer student placement for people with disability.
- Scoping of recruitment protocols around access and equity principles.

## **Systems and process**

- Allocation of budget to address accessibility barriers and facilitate positive experiences for residents with mobility issues while attending Council community events.
- Provide more information in Easy Read.
- Updating of Council forms and correspondence to increase accessibility.



# Community Consultation – What We Heard

## Methods of Engagement

During the development of the Plan, Council conducted consultations with people with disability, carers, disability support services, visitors, Council staff and the wider community. In addition to the consultation, Council also researched the community profile specific to people with disability and their carers, a review of key policies and strategies, review of best practice and benchmark against other councils in NSW.

Council implemented accessible engagement methods to enable people with communication barriers to participate and have a say. They included:

- 'Have Your Say' webpage.
- Council's social media platforms.
- Public community survey 2022 – 30 community respondents received, with overwhelming majority being people with disability, working in disability sector or being a carer/ family member of person with disability.
- Internal survey targeted at Council staff - 26 staff from all areas of Council completed a DIAP survey (8% with disability, 46 % carer or family member with disability).
- Held focus groups with community members and organisations.
- Feedback sessions with Connected and Liveable Community Advisory Committee.
- Meetings and information sessions with staff regarding the new implementation plan.

## What the community told us

Of the total respondents, 19 % of respondents felt that people with disability are welcomed and included in the Kiama community, whereas 14 % disagreed with this statement. Further, 19 % of survey respondents were aware of accessibility barriers with Council's information content, and 43 % were 'unsure.'

The survey also captured statements and commentary from respondents on what accessibility means to them and suggestions for improvement. Below are highlights of the feedback:

- "Accessible means that something is easy to access for a person with a disability as it is for the general population. Inclusive means people with a disability are represented and accepted within the community".
- "Physically, culturally, psychologically safe and available to all".
- "A place where everyone belongs, is welcome and feels comfortable, without any barriers (physical or social) preventing meaningful participation".
- "I'd like to think in terms of whatever access different people need, rather than disability. Everyone needs something different, and we need to take very broad considerations into our planning so that everyone has access and feels genuinely welcome and equal".

- “More disability specific musical events or a disability friendly session of an event could give more people with a range of disabilities the confidence to get involved and meet others, build connections and feel valued as community members”.
- “Please make sure it’s accessible to everyone on the same level and no one should never ever feel left out”.

**Most pressing issues in Kiama were identified as:**

- Accessible information digitally.
- Staff skill development - providing tools and disability awareness to feel confident when working with people with disability.
- Transport and Parking accessibility issues.
- Physical access (public spaces including footpaths, parks, buildings).
- Lack of jobs available to people with disability.
- Negative attitudes and perceptions.
- Limited training opportunities for people with disability to gain skills.

**Key area for action suggested were:**

- Participation of people with lived experience and/or experience in disability in decision making.
- Increased community awareness and education.
- Better accessible employment and career pathways for people with disability, including internship options.
- More opportunities for social interaction through organised programs and events.
- Better physical accessibility of community venues – leisure centres, parks and events.
- Supporting local businesses to be more inclusive.

# What We Will Do – Action Plan

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Councils play a key role in ensuring the rights, needs and aspiration of people with disability are met. The role of local government can be summarised in the following key functions:

- Oversee **compliance to legislation** regarding access and inclusion within local government authority.
- The **strategic planning** policy and procedures ensures the needs and expectations of the community are met.
- Provision of **facilities, services and events** creates a place for everyone to live, work and play.
- Facilitating **community capacity building** through training, skills development, community development and social policy response.
- Lead **collaboration and partnership** among community and other stakeholders.

The DIAP guides Council in its work with, by and for people with disability, the wider community, service providers and other stakeholders to meet the needs of local people with disability.

The DIAP follows the NSW Government's recommended focus areas to address significant barrier to access and inclusion.

## **Focus Area 1 - Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours.**

A community with positive attitudes, behaviour and awareness of the rights, abilities and inclusion of people with a disability.

### *Rationale*

*The attitudes and behaviours of the general community towards people with disability have been described as the single greatest barrier to full access and inclusion. Attitudes and behaviour permeate all aspects of life. Attitudes towards people with disability are often determined by ignorance, fear or lack of opportunity to interact. Developing positive attitudes involves increasing awareness and changing negative perceptions over time.*

- 1.1 Engage with people with lived experience of disability in local community to inform Council policies, strategies and processes.
- 1.2 Build disability awareness and confidence among local businesses to support employment participation of people with disability.
- 1.3 Inform and empower Council staff to better understand disability and create positive engagement and experiences with people with disability when connecting with Council.
- 1.4 Explore opportunities to represent people with disability in Council imagery, marketing and communication materials.

- 1.5 Deliver programs that promote and enhance access and inclusion in community.

## **Focus Area 2 - Accessible and liveable communities.**

People with disability find it easier to access community buildings, places and activities in the Kiama Local Government Area.

### *Rationale*

*Creating liveable communities focuses attention and resources on the elements of community life that most people want to engage and participate in. Creating liveable communities for people with disability is more than modifying the physical environment. It also covers areas such as accessible housing, access to transport, community recreation, social engagement and universal design.*

- 2.1 Improve access and inclusiveness of Council buildings and facilities.
- 2.2 Improve accessibility in the community, including public toilets, seating and footpaths.
- 2.3 Improve accessibility in natural environment of the Kiama LGA.
- 2.4 Improve accessibility of public transport and parking.
- 2.5 Deliver accessible and inclusive community events and functions.
- 2.6 Improve accessibility for children and young people with disability, including for infrastructure such as playgrounds.

## **Focus Area 3 - Meaningful Employment and Economic Participation**

People with disability have greater access to employment opportunities within Council and in the local area more broadly.

### *Rationale*

*People with disability can experience multiple barriers at all stages of the employment process, ranging from inaccessible interview venues and processes, lack of reasonable adjustments to the work environment, poor career planning opportunities, rigid role descriptions and online testing that may place applicants at a disadvantage. These factors can reduce individual opportunities to gain and retain employment, and in turn mean organisations miss out on working with potential excellent staff and team members.*

- 3.1 Build disability awareness and confidence with Council to support employment participation of people with disability in Council jobs.
- 3.2 Encourage local business to increase employment opportunities for people with disability.

## Focus Area 4 - Systems and processes

People with disability find it easier to independently access the services and processes of Council.

### *Rationale*

*A common issue for people with disability is the difficulty in navigating systems and processes to access the services and supports they need in the community. Some of these difficulties stem from the quality of service and training of front-line personnel, the systems and processes required to access services, and the lack of accessible options for communicating, accessing information or providing input or feedback.*

4.1 Provide Council information in accessible formats.

4.2 Continue to enhance the accessibility of Council's website and social media platforms.

4.3 Conduct targeted and accessible consultation and engagement activities with people with disability and support services on key policies and strategies.





# Implementation, Monitoring And Reporting

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The actions within the new DIAP will be incorporated into Council's operational planning and reporting processes, to ensure they are embedded and wholistically delivered. An internal Implementation Plan has been developed that include priority actions for Council over the next four years, ensuring accountability measures across all Council departments.

A copy of the Plan will be registered with Disability Council NSW and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

The Plan and its priority actions will be reviewed internally with the support of Council's new Sustainable Communities Committee and will be reported through the six monthly and annual reporting timeframes. The outcomes will be included in Council's Annual Report and information will be made available to key advisory groups, supporting agencies and the public.

The DIAP will be implemented as a live plan to ensure priority actions are responsive to the changing and emerging community needs and priorities. Council values community feedback on our progress in meeting the goals and actions outlined in our DIAP. Individuals and organisations are encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences with Council to ensure our continued improvement.

# Thank You

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We would like to thank those people who contributed their time and expertise to participate in the development of this plan, including:

- Our survey respondents
- Our community consultation participants
- Kiama Municipal Council staff
- People with disability who are residents/workers and visitors to the Kiama Municipality.

## More Information

[www.kiama.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au)

02 4232 0444

[council@kiama.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@kiama.nsw.gov.au)

For a free interpreter call us via the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

If you are d/Deaf, hard of hearing or have or speech impairment, please contact us via our National Relay Service number: 02 9707 9000.