

Disability Inclusion Engagement Snapshot

Wollongong City Council is creating its next Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) for 2026–2030. This plan will guide how Council makes services, facilities, and community life more accessible and inclusive. Between July and September 2025, Council ran a broad engagement (feedback gathering) process shaped by advice from people with disability and carers.

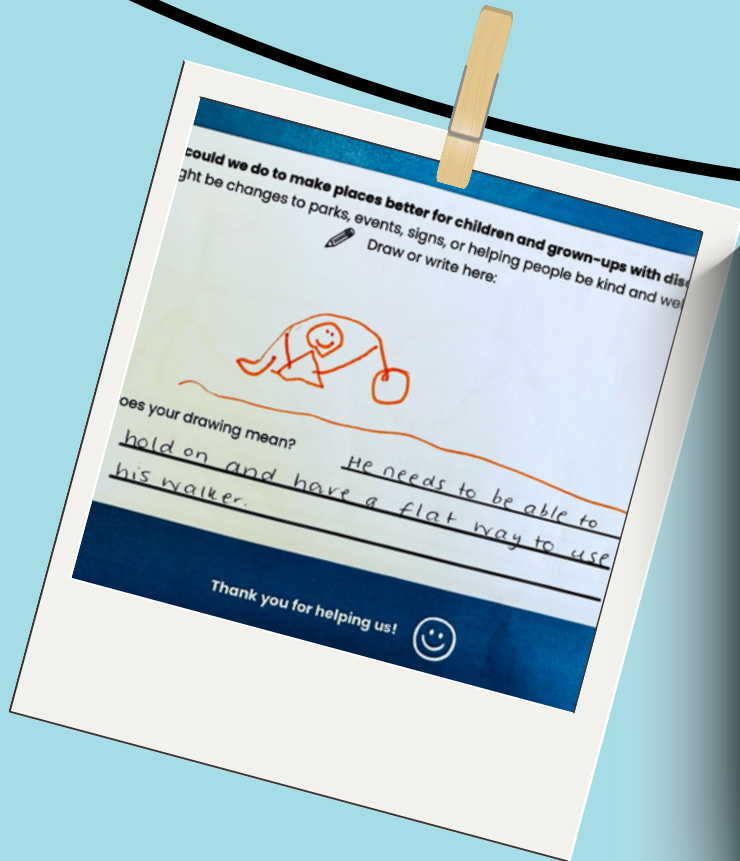
How we let people know about it

- Pre-engagement community check-in (20 people) and Disability Options Expo stand (94 people)
- Social media posts
- Council e-news and community newsletter
- Posters and signs with QR codes
- Library displays with FAQs, printed surveys, and reply-paid envelopes
- On-hold phone message
- Info shared by schools and disability organisations
- Notice in the Illawarra Mercury
- Emails to more than 900 people
- Council's website with FAQs
- Pop-ups and events





Who we heard from



We received 240 submissions. These came from people with lived experience of disability, carers, families, support workers, service providers, and community members. Feedback included voices of children, young people, seniors, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and LGBTQIA+ participants. We heard from people with non-visible, cognitive, intellectual, physical, sensory, and psychosocial disabilities.



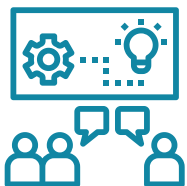


How people shared their feedback



Pop-ups and events

7 events with 196 participants



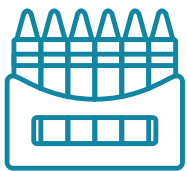
Workshops

8 sessions with 37 participants



Printed surveys

13 responses



Schools

2 workshops with 38 students
10 drawings from preschoolers
11 Community Circle participants



Youth Services programs and outreach

Activities with 17 young people



Meetings

5 targeted sessions with groups and individuals



Online tools

56 contributions via stories and survey



- 6 emails
- 2 phone calls



What we heard

Access to public spaces and facilities

Uneven footpaths, steep kerbs, missing ramps, and poor signage make it hard to get around. Accessible toilets, parking for wheelchair-accessible vans, and beach access are limited.

Community activities and social connection

Inclusive, affordable events and programs are valued. Cost, transport, and inaccessible venues are barriers. People want sensory-friendly programs and intergenerational activities.



Carers, families, and support networks

Carers described challenges balancing their own needs with the demands of caring for loved ones. They asked for more support, clearer information, accessible facilities, shaded seating, and inclusive programs. They want practical features like easy-to-find parking and safe drop-off zones to make going out less stressful.

Inclusive design and sensory needs

Quiet spaces, calm lighting, and reduced noise are important at libraries, playgrounds, and events. People value fenced playgrounds, shaded seating, and hoists in toilets. Crowded places, loud hand dryers, and unexpected noises or lights can make people feel uncomfortable.

Attitudes and respect

Disability awareness, patience, and respectful behaviour matter. People want Council staff trained in accessible communication and neurodiversity.



What we heard

Information and communication

Easy Read, Auslan videos, captions, SMS alerts, large print, and plain English summaries are needed. Information needs to be available in multiple ways. People suggested we add QR codes on signs that link to videos or instructions, and making an “accessible Wollongong” map.



Transport and mobility

People described buses that do not pull close to kerbs, limited services at night, difficulty recognising stops, and hazards created by cluttered footpaths. Some said costly taxi fares and long waiting times reduce their independence.

Employment and workplace inclusion

People shared their experiences of barriers in recruitment and career development in various workplaces, wanting more flexible options and practical assessments. They would like to see more representation in Council’s workforce. Young people need supports to help them move from school or training into employment.

Safety and independence

Lighting, safe crossings, and clear signage help people feel safe. Hazards from e-bikes and scooters were raised. People need privacy and dignity when using accessible toilets, pool hoists and change facilities.

Representation and trust

People want genuine co-design, transparency, and lived experience in decision-making. Trust is especially important for communities who have experienced exclusion or difficulty accessing services.

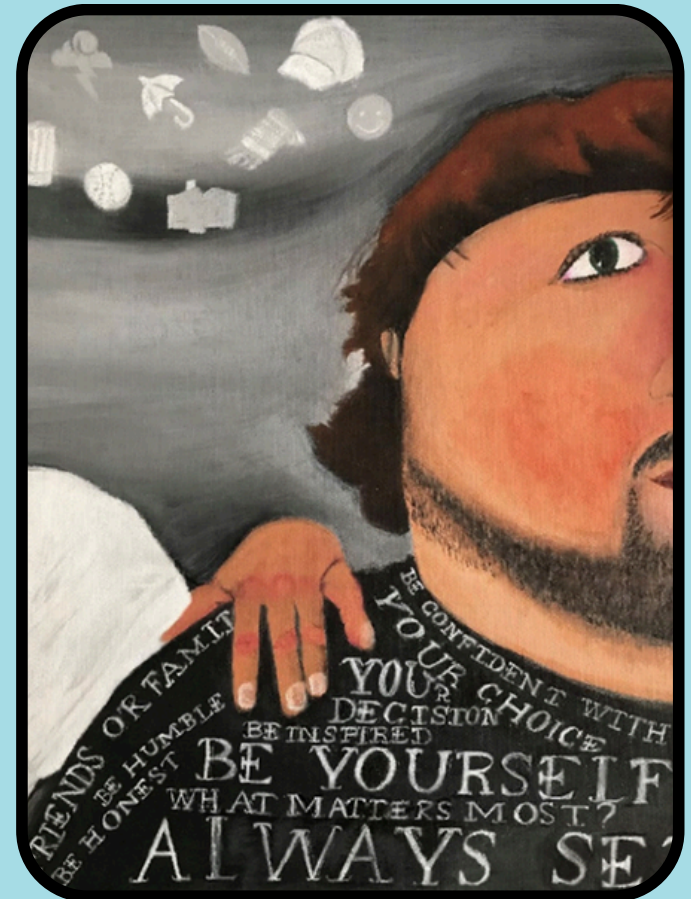
»» What happens next »»

Council will use this feedback, along with research and best practice, to draft the new Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

A draft will be shared for community feedback in early 2026 via Council's website and libraries.

Everyone who provided input will be notified when the draft is available.

**Thank you to everyone
who took part!**



Artwork: "My Path, My Decisions"
by George Williams