wollongong
city of innovation

What young people told us about disability inclusion

By Wollongong City Council

We asked 48 young people with disability what makes a community feel inclusive. Here's what they told us.

feeling welcome and safe

You said inclusion is about more than ramps and signs – it's about attitude. Places feel safe when staff understand disability and neurodivergence, when there are visible signs like rainbow flags or police presence, and when people are kind. Therapy animals? Big yes. Good lighting in parks? Also yes. But hanging out near the Youth Centre can feel unsafe when groups hang around outside.

SENSORY QUIET TIME

getting around

Uneven footpaths, steps without ramps, and blocked paths make getting around hard. Riding bikes along highways with big trucks around doesn't feel safe. Some of you don't like e-scooters and e-bikes and want them banned. You asked for better parking, clearer signs, and free transport in places like Warrawong and Kembla Heights.

BAN E BIKES

public spaces and sensory stuff

Accessible bathrooms aren't always easy to use, and bright lights or loud sounds can make spaces overwhelming. You want info about sensory environments before you go somewhere – like if it's noisy or has harsh lighting. Ramps, elevators, and wheelchair-friendly play areas matter.

communication

Text messages and online updates work best. When you know what to expect, it's less stressful. Some people want Council to come into schools, use posters, and share info through teachers you trust. When people speak slowly to international students, it feels patronising.

What could Wollongong do better to accommodate for people living with disabilities?

Better ramps!! I shouldn't be worried about falling back on the road because the ramp is 90°

Reply

So so many things, I would love to help

Reply

There needs to be more job opportunities for young people with disabilities (with fair wage)

Reply

Keep paths clear and well-paved

Reply

What's something awesome you've seen that makes life better for people living with disability?

Access to ramps or elevators!

Reply

More widespread recognition of the sunflower lanyard has been great

Reply

A sensory area for people with disabilities in a shopping centre

Reply

Quieter spaces (e.g. quiet carriage, supermarkets with a quiet hour)

Reply

Accessible public transport!! its my favourite thing ever.

Reply

Ever noticed a space or service that doesn't work for people with disability?

Maybe a braille trail at the botanical gardens and other council places

Reply

Lack of public transport in areas makes travelling less accessible for everybody (e.g. Yallah)

Reply

The footpaths around Wollongong have lots cracks/dips and are very uneven!

Reply

Got a genius idea to make our community more inclusive?

even walkways

Reply

What makes life easier for you, or someone you know living with disability?

Accessible learning

Reply

Quiet spaces where there aren't big crowds

Reply

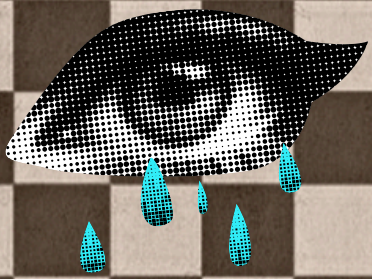
welcome

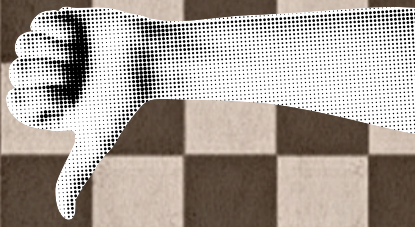
joining in

You're more likely to go to events when spaces are accessible, predictable, and welcoming. It helps if it's free, there's transport, and there are familiar faces like youth workers. Quiet areas and inclusive equipment make activities better for everyone. For those of you with Type 1 diabetes, clear nutrition info at events and venues makes going out safer and easier.

representation and respect

You want communities where disability is normalised and respected. More education about disability, more flexibility for students who need assistive devices, and more people with disabilities working at Council were all suggested. At work, you want bosses who are respectful, actually check in, and get that everyone has different needs.





health and money barriers

Getting diagnoses and support can be expensive and complicated. Some of you said doctors don't take young people seriously enough. Learning to drive can be harder if you have a disability, so free or supported lessons would really help once you're on your L's and trying to be more independent.

what happens next...

Your ideas will help shape Council's next Disability Inclusion Action Plan. This plan sets out what Council will do to make our city more inclusive over the next four years. We'll share updates as the plan develops, so keep an eye on Council's website or drop into the Youth Centre to find out where we're up to with it.

thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts, drawings, and ideas. Your voices matter, and they're making a difference.