

# Tweed Shire Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021

## Executive Summary



**Access** means you can go where you want to in the community: into buildings and outdoor places, on transport and to events. It means there are toilets you can find and use.

**Inclusion** means you feel part of the community and are treated with dignity and respect as a valued and equal member of society.

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## Message from the Mayor

Our vision is for a community where everyone can participate.

Throughout our lives we all become aware of the need for access. This could be as parents pushing a pram, through injury or illness, temporary or permanent impairment, or the process of ageing. We will all want to continue going to places and doing the things that make up our lives. Access and Inclusion Plans help local governments make this possible.

The *Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 - 2021* shows what Council will do to make our community a place that everyone can enjoy.

## About Tweed Shire

Tweed Shire has a population of 94,547. About 18,000 people in Tweed Shire live with a disability including over 6,500 who need assistance with daily living. About 12% of Tweed residents are caring for others.

*Source: ABS Estimated Resident Population, prepared by .id, the population experts. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016. ABS 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)*

## About the Access and Inclusion Plan

This plan, through the NSW Disability Inclusion Act, focusses on people with a disability. Living with a disability or the challenges due to ageing covers a wide range of experiences and conditions. Almost everyone or someone we know will experience physical or psychological challenges through their lives. Inclusion is about everyone in a community feeling they belong.

The 2014 *Disability Inclusion Act* says all councils in NSW must make Disability Inclusion Action Plans. In Tweed we call it our Access and Inclusion Plan.

The NSW Government asks us to cover four areas in the plan. These are:

1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes

## **How the Access and Inclusion Plan was made**

We made the Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2021 after talking with people in the community and in Council. We talked with many different people including older people and people with dementia, people with disabilities, parents, carers, workers and volunteers. The people we talked with live in all parts of Tweed Shire.

We found out what people think are the most important things we need to do to improve access and inclusion in Tweed Shire.

This plan cannot do everything we want or need to do for access and inclusion. We had to work out what we are able to do over the next three years.

## **What the community told us**

People told us that overall Tweed is a friendly and welcoming place but there are still many physical barriers and the inconsiderate behaviour of others that need to change.

Within Council we want to make sure we plan and build facilities to the best access standards. We want to include the right people at the right time in the project planning process and make sure the information we provide is accessible to the widest number of people in the community.

## **How the Access and Inclusion Plan fits in to Council planning**

This plan is funded under Council's Long Term Financial Plan which provides the budget for the *Community Strategic Plan 2013–2023*. External funding through grant applications may also be needed.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act says Councils must report on our progress as we work on the plan. Actions in this Plan will be included in our four year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.

## **How the Access and Inclusion Plan is put together**

The Plan is organised under the four areas given by the NSW Government we mentioned earlier. Under each area we say what we want to do over the next three years.

## **Focus area 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours**

This means a community where everyone feels they belong

### **We will use community education and information to promote access for inclusion**

Council has an important community education role in many different areas. We want to take the lead in changing community attitudes and behaviours so everyone can go about their business as easily and safely as possible.

In this plan we will focus on the safety of pedestrians, the use of designated accessible parking bays, the safety of assistance animals, guide dogs and their owners, supporting inclusion in community groups and organisations, maintaining knowledge and skills of Council staff and making partnerships that support inclusion in the community.

## **Focus area 2: Liveable and accessible communities**

This means the barriers removed so people can get on with living

### **We will extend our thinking and practice to incorporate a Universal Design approach**

Universal design means the design of everything with everyone in mind. This includes places, things, information, communication and policies.

We will develop guidelines on applying a universal design approach to assist Council planning, projects, activities and services to create a liveable and accessible community. This will guide the way we do our business.

### **Focus area 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment**

This means the same opportunities as everyone else for a fulfilling and productive life

#### **We will be a great example as an inclusive employer**

Council is the largest employer in the Tweed Shire. We want to continue our efforts to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

In this plan we will focus on promotion of Council as an inclusive employer, training for staff involved in recruitment and encourage people with disabilities to volunteer with Council.

### **Focus area 4: Improving access to services through better systems and processes**

This means obtaining what the rest of the community would consider an ordinary life

#### **Council has a key role in the community as a provider of services and information.**

In this plan we will focus on accessible information and communication methods. This includes all aspects of our organisation, our website and other online platforms and our printed information.

For the full plan and action tables go to [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au)