

Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan 2023–2026

Summary



Acknowledgement of the Bundjalung Aboriginal Nation

Tweed Shire Council acknowledges the Ngandowal and Minyungbal speaking people of the Bundjalung Country, in particular the Goodjinburra, Tul-gi-gin and Moorung – Moobah clans, as being the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters within the Tweed Shire boundaries.

We also acknowledge and respect the Tweed Aboriginal community's right to speak for its Country and to care for its traditional Country in accordance with its laws, customs and traditions.

A message from the Mayor

I am delighted to present the Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2026 – our third since 2014.

This Plan demonstrates our continued commitment to ensuring equal opportunity for people with disability in the Tweed to participate in every aspect of working and community life and have access to Council and community programming, education, events, information and infrastructure.

This Plan embodies our values:

Living and loving the Tweed.

We look after people and places, explore all opportunities and are proud of our passionate approach.

We care about each other, choose to be here, and are in this together.

We have conversations where everyone can contribute and we are willing to have a go.

We put back in to make a difference, so that our Tweed community is even better tomorrow than it is today.

Council delivers more than 50 services to our residents and visitors and this Plan will help us to make sure as many people as possible can access them. Our commitments within this Plan focus on making inclusion a core business of Council delivered internally and with partners in community, government, and business.

We aim to build on our previous effort and achievements. We aim to keep listening to our community and staff about their priorities and ideas for making the Tweed more inclusive.

We aim to make lasting improvements and benefit everyone in our diverse community, now and in the future.

I acknowledge and wish to thank everyone involved in providing feedback to develop this Plan, particularly those with lived experience of disability.



Chris Cherry
Mayor of Tweed

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How to read this document

This is a summary of the Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan 2023–2026.

This Plan is also available in different versions including:

- 1 Full detailed text only versions for screen reader devices – available in word and pdf.
- 2 Easy Read versions as text only and screen reader accessible with images – available in word and html.
- 3 A full detailed graphic version with images, graphs and tables – available as pdf.

This Plan was prepared by and is for Tweed Shire Council to deliver, in some cases in partnership with community, business and other government.

When we say 'our,' 'we' or 'us' in this plan, we mean Tweed Shire Council staff and elected Councillors.

Important words are presented in bold. There is a list of important words and definitions on page 9.

Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

The Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan 2022–2026 ('the Plan') is about the work that Council intends to do to help make sure that people with disability have fair access to our programs and services.

Our aim is for everyone to be included in community life in the Tweed.

The Tweed Access and Inclusion Plan 2023–2026 serves as Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan, as required by the [NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021–2025](#) and legislated by [NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014](#)

Who this Plan is for

The work described in this Plan will benefit everyone in our community because it is about creating a place where everyone feels like they belong, can participate, and have a say, no matter their abilities.

In particular, it aims to help people with **disability** living and visiting the Tweed to **access** our programs and services and take part in our society.

That **disability** could be any limitation, restriction or impairment which affects a person's everyday activities, lasts at least 6 months and may make it harder for the person to participate in the community the same way most other people can.

Disability can be described as impairments and can take many forms, for example:

- a. Sensory impairments affect vision or sight and hearing
- b. Physical and mobility challenges
- c. Neurological, cognitive and intellectual conditions affect a person's thinking and understanding
- d. Psychosocial limitations can affect how a person thinks, feels or interacts with others like depression, bipolar or anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder.

Some impairments or health conditions are not visible or do not appear obvious.

About 17,200 people live with a **disability** and over 33,000 people are over 60 years old in the Tweed. Over 7,200 people in the Tweed need help with activities due to their **disability**, health condition or due to old age and there are over 10,000 carers in the Tweed who give their time to help a family member, friend or persons with **disability**.

Why we have made this Plan

Council has made this Plan because we want to support our community to be **inclusive** and care for each other to create stronger community bonds and support for those in need.

We are also responsible, under international, national and state law, to protect the rights and interests of people with **disability** in the Tweed.

We deliver more than 50 services to our residents and visitors and this Plan will help us to make sure as many people as possible can **access** them. This Plan builds on work we have done already and has new ideas that our community has told us are important to them.

We want to keep making a difference so that our Tweed community is better tomorrow than it is today.

How we prepared this Plan

This is Council's third Disability Inclusion Action Plan under NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014.

To prepare this Plan, we looked at what actions we delivered from the last Plan and what had not been done yet. We looked at information and data about what our community needs. We also listened to our community and staff about what was important and learned about work that other Councils were doing to help their communities.

Our vision is guided by principles of **Respect, Equity, participation, Access, Collaboration, Integrity of Service** – and aims to align with the guiding principles of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025, Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Our new actions

The new actions in the Plan will be delivered until 2026. They focus on 4 areas of Council services and programs:

- 1 developing positive community **attitudes** and behaviours
- 2 creating liveable and accessible communities
- 3 supporting **access** to meaningful employment
- 4 improving **access** to services through better systems and processes.

Focus area 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Feeling welcome and a part of community is very important to a person's health and wellbeing. It can give a person confidence to **access** information and ask questions, to learn, look for and find work, take part in social activities and meet new people.

Some people with disability feel they are treated differently or left out because other people think they can't do things or can't be involved.

- Council will help our staff and our community to better understand the **diverse** nature and rights of people of all abilities.
- We will listen and work together with people of different abilities, their families and their carers and help connect them with social and community groups, recreation groups, business groups and education groups and schools.
- We will celebrate and share stories about how our community can work together to improve attitudes and behaviours.

Focus area 2: Creating liveable and accessible communities

Council designs, builds and looks after our natural areas, parks, pathways, toilets, buildings, facilities and services so that they are safe, healthy and can bring people together. It is important that everyone can use and enjoy them.

- Council will check that everyone can **access** our facilities, like buildings, toilets and community halls.
- We will listen to people about any problems they might have using our buildings, community facilities, information or services.
- We will work with government agencies and others to plan, build and repair our parks, places and facilities to make sure everyone can use and enjoy them.
- We will help community and business groups, and organisers of events and markets to learn about ways people with **disability** can **access** their spaces, products and services.
- We will create and publish information and maps about places, services and information that are accessible and **inclusive** of people with disabilities.
- We will develop a wayfinding and signage guide for our open spaces and facilities so that people with different abilities can find and make their way around easily and safely.

Focus Area 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment

Council is the largest employer in the Tweed and we want to improve the **diversity** of our workforce. We also want to make sure that everyone in the Tweed has **access** to work and learning. This means that a person can earn an income and be independent in their life, and work can also bring a feeling of self-worth and improve a person's mental and physical health. However, people with disability can experience many barriers to finding and keeping work.

- To help, Council plans to look at different and creative ways for people with **disability** to work or volunteer with Council. We will work together with researchers, advocates and partners in **disability** employment and education sectors to help us.
- We will offer training to staff about how to create an **inclusive** work environment.
- We will review programs that aim to employ people with **disability**, including looking at how to advertise our roles, recruit and train our staff.
- We will review how **inclusive** and accessible our workplace, workspaces, facilities, assistive technologies and other software is.

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

Council communicates and engages with our residents, workers and visitors in accessible ways, so everyone can find information about events, activities, programs and decisions being made that may affect their lives, and they are able to contribute their own perspectives.

- We will provide alternative customer touchpoints including service counters, online and telephone. Council will continue to deliver accessible information and tools on Council websites, including accessible webforms.
- We will provide information toolkit training for our staff on how to improve **inclusion** in their services, programs and policies.
- We will review our information systems to build in customer communication requests and **access** barrier reports.
- We will deliver and support others to host events, consultations and meetings that are **inclusive** of people of all abilities.
- We will review our grants programs to remove barriers, and work to ensure our services, programs and policies are as inclusive of people with **disability** as possible.

How we will track our achievements

The actions in this Plan are shared across different parts of Council and sometimes we will work with community, government and business partners to deliver them.

The success of our Plan relies on Council staff making gradual, measurable changes to how we do our work. We will track our actions every 3 months and report on our actions every year in Council's Annual Report.

Our Community Development Officer Inclusion and the Tweed Equal Access Advisory Committee will work with our staff to help them understand their responsibilities to implement the actions that under our Plan.

Important terms and definitions

Access / Accessible

Access means making sure that people with disabilities can easily take part in everything in the community, like going places, using services, getting information, and joining activities, without facing unnecessary problems or things that stop them. It's about treating everyone fairly and making things work for everyone.

Attitudes

Our attitudes are what we think, feel and believe.

Inclusion / Inclusive

Inclusion means making sure that people with disabilities are welcome and involved in all parts of society. It's about creating a place where everyone feels like they belong, can participate and have a say.

Disability

Disability could be any limitation, restriction or impairment which affects a person's everyday activities, lasts at least 6 months and may make it harder for the person to participate in the community the same way most other people can.

These conditions can take many forms, for example:

- a. Sensory impairments affect vision or sight and hearing
- b. Physical and mobility challenges
- c. Neurological, cognitive and intellectual conditions affect a person's thinking and understanding

- d. Psychosocial limitations can affect how a person thinks, feels or interacts with others like depression, bipolar or anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder.

Some conditions or impairments are complex and multi-dimensional. Some are not visible or do not appear obvious.

Diversity

When something is diverse, it means lots of different people take part in it.

This includes people with different:

- abilities
- ages
- backgrounds
- beliefs.

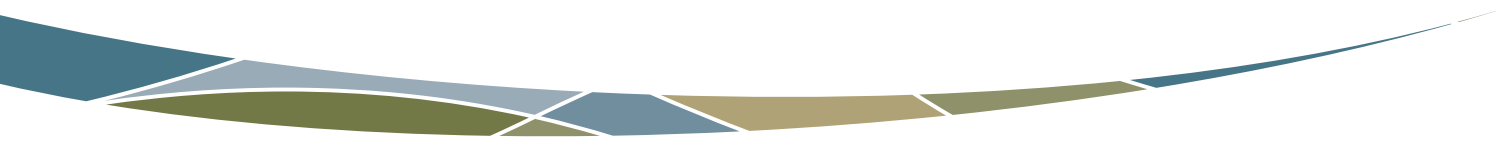
Contact us

You can contact us for more information about our Plan, in different ways:

Email us: tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au

Call us: 02 6670 2400. If you're deaf or find it hard hearing or speaking to people on the phone, the [National Relay Service](#) can help.

Cover: Courtney Peate’s Connect and Captivate team at Tweed Shire Council’s International Day of People with Disability community event, December 2022. Photo credit: Pipi and Palm Photography.



Contact and connect

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