



WALCHA COUNCIL

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Walcha Council has undertaken the development of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) within an environment of strong support and commitment for such a Plan. The background to the DIAP includes the structure and functions of Council and the demographic and geographic profile of the community. The DIAP is underpinned by Council's policies and legislative and regulatory requirements. Council's values and principles guide the development of the DIAP and responsibilities have been allocated throughout the Council structure. The DIAP will be incorporated into Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPR), with the goals being included in the 2017-2021 Delivery Program and subsequent Annual Operational Plans. Details about the consultation process and methodology introduce the identification of priorities by the stakeholders. The objectives are analysed and a risk management process undertaken, before incorporating the items under existing **Walcha-2027** (ten (10) year community strategic plan) items and existing or new Delivery Program items.

2. BACKGROUND

*"Walcha is located in the beautiful and very productive New England Tablelands regions of New South Wales. The Walcha Local Government Area has an area of 640,858 hectares and a total population of 3,187 people." "It is one of the most productive agricultural regions in Australia. It is also a major hardwood timber supplier and is a significant supplier of softwood"*¹ Residents are located in the town of Walcha and in the villages and surrounding rural areas.

Walcha is a friendly town with a strong sense of community. Residents value their identity highly and one of the six (6) priorities identified during the development of the Community Strategic Plan (2013) was "Maintaining the Feel and Identity of Walcha." This fierce independence, fostered perhaps by the size and location of Walcha, was apparent in the successful bid to retain the Walcha local government area as an independent Council (2015-2016) thus avoiding amalgamation with neighbouring Councils. Residents are distinguished by an acute awareness of community obligation which is demonstrated in self-reliance and resilience when it comes to providing informal supports for people with a disability- *"We always help each other out if it's needed."* In other words, the community has an existing belief in inclusion.

There are a broad range of specialist and mainstream services available for Walcha residents. For some services, people will have to travel to regional centres such as Armidale or Tamworth, but many organisations provide local or outreach services in Walcha. Walcha Council is a direct provider of services for older people, people with a disability and their carers through:

Community Home Support Program (CHSP)

- Social Support, group and individual
- Transport
- Meals

Community Care Support Program (CCSP) including social support, meals and transport, for people with a disability, now transitioning to NDIS individual packages
Community Transport

¹ Walcha 2027 P. 6

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Local Access Bus
Early Intervention services for children with a disability
Preschool
Public Access Computers
Library

Walcha Council supports community organisations through S355 Committees and Councillor representation, including, (but not limited to):

- Beautification and Tidy Towns Committee
- Traffic Committee
- Roads Management Committee
- Baths and Squash Courts Committee
- Preschool Advisory Committee
- Arts Advisory Committee
- Youth Advisory Committee
- Australia Day Committee
- Walcha Mountain Festival Committee

Councillor delegates are also appointed to support independent committees and groups:

- Central and Northern Regional Library Committee
- Country Library of NSW
- Arts North West
- Namoi Councils Joint Organisation
- Walcha Local Health Committee
- Country Mayors Association
- Walcha Community Consultation Committee
- Walcha Australia Day Committee
- Local Emergency Management Committee

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), which has been developed by Walcha Council, defines strategies and provides a planning framework to promote inclusion and equity for people with a disability, so they may fully participate in, and contribute to, social, business and community life. The DIAP will enhance and complement the existing service provision by Walcha Council and other providers.

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The DIAP is incorporated into the Walcha Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework and aligns with the goals set in their Community Strategic Plan *Walcha-2027*, the *2017-2021 Delivery Program* and *Annual Operational Plans*. "All the goals and strategies that are developed seek to attain an outcome that is sustainable and strives for equity, access, participation and equal rights, particularly for the disadvantaged and vulnerable".

3. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

DEFINITION

In the context of the DIAP, disability includes functional impairments or limitations, which may be present from birth, acquired by accident or illness or due to the process of ageing. The impairments may be substantial or seemingly minor, temporary or permanent.

LEGISLATION

Direct service provision for people with a diagnosed disability by specialist and mainstream services (both government and non-government) is underpinned by legislation and policy including:

- [*Principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with a Disability*](#)
- [*Australian Government NDIS Act 2013*](#)
- [*Australian Government Aged Care \(Living Longer Living Better\) Act 2013*](#)
- [*NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*](#)
- [*NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*](#)

The most recent legislation and amendments reflect a shift towards the view that, while a disability may affect the way that a person interacts with others and their environment, it should not define a person and it should not limit their capacity to become an integral part of the community. Although the rights of a person with a disability have been defined as the same rights as those of all people, since the early 1990s, it is understood that upholding these rights must include promotion of individual choice about what is important to them, universal access to services and facilities and inclusive communities where individuals can fully participate in social, business and community life.

These cultural and philosophical developments are embedded in the *Australian Government NDIS Act 2013* and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* which are complementary pieces of legislation dealing with funding of specialist supports and community responsibility and response respectively.

The *NDIS Act 2013* defines how reasonable and necessary supports are funded and provided for all people with a disability and is administered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) which is rolling out in the New England Tablelands area in 2016.

² *Walcha-2027*, P. 8

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The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* promotes the view that ‘inclusion’ is not only a goal for service providers and public and private sector organisations, it is a responsibility of the whole community. It legislates for the rights of people with a disability to full participation in every-day life, with enhanced community connection, independence, empowerment and wellbeing. It is the role of local government through a **Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)** to promote and support inclusion in their communities.

The Walcha DIAP will have four (4) Focus Areas:

1. Positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Liveable Communities (including physical access to buildings and facilities, and transport)
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes (which is about availability and accessibility of information regarding services).

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Walcha Council’s vision is, **“To be a vibrant, welcoming and resilient community that supports our citizens, businesses, industries and environments.”**³

*“The principles and values that underpin the framework for developing **Walcha-2027** are social justice and sustainability.”* As with the strategic plan, these principles and values reinforce the goals and strategies included in the DIAP and *“seek to attain an outcome that is sustainable and strives for equity, access, participation and equal rights, particularly for the disadvantaged and vulnerable”*⁴ and aligns with the philosophy behind the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*.

5. WALCHA COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

ROLE OF COUNCIL

Council’s role in implementation of the DIAP will include⁵:

- ❖ **As Leader:** *Council will lead the development and implementation of detailed plans and actions to implement the strategy and to achieve progress towards the identified goal: through direct service provision and review of Council policies and procedures-Aligns with Core business and functions of Council*
- ❖ **As Facilitator:** *Council will facilitate the development and implementation of detailed plans and actions with other stakeholders to implement the strategy and achieve progress towards the identified goal: through S355 Committees, delegating Councillor representatives to community organisations and supporting local business and community initiatives- Partial or shared responsibility with community or government partners*

³ *Walcha-2025* the Community Strategic Plan adopted by Council 26 June 2013, P. 13

⁴ From *Walcha-2025* the Community Strategic Plan adopted by Council 26 June 2013, P. 8

⁵ From *Walcha-2025* the Community Strategic Plan adopted by Council 26 June 2013, P. 14

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- ❖ As **Advocate**: Council will advocate for the development and implementation of detailed plans and actions with other stakeholders to implement the strategy and achieve progress towards the identified goal: through representation to regional bodies and other levels of government, promotion of ideas and distribution of information- Advocate, educate and support on behalf of the community.

EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Walcha Council supports the development and implementation of the DIAP. The General Manager, Jack O'Hara, has delegated overall responsibility for the DIAP to the Manager Community Services, Karen Kermodé.

PROJECT COORDINATION

Karen Kermodé Manager Community Services, Cathy Noon Coordinator Community Care, and Rhonda Barnet Early Intervention Coordinator, have shared responsibility for coordination of the project and liaison with **Strategy to Action**.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Walcha Council engaged **Strategy to Action** to carry out the development of the plan through community consultation, collation of results and identification of priorities, preparation of the **DIAP Report** (this report) and development of goals and actions for alignment with **Walcha-2027** and inclusion in the **Walcha Council 2017-2021 Delivery Program**.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY INPUT

Administration Department (Library, Council Records, Equal Employment Opportunity, Preschool and HR) represented by General Manager Jack O'Hara, Karen Kermodé

Community Services Department (Community Services, Library and Youth, Preschool and Early Intervention) represented by Karen Kermodé, Cathy Noon and Rhonda Barnet.

Environmental Services Department (Public Health, Strategic Planning, Town Planning, Building Control, Council Buildings and Amenities) represented by Lacey Latham

Engineering Department (Kerb and Gutter, Parks, Gardens and Playgrounds, Sporting Fields, Street Scaping, Public Toilets, Road Safety, Street Lighting, Footpaths and Cycleways, Traffic Management) represented by Dylan Reeves.

IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for implementation and resourcing of the DIAP will be across all sections of Council as identified in **Walcha-2027**, the **2017-2021 Delivery Program** and the **Annual Operational Plans**, and the departmental responsibility as outlined above.

6. INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

Goals and strategies of Walcha Council are underpinned by eight themes which provide focus and direction for the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) framework⁶. The four focus areas for the DIAP may be positioned within those:

In Walcha-2027

- CSP1 Transport
- CSP2 Business and Jobs
- CSP3 Health
- CSP4 Education and Training

- CSP5 Stronger Communities
- CSP6 Local Environment and Liveable Communities

- CSP7 Keeping People Safe

- CSP8 Better Government

Focus Areas for DIAP

- ⇒ Liveable communities Focus Area 2
- ⇒ Supporting access to meaningful employment, Focus Area 3
- ⇒ Supporting access to meaningful employment, Focus Area 3
- ⇒ Positive community attitudes and behaviours, Focus Area 1 and
Improving access to services through better systems and processes,
Focus Area 4
- ⇒ N/A
- ⇒ Positive community attitudes and behaviours, Focus Area 1 and
Improving access to services through better systems and processes,
Focus Area 4
- ⇒ N/A
- ⇒ Liveable communities, Focus Area 2

7. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Walcha Council local government area has a population of 3,187 people. Given this small population and the relative isolation of Walcha, (it is off the main State highways), the community is tight knit, resilient and to a large extent self-sufficient. Although there are a broad range of community committees, organisations and leisure groups, many individuals are involved in several of the groups, so that key individuals are able to represent many demographic, geographic and interest groups which made for data rich group consultation and a public forum. Individual surveys provided an opportunity for all Walcha residents to prioritise issues in the four focus areas.

⁶ From *Walcha-2025* the Community Strategic Plan adopted by Council 26 June 2013, P. 14

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ABS statistics confirm that (at 2011) 16.3% of people have specific limitations on their activities and participation in community life. This suggests that approximately 500 people in Walcha and the surrounding district have some form of limiting disability. While some of these (6.3% or about up to 190 individuals in Walcha) will be supported by specialist or mainstream services, the remainder will probably experience some barriers to full participation in social and community life. By developing strategies that address the identified priorities, Walcha can become “*a vibrant welcoming and resilient community*” for all its residents.

As background to the consultation and to confirm issues which have been previously identified in the Walcha Council local government area, a review of existing documents was undertaken:

- **Walcha 2027** which incorporates the broad goals for the ten (10) year strategic plan, including those relevant to inclusion and access for people with a disability
- **Walcha Council Delivery Program 2017-2021** provides detailed strategies for the broad goals of **Walcha-2027**
- **Walcha Council complaints register**- there were no complaints in the last two (2) years relevant to disability access, equity or inclusion
- **Walcha Council Community Care (WCCC) Policy Manual**-this manual includes the policies: *Service Access, Client Rights, Information Provision, Independence and Individual Outcomes, Inclusion and Participation, and Community and Consumer Participation*, which reflect and implement the goals of the DIAP for WCCC service users
- **Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP)**- which is planned, but not yet developed, which will increase opportunities for funding for footpaths, cycle-ways and pedestrian ramps.

The extensive consultation carried out for **Walcha-2027** in 2013 identified key issues relevant to people with a disability and included:

- Public transport, including local and to centres such as Tamworth and Armidale
- Infrastructure for the safe movement of pedestrians and cycle traffic
- Adequate parking
- Education and training programs for young people
- Access to information about health services and other specialist services
- Activities that promote participation in community events
- Library, sporting and leisure facilities
- Participation in decisions about the local community
- Access and involvement in local organisations
- Minimising crime and antisocial behaviour

STAKEHOLDERS

In seeking to more fully understand and identify the barriers to inclusion and seek solutions, information and input was sought from stakeholders including:

- Walcha residents and visitors
- Service providers
- Walcha Council

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- People with a disability and their carers
- Aboriginal people
- Older people
- People with temporary or minor limitations to functional capacity due to illness or medical conditions
- Community organisations and groups
- Local businesses
- Walcha Central School and other remote schools
- Walcha Preschool.

Feedback was obtained through surveys, consultation with individuals and key groups and a public forum.

Approximately 300 surveys⁷ were distributed through service delivery points, key organisations, and individual distribution including but not limited to:

- Walcha Council Community Care
- Walcha Council Early Intervention
- Aspley Advocate
- Walcha Community Hub
- Men's Shed
- Tamworth SCAN Meeting
- Walcha Council consultation meetings at Woolbrook, Europambella, Nowendoc and Yarrowitch
- Walcha Preschool
- Walcha Support Group
- Walcha Council Advisory Group
- Public Forum for NDIS and DIAP

⁷ See Appendix 1

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

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METHODOLOGY		
Engagement Processes	Priority issues to be explored	Priority issues identified
People with a disability, their carers and families: Inform, Consult, Involve in setting priorities, review, evaluation and feedback, Collaborate in setting priorities, Empower to provide feedback.		
Questionnaires and attendance at focus group (25 participants).	Transport, community involvement, employment, access, inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for employment and/or meaningful contribution to community • Adequate and appropriately located disability parking • Good footpaths and crossings; local and inter-town transport • Feeling welcome in clubs and organisations • Signage for disability toilets • Upgrade of disability toilet facilities at clubs • Being able to find information easily through a variety of means • Access to businesses particularly banks, hardware store • Know where to go to raise issues of inclusion or access • Upgrades of facilities to take the needs of people with a disability into account.
Advisory Group: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower		
Questions at meeting, open discussion (9 participants)	Transport, community involvement, employment, access, inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion agenda for all advisory meetings which will assist the group to focus on this area • Footpaths generally good • National Bank entry difficult • Toilet with Disability access doesn't have signs (to direct people to these toilets) • 1 Disability parking spot only • Disability parking near Post Office and Chemist would be beneficial • Wheelchair bus doesn't have easy access to town centre • No taxi service • No tactile indicators • Concern about colour of walkers (hard to see)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested Uber drivers in Walcha (possibly transport volunteers?) • CHSP transport has regular trips to outlying villages • Mobility Scooter which could be loaned at IGA or somewhere central? • Grocery stores deliver • CCC meeting takes complaints/concerns from the community and will pass on to the Council where necessary • There is no secure & warm place for people who are waiting for transport or the bus
<p>Walcha Council staff: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate</p>		
<p>Consultation with Walcha Council staff: General Manager Jack O'Hara; Community Services Manager Karen Kermode, Manager Environmental Services Lacey Latham, Director Engineering Dylan Reeves;; Community Care Coordinator Cathy Noon; Early Intervention Coordinator Rhonda Barnet.</p>	<p>Provisions in service delivery for people with a disability, facilities and access, events and access, transport, information provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of streetscape to incorporate any issues of inclusion and access. • Development of a PAMP so that funding for improvements to crossings and ramps can be applied for. • Information for local builders and tradespeople regarding Australian Standards and how to make facilities more disability friendly. • Community Care Coordinator to be included in Local Emergency Management Meetings • Information provided to Early Intervention families • Information about NDIS to be provided to people with a disability • Review of the way that services are provided to people with a disability and frail aged under NDIS and My Aged Care
<p>Specialist Disability Providers: Inform, Consult, Involve in determining priorities, Collaborate in making changes to ways that services are delivered</p>		
<p>Pathfinders Ability Links; Walcha Council Community Care; Walcha Early Intervention; Walcha Preschool; Walcha Central School; FACS (Dept of Family & Comm. Services), Ageing Disability and Home Care; Disability Advocacy; St. Vincent de Paul Local Area Coordinators; Walcha Community Hub.</p>	<p>Barriers to full participation, priorities for inclusion, penetration of service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do people get information? • A need to involve people with a disability in local community activities and events • Employment is an issue, and voluntary work may be seen as an alternative if it is meaningful, interesting to the person and something they want to do • A local wheelchair accessible taxi is commencing • People do not know about the Community Hub and the information that it may be able to provide.

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Mainstream Service Providers: Inform, Consult, Collaborate in better ways to delivery services		
Community Health	Inclusion, barriers to inclusion	Surveys provided, but no feedback obtained.
Schools and Education providers: Inform, Consult about barriers, Collaborate in facilitating better relationships between families and teachers		
Walcha Central School (2 respondents).	Inclusion, barriers to inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers at the Walcha Central School advised that what they found most difficult was finding information about disability services or where students could get information about jobs.
Recreation, leisure, sporting clubs and groups: Inform about access and participation barriers, Consult about ways to address the issues, Involve in deciding on strategies, Collaborate in implementing strategies, Empower to ongoing engagement		
Walcha Support Group (12 participants); Walcha Men's Shed;	Inclusion, barriers to inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paths very uneven Pram ramps – not enough of these-they need to be adjacent to disabled parking spaces so that wheelchairs can access the footpath, needed outside the Post Office, NAB, Telecottage & Blood Clinic, Pharmacy. Pram ramps should be opposite each other for safe access across the street Difficulty accessing Post Office Two disability parks at one location only (Near the Chemist and Post Office would be the best), need to be outside the pharmacy, Post Office, and Telecottage; disable park at the Bowling Club needs re-locating to a more user friendly location No designated park for wheelchair bus One of the members will identify 'hot spots' through town where it is difficult to access <p>See also Appendix 2 for the Walcha Support Group response</p>
Walcha Councillors and Committees: Inform about potential for participation in decision making, consult about ways to attract people to committees, involve in development of strategies, empower to continuing engagement of people with a disability		

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Council Community Consultation (estimated 25-30 participants)	Service provision, inclusion, planning, allocation of resources	Information was provided and surveys handed out at Community Consultation meetings at Woolbrook, Europambella, Nowendoc and Yarrowitch
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8. PRIORITIES AND SOLUTIONS

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

Returned surveys and consultation meetings presented a clear picture of priorities with suggestions and solutions:

1. *“Ensuring that people with a disability have opportunities to contribute to their community in a variety of ways [Focus Area 1]”* It was suggested that volunteer work and positions on local committees, while unpaid, could enhance self-esteem and a sense of self-worth, help change community attitudes and behaviours, and develop skills that could be beneficial in paid employment
2. *“Ensuring that disability parking is adequate, in the right places, and appropriate for unloading wheelchairs if required [Focus Area 2].* Almost all responses suggested at least two (2) disability parks are needed to be located near the Post Office and the Pharmacy; having a safe area to down load wheelchairs from the access bus was also needed
3. *“Ensuring that local and regional transport are adequate [Focus Area 2]”.* Transport locally and to regional centres for medical appointments was seen as generally adequate, and there was a strong sense of community in that those with access to a vehicle would offer transport to social activities for those without their own transport; but there are obvious deficits in opportunities for accessing social and community activities and events, and travel to regional centres for pleasure or recreation was also limited
4. *“Having good footpaths and safe crossings throughout Walcha and the villages [Focus Area 2]”* There have been considerable improvements in the footpaths and cycle ways, but there is room for improvement; The Walcha Support Group identified areas of concern⁸
5. *“Having good disability toilets and facilities in local clubs and sporting venues” [Focus Area 2]* Although this isn’t an area of direct responsibility for Council, there are some improvements needed, and it was suggested that Council could advocate for better facilities. Consideration should also be given to providing disability toilet and changing facilities in village areas such as Yarrowitch.
6. *“Improvements in access to some businesses” [Focus Area 2]* This is a shared responsibility with Council collaborating with businesses to provide access from footpaths into business premises

⁸ Appendix 2

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7. *“Upgrading playgrounds to meet the needs of children with a disability and their families [Focus Area 2].* As Council maintains and upgrades children’s playgrounds, there is an opportunity to consider the design of these so that they meet the needs of children with a disability.

FOCUS AREA 1 DEVELOPING POSITIVE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS				
Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role	Outcome	IPR Reference
Encourage inclusion of people with a disability in community committees, organisations and interest groups	Moderate	Leader, Facilitator	**Number of people in these groups representing the interests and needs of people with a disability, increases	CSP 5.2.1
Risk: Unable to get willing participants		*Rating: High	Risk Management: Seek cooperation of Ability Linkers, service providers and carers in encouraging participation	
Encourage inclusion of people with a disability in S355 Committees of Council	Moderate	Leader	Number of people in S355 Committees, who identify as having a disability, increases	CSP 5.7.3
Risk: Unable to get willing participants		Rating: High	Risk Management: Councillor representatives proactively seek participants in S355 Committees; media release regarding representation from people with a disability	
Seek and promote opportunities for people with a disability to participate in volunteer activities	Moderate	Facilitator	Volunteer opportunities identified and volunteers who identify as having a disability recruited	CSP 5.1.3
Risk: Volunteer activities not suitable for people with a disability		Rating: Moderate	Risk Management: Council staff provide support to organisations in developing volunteer 'job descriptions' and recruiting volunteers	

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***In seeking to allocate a risk rating, reference is made to the Hierarchy of risk⁹. The risk may relate to outcome of the strategy i.e. the outcome not being achieved, or to Council as a financial risk, a legal or industrial liability, WHS risk, or risk to Council's reputation.**

**** Walcha residents who participate in groups and committees may not identify as having a disability, but the aim is to have people on committees who will give a voice to the needs of people with a disability of functional limitations.**

⁹ Appendix 3

FOCUS AREA 2 CREATING LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role	Outcome	IPR Reference
Increase number of Disability Parking spaces and locate them close to Post Office and Pharmacy	High	Leader	New Parking spaces available	CSP 1.1.6
Risk: Location of Disability Parking may not be appropriate or not seen as adequate		Rating: High	Risk Management: Delegate Advisory Committee to confirm location and number of Parking and review with Traffic Committee	
Review crossings, including school crossings and ramps and include tactile indicators where appropriate, as they are upgraded	Moderate	Leader	Number of ramps reviewed and upgraded	CSP 1.1.6
Risk: 1. Liability if ramps and crossings do not meet Australian Standards 2. Although the ramps meet AS, they may still be difficult for some wheelchairs or mobility scooters 3. Budget overrun		Rating: 1. Extreme 2. High 3. High	Risk Management: 1. Ensure compliance with Australian Standards 2. Seek professional advice from an appropriate organisation such as Guide Dogs and feedback from local wheelchair and mobility scooter users 3. Rigorous costing process- development of PAMP will facilitate opportunities for funding from State Government Dept. of Roads and Maritime Services for such improvements	
Involve people with a disability in the development of a PAMP	High	Leader	PAMP developed	CSP 1.1.6
Risk: Consultation not inclusive		Rating: High	Risk Management: Seek cooperation from Advisory Committee; media coverage	

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Maintain and improve footpaths where these are a barrier to community access for people with a disability	High	Leader	Maintenance reflects input from local community through activation of SNAP SEEK SOLVE	CSP 1.1.6
Risk: 1. Liability if footpaths do not meet Australian Standards 2. Budget overrun		Rating: 1. Extreme 2. High	Risk Management: 1. Ensure design compliance with Australian Standards 2. Rigorous costing process	
Encourage and support improvements to disability amenities at cultural, sporting and recreational venues	High	Facilitator and Advocate	Number of venues with improved amenities	CSP 6.6.4.1
Risk: Venues may not be willing to comply or may not have an understanding of appropriate standards leading to liability for their organisations		Rating: High	Risk Management: Provide free information relating to Australian Standards for organisations upgrading facilities for people with a disability and promote consultation with local users of the facility who have a disability	
Review and improve signage for public disability toilets	Moderate	Leader	New signage installed	CSP 8.2.4
Risk: Proposed signage does not meet needs		Rating: Moderate	Risk Management: Consult with community through Advisory Committee	
Consider the needs of children with a disability and their families when designing or upgrading playground and equipment.	Moderate	Leader	Playgrounds scheduled for upgrades identified and designs completed	CSP 6.6.4
Risk: Playground equipment not meeting needs or being unsafe leading to liability		Rating: Extreme	Risk Management: Ensure design complies with Australian Standards; consult an Early Childhood professional regarding choice of equipment; seek input from children.	
Fence an existing playground for use by families with young children and children with special needs	High	Leader	Playground suitable for this upgrade identified and funding allocated	CSP 6.6.4

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Risk: Children able to run onto the road which is a particular risk for children with special needs		Rating: Extreme	Risk Management: Allocate funding for this as soon as possible to minimise risk to children. Seek input from families as to the location and design	
Support the local Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) business through utilisation of the taxi for Council funded services such as those provided by WCCC	High	Leader and Facilitator	Local WAT is sustainable	CSP 1.1.5
Risk: WAT not viable in the long term, leaving a gap in services		Rating: High	Risk Management: Investigate ways that the support can be provided that do not impact on other businesses	
Seek ways to better coordinate transport to regional centres to promote opportunities for personal and leisure activities	Moderate	Facilitator	More people know about transport options	CSP 1.1.5
Risk: Council reputation if it is seen as encouraging business 'out of Walcha'		Rating: High	Risk Management: Consultation with local businesses and local groups so that it is seen as a benefit to the whole community, and enhancing the liveability of Walcha	

FOCUS AREA 3 SUPPORTING ACCESS TO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT				
Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role	Outcome	IPR Reference
Support employment of people with a disability through appointment of a Council staff mentor to assist with applications and orientation to work	Moderate	Leader	Opportunities for people with a disability	CSP 4.1.3
<p>Risk: 1. No appropriate jobs</p> <p>2. Applicants unwilling to apply</p> <p>3. Mentor not available</p>		<p>Rating: 1. High</p> <p>2. Moderate</p> <p>3. Moderate</p>	<p>Risk Management: 1. Review each job as it becomes vacant to see if it can be modified for a person with a disability</p> <p>2. Review wording of job advertisements to encourage people with a disability to apply</p> <p>3. Utilise staff with relevant skills such as WCCC Coordinator</p>	
Collaborate with organisations such as <i>Ability Links</i> and <i>Job Active</i> agencies to promote employment within the local government area, for people with a disability	Moderate	Facilitator	Opportunities for people with a disability	CSP 4.1.4
Risk: Employment opportunities not available		Rating: High	Risk Management: Maintain connection with agencies	

FOCUS AREA 4 IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES THROUGH BETTER SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Item for improvement	Priority	Council Role	Outcome	IPR Reference
Update directory and Information on Council Website	High	Leader	Better access to information	CSP 5.2.4
Risk: Information not being current and time taken to continually update		Rating: High	Risk Management: Develop a schedule for regular review and outsource responsibility; a link to a directory may be more useful if an external organisation such as the Community Hub would undertake to keep information relevant	
Ensure that the Walcha Council website is accessible by people with a disability	Moderate	Leader	Accessibility by people with a disability	CSP 5.2.4
Risk: Difficulty with local government privacy and firewalls		Rating: High	Risk Management: Follow up with LGNSW to see if other Councils have had this problem	
Collaborate with <i>Community Hub</i> and the local media to promote the available services provided in Walcha	High	Facilitator	Better access to information	CSP 5.1.2
Risk: <i>Community Hub</i> staff may not have capacity for additional services		Rating: High	Risk Management: Collaborate with Community Hub Committee and Dept. of Family and Community Services program officer (see Risk Management CSP 6.1.5))	
Update the <i>Resident Handbook</i> to include information about relevant services		Leader	Resident Handbook provides current, relevant and quality information	CSP 5.2.4

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Risk: Maintaining the Resident Handbook with current information may require additional resources	Rating: High	Risk Management: Allocate the task and schedule updates
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REPORTING

The Annual Report will include information on achievement of goals as outlined in the Annual Operational Plan. Reporting on the Operational Plan and Delivery Program is carried out six-monthly and adopted by Council.

9. WALCHA-2027					
Identified priorities	Delivery Action/Task	Reporting Measure	Resourcing Responsibility	Time-frame	Operational Plan 2017-2018
CSP 1 Transport					
CSP 1.1 Walcha will be serviced by an integrated and efficient transport system					
CSP 1.1.5 Improve community and public transport					
Seek ways to better coordinate and advertise transport to regional centres to promote opportunities for personal and leisure activities	1.1.5.1 & 1.1.5.2	Action Plan developed	MCS ¹⁰	December 2017	1.1.5.1.1 & 1.1.5.1.2 1.1.5.2.1 & 1.1.5.2.2 Allocate budget and/or seek grants for advertising & promoting
Support the local Wheelchair Accessible Taxi business through utilisation of the taxi for Council funded services such as those provided by WCCC	1.1.5.1	Procedures and agreement for support approved	MCS	December 2017	1.1.5.1.1
CSP 1.1.6 Provide and maintain facilities for the safe movement of pedestrian and cycle traffic					

¹⁰ Manager Community Services

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Review crossings and ramps and include tactile indicators where appropriate, as they are upgraded	1.1.6.1 & 1.1.6.2	Schedule of ramp review developed; ramp upgrades commenced	DE ¹¹	June 2018	1.1.6.1 1.1.6.2.1 Allocate budget and/or seek grants
Involve people with a disability in the development of a PAMP	1.1.6.2	PAMP developed and implementation commenced		June 2018	1.1.6.2.1
Maintain and improve footpaths where these are a barrier to community access for people with a disability	1.1.6.3	The App, 'SNAP SEEK SOLVE' activated and maintenance carried out	DE	December 2017 and ongoing	1.1.6.3.2
Increase number of Disability Parking spaces and locate them close to Post Office and Pharmacy	1.1.6.2	Parking spaces allocated and relocated	DE	December 2017	1.1.6.2.1 Allocate budget and/or seek grants
CSP 4 Education and Training					
CSP 4.1 Education and Training opportunities will be provided that deliver the skills and knowledge needed to advance the community.					
CSP 4.1.3 Support education, training and employment programs for trainees and apprentices and adult education					
Support employment of people with a disability through appointment of a mentor among Council staff to assist with applications and orientation to work	4.1.3.1	Wording for advertising amended; mentor appointed	GM/HR	December 2017	4.1.3.1

¹¹ Director Engineering

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CSP 4.1.4 Provide Financial incentives for local children					
Collaborate with organisations such as <i>Ability Links</i> and <i>Job Active</i> agencies to promote employment within the local government area, for people with a disability	4.1.4.1	Meeting held to develop plan for collaboration		December 2017	CSP 4.1.4.1
CSP 5 Stronger Community					
CSP 5.1 Social Services will be planned, maintained and coordinated so that they meet the current and future needs of all groups in the community					
CSP 5.1.2 Support activities that provide meaningful engagement and social interaction					
Encourage inclusion of people with a disability in community committees, organisations and interest groups	5.1.2.1	Media release; guide for committees and organisations developed	MCS	June 2018	5.1.2.1.1
CSP 5.1.3 Support current volunteer efforts and encourage volunteer participation					
Seek and promote opportunities for people with a disability to participate in volunteer activities	5.1.3.1	Press release regarding opportunities; booklet developed to outline volunteering opportunities	MCS	June 2018	5.1.3.1.1 Allocate budget and/or seek grants
CSP 5.1.5 Educate and advise the community about available government services					
CSP 5.2 The existing strong community spirit and pride will be protected and promoted					
CSP 5.2.4 Council Information Services					

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Update directory and Information on Council Website	5.2.4.1	Develop plan for maintaining community directory and allocate responsibility	GM/Records	December 2017	5.2.4.1.1
Ensure that the Walcha Council website is accessible by people with a disability	5.2.4.2	Website is accessible	GM/Records	June 2018	5.2.4.2.1 Allocate budget and/or seek grants
Maintain the Resident Handbook and include information relating to local services	5.2.4.3	Resident Handbook updated	GM/Records	December 2017	5.2.4.3.1
Collaborate with <i>Community Hub</i> to promote available services provided in Walcha	5.2.4.4	Meeting held with <i>Community Hub</i> committee and FACS ¹²	MCS	December 2018	5.2.4.4.1 Allocate budget and/or seek grants
CSP 5.7 Community members will be given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills so that they can better participate in the leadership of the community					
CSP 5.7.3 Provide opportunities for community members to become involved in the management of the community					
Encourage inclusion of people with a disability in S355 Committees of Council	5.7.3.1	Directive to Council representatives on all S 355 Committees	GM	December 2017	5.7.3.1
CSP 6 Local Environment and Liveable Communities					
CSP6.6 The character of Walcha and its surrounding villages will be maintained while protecting the productivity of our rural land.					

¹² See Council Minutes 25 August 2014

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CSP 6.6.4 Enhance the Walcha Local Government Area so that it continues to be an attractive place to live, work and visit.					
Encourage and support improvements to disability amenities at cultural, sporting and recreational venues	6.6.4.1	Discussions held with key cultural, sporting and recreational venues to develop ways to support improvements	DES	June 2018	6.6.4.1.3 Allocate budget and/or seek grants
Consider the needs of children with a disability and their families when designing or upgrading playground and equipment	6.6.4.1	Playgrounds scheduled for upgrades identified and designs completed	DE	June 2018	6.6.4.1.3 Allocate budget and/or seek grants
Fence an existing playground for use by families with young children and children with special needs	6.6.4.1	Suitable playground identified and funding allocated	DE	June 2018	6.6.4.1.3 Allocate budget and/or seek grants.
CSP 8 Better Government					
CSP 8.2 Council rate funding for local government projects will be supplemented by income generated from other sources					
CSP 8.2.4 Maintain and improve Council owned building and land assets					
Review and improve signage for public disability toilets	8.2.4.1	Schedule for upgrades developed; upgrades commenced	DE	June 2018	8.2.4.1.1 Allocate budget and/or seek grants

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Conclusion

Walcha Council and Council staff have a strong commitment to enhancing the experience of people with a disability in the Walcha Council local government area.

In developing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Walcha Council has built on the strengths of the existing Council, Council structure/staff, Council policies and the local closely connected community by consulting with a broad range of stakeholders. The priorities identified above reflect Council values and principles and are integrated into goals of the ten (10) year strategic plan, Walcha-2027. The individual objectives, once approved by Council, are to be included in the 2017-2021 Delivery Program and the Annual Operational Plans for each of those four (4) years. Within the Integrated and Strategic Planning framework, the responsibility, reporting and resourcing for the objectives will be defined.



APPENDIX 1 DIAP SURVEY

WALCHA COUNCIL

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN SURVEY

Walcha Council is developing a **Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)**, with the objective of ensuring that people with a disability have every opportunity to fully participate in the social, community and business life of Walcha and the surrounding area. The DIAP will have four (4) Focus Areas: 1. Positive community attitudes and behaviours; 2. Liveable Communities; 3. Supporting access to meaningful employment; 4. Improving access to services through better systems and processes.

We need to collect information about what is important for people with a disability, and what improvements could be made to enhance their quality of life. Walcha Council will include the most important goals in their planning processes.

Actions to achieve the goals may include:

- Working with local organisations or businesses to raise awareness of the needs of people with a disability, and how to address those needs
- Looking at the design of facilities and buildings to improve access to them
- Making sure Walcha Council policies take the needs of people with a disability into account
- Making sure that information about services are easily available to people with disabilities and their carers and in formats that are appropriate to their needs

Are you or do you represent: (Tick which applies)

- A person with a disability Carer or family member
- Specialist disability service provider Mainstream service provider

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Local business or organisation Sporting, Leisure, Club Community member

What are the things that are most important for participation, community connection, quality of life, happiness and wellbeing of people with a disability? *Select those which, in your opinion are most important in Walcha, and number them from 1, with 1 being the most important.*

- Changing community attitudes so that people with a disability are welcomed in sporting, recreational and leisure activities and programs [Focus Area 1]
- Changing community attitudes and behaviours so that people with a disability are involved in making decisions about Walcha civic and social life [Focus Area 1]
- Ensuring that people with a disability have opportunities to contribute to their community in a variety of ways [Focus Area 1]
- Ensuring that local and regional transport are adequate [Focus Area 2]
- Having good footpaths and safe crossings throughout Walcha and the villages [Focus Area 2]
- Ensuring that disability parking is adequate, in the right places, and appropriate for unloading wheelchairs if required [Focus Area 2]
- Ensuring that people with a disability are able to attend special events like the Walcha Show, or (the recently held) *The Mikado* at Langford, with appropriate transport and good access to facilities [Focus Area 2]
- Employment opportunities and relevant training for people with a disability in Walcha [Focus Area 3]

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Support for businesses and organisations to understand and meet the needs of people with a disability so that employment and participation is maximised [Focus Area 3]

Being able to easily find information about disabilities, or about services that are available in Walcha [Focus Area 4]

Anything else that you would like to see as a priority?

Do you have any suggestions about improvements that could be made to promote inclusion?

Would you like to be involved in a forum where some of these issues can be addressed and solutions can be worked out? Yes No

Would you like to be involved in an ongoing working group to address these issues? Yes No

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

If you would like to be involved, please provide your name and contact details (phone, email, or contact person)

Name:

Contact Details:

PLEASE RETURN TO:

Lacey Latham at Walcha Council Administration OR Cathy Noon at Walcha Council Community Care

Forms can be returned via email to council@walcha.nsw.gov.au

If people have suggestions and don't want to fill out the form, just email Susie or Robyn directly at the email addresses below.

APPENDIX 2 SUPPORT GROUP SUBMISSION

SUBMISSION

**Walcha Support Group
to**

Walcha Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan Survey.

Please find attached detailed map of Walcha town centre with colour coded proposed disabled parking, pram ramps and disabled toilets marked.

Walcha Support Group wishes to stress that these are " suggestions " that it would be wonderful to see gradually implemented when physically and financially possible when council is planning town works and where funding could be best spent in the future with regard to people with disabilities in our area.

Disabled Parking:

In close proximity to the Telecottage in Fitzroy Street which also contains our local blood clinic.

Outside our Pharmacy in Derby Street.

Outside the Post Office in Derby Street.

The disabled parking space at the Bowling Club needs to be re located to be in a more user friendly spot.

Disabled Toilets:

Hamilton Street Disabled Toilet sign needs to be re-located down to the corner of Derby and Fitzroy Streets near Market Fresh pointing towards McHatten Park where the toilet is actually located.

The disabled toilet in McHatten Park needs to be sign posted on both the South Street and the Fitzroy Street sides of the public toilet building. As the disabled toilet is at the rear of the building it is hard for visitors to find as it is currently not adequately signposted.

Walcha Bowling Club needs better disabled toilet facilities

Walcha Golf Club also needs disabled facilities.

The inclusion of rails in public toilets could also be useful .

Pram Ramps:

Need to be adjacent to disabled parking spaces so wheel chairs can access the adjacent footpath.

Pram ramps outside the Post Office and opposite outside the National Australia Bank.

Also outside the Telecottage & Blood Clinic and the Pharmacy.

Pram ramps to be placed opposite each other for safe access from one side of the road to the other.

Walcha Support Group feels our community is very supportive and inclusive of disabled people.

Wherever possible they are included in all town activities.

WSG has lent equipment to disabled people with regard to events like the local Walcha Show.

WSG Member Lyn Burnell would be happy to assist in an ongoing working group. Her details are on the printed form.

APPENDIX 3 HIERARCHY OF RISK MATRIX

	Consequences				
Likelihood	Catastrophic	Major	Moderate	Minor	Insignificant
Almost Certain	EXTREME	EXTREME	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE
Likely	EXTREME	EXTREME	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Possible	EXTREME	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Unlikely	HIGH	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW	LOW
Rare	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW	LOW	LOW