

Prepared by the Sax Institute with the Centre for Disability Research and Policy for NSW Department of Family and Community Services

# Review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2018

Final Report  
June 2019

**Review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan:** a report by the Sax Institute and the Centre for Disability Policy and Research for NSW Family and Community Services.

June 2019

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
DEN	Disability Employee Network
DIAP or "the Action Plan"	Disability Inclusion Action Plan
DIPIC	Disability Inclusion Plan Implementation Committee
DIPO	Disability Inclusion Promotion Officer
IP&R	Integrated Planning and Reporting
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NDS	National Disability Strategy
DPC	NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
NSW DIP "the Plan"	NSW Disability Inclusion Plan
NSW FACS	NSW Family and Community Services
PSC	NSW Public Service Commission
SSI	Settlement Services International

# Executive summary

Over the last decade, major reform in the disability sector at both the state and national levels has sought to improve social inclusion and accessibility to services for people with disability.

The NSW Government's commitment to move to a new model of disability inclusion was given effect through the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*. The new Act represented a shift away from a focus on service delivery and towards a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion, based on the principles of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. The Act mandated the development of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (NSW DIP) and required NSW public authorities to develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) to improve disability inclusion within their agencies and within the community.

Both the NSW DIP and DIAPs are aligned to four areas of action:

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

The NSW DIP covered a four-year period from 2015-2019. DIAPs were rolled out in the NSW Government clusters by December 30, 2015 and in local councils by June 30, 2017. NSW Family and Community Services (NSW FACS) has played a central role in overseeing implementation of the NSW DIP and supporting state-level agencies to develop their DIAPs, including funding Local Government NSW to support implementation in local councils. NSW FACS also established the Disability Inclusion Plan Implementation Committee (DIPIC), which comprised representatives from each of the government clusters, the disability sector and local government. The DIPIC functioned as a key governance structure for implementation of the NSW DIP and DIAPs.

This report presents the findings from the first comprehensive review of the NSW DIP. The review sought to document progress on actions and implementation of the DIP and DIAPs, and to identify and report on intermediate outcomes. The findings have been informed by a document review and a series of consultations with over 150 stakeholders representing the government clusters, local government, peak bodies, community organisations, disability sector organisations and people with lived experience of disability.

## Key findings

- **Every mandated agency has a DIAP in place.** Many agencies not specifically required under the Act to develop a DIAP have also elected to engage with disability inclusion planning.
- **The legislation was perceived as an effective catalyst, driving the prioritisation of inclusion and increasing visibility within the government sectors.** Contextual drivers, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), have added weight to this momentum.
- **The plans demonstrate significant activity has occurred, evidenced by the volume of actions.** While many agencies noted that their DIAP did not capture the full extent of their inclusion work, there were also concerns that some Plans may not have been ambitious enough. It should also be noted that agencies began the process with different levels of experience in disability inclusion planning. Some agencies had long histories of disability inclusion planning, while others were engaging with the concept for the first time.

- **Stakeholders believed the NSW DIP had been implemented as intended.** Implementation was supported by investment in a number of significant actions early in the life of the NSW DIP, such as the *Employable Me* television series and cross-sector partnerships.
- **Consultation with people with disability was conducted across clusters and local government.** A lack of resources made effective consultation a challenge in some cases. Disability sector agencies and people with lived experience perceived the consultation processes to be meaningful although many also reported feeling overwhelmed by the volume of requests to participate in these processes.
- **Ongoing engagement with the disability sector and people with disability was variable and not always achieved.** While some agencies already had processes in place to gather feedback and respond to complaints, for others ongoing engagement was limited or non-existent. It was generally perceived that local government engaged in an ongoing way more effectively, particularly if they already had a community access committee providing input to council planning and activities. A few of the clusters had standing advisory committees which included people with disability, and they were able to draw on this expertise throughout the implementation of the DIAP.
- **Resourcing was a challenge for agencies both in the development and implementation phases of the process.** Agencies with limited resources, particularly local councils in regional areas, had limited staff capacity to support consultation, community engagement and planning activities, and fewer resources to fund the realisation of the initiatives.
- **Implementation of DIAPs was enhanced where there were good governance structures and support from champions.** Senior executive commitment and the involvement of both human resources divisions and employees with lived experience of disability also supported more effective implementation. Embedding responsibility for actions within and across agencies, such as within local council Integrated Planning and Reporting structures, was also identified as an enabler for success.
- **Coordination and supporting structures such as FACS, Local Government NSW and the DIPIC were useful resources and facilitators for planning and implementation.** Some agencies felt they could have benefitted from more support, whereas others reported requiring less support as they were already well-established in the disability inclusion space. The DIAP guidelines were cited as useful supporting documents for councils and agencies preparing their DIAPs.
- **Disability Employee Networks (DENs) were active drivers of change and progress.** DENs were operational in several clusters and represented some of the key work being done towards the employment target and other DIAP actions. Members of these networks did report that the workload associated with the DEN could be a significant addition to their substantive positions.
- **Reporting was widely recognised as problematic.** Much reporting was anecdotal with little sense of impact or outcomes. Stakeholders were also concerned that there was limited documentation of challenges and limitations. Balancing reporting requirements to deliver valuable and meaningful data without overburdening agencies was identified as a key challenge.
- **Most agencies were not actively monitoring or collecting data that could demonstrate meaningful outcomes.** Disparate monitoring and data collection made it difficult to quantify the tangible impacts of the DIAP. Despite this, many narratives of success have been gathered demonstrating the breadth of the groundswell towards disability inclusion.

## Impact and successes



Some high-profile successes associated with the NSW DIP have delivered significant impacts and have been recognised as delivering substantial shifts in practice. Highlights have included:

- **Community partnerships with Sport NSW, Settlement Services International, ClubsNSW and the NSW Business Chamber.** These partnerships demonstrated the value of working collaboratively with well-networked organisations to promote disability inclusion within their sector and to deliver projects to improve disability inclusion among their member organisations. Several partners have been successful in receiving the NDIS Information Linkage and Capacity Building Grants, recognising the enhanced knowledge, expertise and capacity of these organisations in disability inclusion.
- **The *Employable Me* TV series was seen by two million people and won two international awards.** Anecdotal feedback has indicated that the series has resulted in attitudinal shifts towards people with disability within workplaces. Tangible benefits include the creation and strengthening of employment pathways through organisations such as Jigsaw, Xceptional, and Hireup.
- **The Live Work Play conference attracted over 600 delegates and 70 presenters to a two-day conference focusing on inclusion.** The conference engaged with three themes: Employment for people with disability, inclusive tourism and planning liveable communities, and the role of assistive technology and accessible IT to enhance inclusion for people with disability. Several stakeholders reflected on the significance of this achievement.
- **The Inclusive Leadership forum hosted by the NSW Public Service Commission (PSC) and FACS, convened around 300 public service senior executives to focus on strategies to meet the public sector employment target.**
- **The Department of Planning and Environment and local government collaborated to create several accessible playgrounds.** At the time of writing, this included a funding initiative to support councils to renew, renovate and build inclusive playgrounds across NSW.
- **Design with Dignity principles are being incorporated into design requirements for new government buildings.**
- **Personalised learning support has been introduced to the NSW education system to ensure quality learning experiences are available to all students.** This change in approach has been supported by comprehensive professional learning support for teachers.
- **The experience of people with disability in the health system has been made more visible.** A move towards using data from the Bureau of Health Information has generated new levels of understanding and reporting on the experiences of people with disability in the health system.

### Considerations for the future

The review found significant momentum towards the realisation of the goals of the NSW DIP. However, continued encouragement and consolidation will be needed for the goals to be achieved with consistency across NSW Government agencies and local councils.

We propose the following considerations for further action:

- **Engagement with the priority groups of children, women, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and Aboriginal people should be a priority.** These groups were recognised under the Disability Inclusion Act as requiring special attention, but it appears that engagement with these groups to date has been limited. Ongoing engagement of people with disability in implementation processes, emphasising consumer-led processes, would also capitalise on the enormous interest in the inclusion movement from within the sector.

- **Improving reporting standards and processes for monitoring implementation can be strengthened.** Implementation needs to be tracked more consistently across agencies and local councils to draw conclusions and enable comparisons where appropriate. Reporting should also provide a better picture of outcomes through narratives of the actions that have occurred and the impact on the community, rather than solely relying on quantitative data to illustrate impact. Reporting must also specifically focus on the priority groups identified in the Disability Inclusion Act.
- **Progress and achievements in inclusion should be communicated more widely and strategically to maintain momentum for action and to facilitate learning.** Messages about the four priorities and the content of DIAPs should ensure that progress in other important areas of disability inclusion is not unnecessarily constrained by an interpretation that all inclusion activities must fit within a priority area.
- **Consideration should be given to developing a strategy to guide targeted work with agencies and local councils that have been slower to engage with the inclusion agenda.** These agencies and councils, which are in the early stages of building their awareness about inclusion, require more foundational support than some agencies to move more boldly into the inclusion space. Strategic work also needs to occur in the policy space to consider how the NSW DIP and associated work under the Disability Inclusion Act fit within the context of the NDIS; the findings of the recent review of the National Disability Agreement; and the next phase of the National Disability Strategy (NDS). Strategies for priority groups identified in the Disability Inclusion Act also need to be developed and articulated.

# Background

## Introduction

In June 2018, NSW Family and Community Services (FACS) commissioned the Sax Institute to deliver a review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan at the end of its first four-year period. The requirement for a review is written into the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, which states the goal of the review is to understand whether the “*the whole of government goals set out in the State Disability Plan continue to support the inclusion in the community of people with disability and to improve access to mainstream services and community facilities by people with disability.*”<sup>1</sup> The Sax Institute partnered with the Centre for Disability Policy and Research at the University of Sydney to undertake this review.

This review aimed to document progress on actions, implementation and intermediate outcomes, while recognising that the timeframe for implementation of DIAPs has been relatively short (government clusters were required to have Plans in place by December 30, 2015, whereas for local government it was June 30, 2017). The scope of the review covers the work undertaken under the state Disability Inclusion Plan, and also under the individual Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) of the mandated agencies: the 10 Government clusters (Health, Education, FACS, Transport, Planning, Industry, Treasury, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Finance and Justice) and all 128 local councils in NSW. The review does not consider the work undertaken under objective 1.1 of the State Plan ([page 13 Table 1](#)) which includes the public awareness campaigns on disability inclusion. A separate evaluation of these campaigns has been produced by UTS.<sup>2</sup>

## This report

The first section of this report provides an overview of the policy framework (below), a snapshot of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (DIP) activities, and details on the review questions and approach. This is followed by a section on review findings which includes an overview of the findings, synthesising the results from across the review. Further on in the report there are individual sections for the findings in relation to: perceptions from the disability sector and people with lived experience (part 2), the DIP coordinating and supporting structures (part 3), NSW Government clusters (part 4), local government (part 5) and cross-sector partnerships and capacity building (part 6). The final discussion section highlights key considerations for the next stage of work in relation to the NSW DIP.

## Disability inclusion in NSW

The past decade has seen tremendous growth in the number and reach of new policies and legislative frameworks applying to disability inclusion. Historically, legislation such as the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*<sup>3</sup> and the NSW *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*<sup>4</sup> focused on protecting individuals from discrimination and providing care. While these were important steps in building inclusion for people with disability, they did not fully address elements within society that have precluded people with disability from leading equal and meaningful lives.

Action at the federal level to build a more inclusive society has included the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which provides supports for individuals so that they may participate more actively in the community, and the overarching National Disability Strategy (2010-2020) (NDS) which focuses on “a

*national approach to supporting people with disability to maximise their potential and participate as equal citizens”.*<sup>5</sup>

The NSW State Government has committed itself to both the NDIS and the NDS and has introduced its own framework of disability inclusion legislation and policy. Primary among these has been the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*.<sup>1</sup>

### The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*<sup>1</sup> replaced the *Disability Services Act 1993*.<sup>6</sup> The change in nomenclature marks an important cognitive shift that has seen governments move from simply providing services towards actions to include people with disability in our communities. The Disability Inclusion Act takes a human rights-based approach to disability inclusion based on the principals of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.<sup>7</sup> It aims to promote the social and economic inclusion of people with disability, provide choice and control, and implement safeguards. It also provides a set of processes for the stewardship of disability services as the NDIS is implemented in NSW.

The legislation is underpinned by a set of core principles applying to people with disability:

- an inherent right to respect for their worth and dignity as individuals
- the right to participate in and contribute to social and economic life, to develop and enhance skills and experience
- the right to realise physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and intellectual capacities
- the same rights as other members of the community to make decisions that affect their lives (including decisions involving risk) to the full extent of their capacity to do so and to be supported in making those decisions if they want or require support
- the right to respect for cultural or linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs
- the right to privacy and confidentiality
- the right to live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- the right to access information in a way that is appropriate for their disability and cultural background and enables people with disability to make informed choices
- the same right as other members of the community to pursue complaints
- the crucial role of families, carers and other significant persons in the lives of people with disability, and the importance of preserving relationships with families, carers and other significant persons
- the needs of children with disability as they mature, and their rights as equal members of the community
- the changing abilities, strengths, goals and needs of people with disability as they age.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women and children and emphasised groups who may have specific needs in relation to the Act. These principles are important to clarify in full because they form the foundation for disability inclusion planning and efforts in New South Wales.

### The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan

The Disability Inclusion Act mandated the development of a New South Wales Disability Inclusion Plan (NSW DIP) to operationalise the Act by planning new strategies, connections and programs of work which bring about a more inclusive society in NSW. It also required public authorities to create and implement Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs).<sup>8</sup>

The Foreword to the NSW DIP, by the then Minister for Disability The Hon. John Ajaka MLC, reflects the intent of the legislation and its enabling plans:

*"This plan is about ensuring government and the rest of the community now make the choices to consult, to involve and to plan with consideration of those living with disability to ensure a fully inclusive society.*

*It marks a new direction in focus for NSW at a time of great change in the disability sector. We are moving away from a model which centred on what people with disability cannot do, to one which seeks to remove the obstacles created by society and empowers people to achieve their full potential and experience all that life has to offer."*<sup>8</sup>

The NSW DIP provides a set of goals under four priorities, which were developed in consultation with relevant communities:

Priority 1: Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

Priority 2: Creating liveable communities

Priority 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment

Priority 4: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

New initiatives under the NSW DIP have included:

- the Employable Me series for ABC TV
- training packages and awareness campaigns for employers
- inclusive tourism strategies
- community-based partnerships and grants
- employer and employee networks
- new committees, plans and agreements to steer progress.

The *Live Work Play: NSW the State of Inclusion* Conference held in 2017 was a major focal point to showcase the work underway to progress the NSW DIP goals, and brought together individuals, groups and agencies involved in many of the innovative programs being stimulated by the implementation of the Plan.

### Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs)

The NSW DIP is operationalised through the development of Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) that clearly link principals and priorities to specific actions. DIAPs assign responsibility for the achievement of measurable outcomes to specific functions within an agency or local council. Under the Disability Inclusion Act, all NSW Government Departments, some other government agencies and all Local Councils were required to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). All NSW Government clusters were required to have their DIAPs in place by 30 December 2015, and all Local Councils were required to have their Disability Inclusion Action Plans in place by 30 June 2017.

### Coordinating and supporting structures

The key structures involved in either coordinating or supporting the implementation of the DIP and DIAP included:

- The Disability Council has an expanded role under section 17 of the Disability Inclusion Act to: advise public authorities about the content and implementation of disability inclusion action plans and advise the Minister about the content and implementation of the State Disability Inclusion Plan and disability inclusion action plans. All public authorities are required by section 12 of the Disability Inclusion Act to give a copy of their DIAP to Disability Council to enable the Disability Council to fulfil its role under the Disability Inclusion Act.

- The NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) is responsible for providing a framework for governance, evaluation and reporting on DIAPs, and for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on actions under the DIP. This included coordinating the DIP and supporting implementation of the DIAPs across NSW, including within each of the clusters and agencies, the cross-sector partnerships and across local government.
- Local Government NSW, the peak organisation that represents the interests of NSW general and special purpose councils, who were funded by FACS to promote access and inclusion of people with a disability by supporting the development and implementation of DIAPs in local government. The support included developing resources and conducting implementation workshops.
- The DIP Implementation Committee (DIPIC), established by FACS with representation from each of the clusters, Local Government NSW and the disability sector. The DIPIC is a key governance structure for implementation of the DIP and DIAPs and meets between two and four times per year.

# Snapshot of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2015-2019

The NSW DIP is the NSW Government’s framework for increasing access and inclusion for people with disability across government agencies, business and the community. Since its introduction in 2014, much progress has been made in growing initiatives in each of the four priority areas of the Plan, drawing together and leveraging resources and other activities in place across the sectors. The NSW DIP both feeds off and contributes to the momentum created by the NDIS and a range of other work in the inclusion space. Table 1 provides a snapshot of actions, initiatives and outcomes from the NSW DIP.<sup>9</sup>

Table 1 Snapshot of initiatives and outcomes of the NSW DIP

Actions	Initiatives	Outcomes
<b>1. Developing positive attitudes and behaviours</b>		
1.1 Public awareness campaign on disability inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Don't DIS my ABILITY</i> - social marketing campaign</li> <li>• <i>See the Possibilities</i> - employer awareness campaign</li> <li>• <i>Employable Me</i> - television documentary</li> </ul>	The three campaigns embedded appropriate themes and messages to reach and engage their primary target audiences with the aim of increasing awareness and strengthening understanding. The evaluation indicated the campaigns shifted mindsets of those who were exposed to them, though they achieved this to different degrees and in different ways. <sup>2</sup>
1.2 Human rights learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Upholding the Rights of People with Disability – A training package</i> - Public sector training developed by FACS and the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)</li> </ul>	A total of 197 employees from across the NSW public sector attended this training. Course evaluation data found that the training was positively received and achieved increases in knowledge across its four learning objectives. The training has also now been offered to the 240 participants in the 2017, 2018 and 2019 cohorts of the NSW Public Service Commission Graduate Program. Further details about the AHRC training are provided in <a href="#">Part 6</a> .
<b>2. Creating liveable communities</b>		
2.1 Liveable Communities Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Liveable Communities Grants</i> and community seed funding</li> <li>• <i>Lift and Change</i> trial</li> </ul>	<p>The <i>Liveable Communities Grants</i> Program funds innovative projects that help older people, people with disability and carers to live active, healthy lives and access their community freely and safely.</p> <p>The <i>Lift and Change</i> trial supported 10 facilities and funded community initiatives in NSW.</p>

Actions	Initiatives	Outcomes
2.2. Coordinated planning for access and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines and regional workshops</li> <li>• Live Work Play Conference</li> </ul>	<p>Local Government NSW was involved in supporting local councils to develop and implement their DIAPs.</p> <p>The Live Work Play conference was held in 2017 with over 600 delegates and 70 local and international presenters. The conference received positive feedback from participants. The conference is described in more detail in <a href="#">Part 6</a>.</p>
2.3 Cross-sector local partnerships in key areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport NSW, NSW Business Chamber, ClubsNSW &amp; Settlement Services International partnerships</li> <li>• Inclusive tourism consultations and workplan</li> <li>• Working with Justice NSW to support people with disability in contact with the criminal justice system</li> </ul>	<p>The four partnership programs have worked in local communities on several diverse initiatives. While the core funding from the NSW DIP has ended, two of these partnerships (Sport and Settlement Services International) have established permanent positions to continue the work. More detail on the partnerships is provided in <a href="#">Part 6</a>.</p>
<b>3. Supporting access to meaningful employment</b>		
3.1 NSW Government agency planning for workforce diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DIAPs for the clusters and local councils</li> <li>• Establishing the Disability Employment Advisory Group</li> </ul>	<p>There were over 100 actions in total across the government and council DIAPs to support increased employment for people with disability.</p>
3.2 Cross-sector disability employment forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forums for government, disability and community sectors to support innovative employment growth</li> <li>• Disability employment included as a priority in Jobs for the Future: Adding 1 million rewarding jobs in NSW</li> <li>• Transition to Work</li> <li>• Employment Enablement Strategy</li> </ul>	<p>The Employment Enablement Strategy has delivered 275 packages for adults with disability across NSW. An evaluation report is expected in 2019.</p>



Actions	Initiatives	Outcomes
3.3 Disability Employee Networks (DENs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing and supporting DENs to encourage public sector job growth for people with disability</li> <li>Transition to work for 4,100 school leavers</li> </ul>	There are about 10 DENs operating in the NSW government sector. Each DEN is organised differently depending on departmental/organisational context – with different terms of reference and supporting resources. The PSC has published <i>Guidelines for Employee Networks</i> . <sup>10</sup>
<b>4. Improving systems and processes</b>		
4.1 Accessibility working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing Disability Accessibility Advisory Group</li> <li>Digital citizenship guidelines</li> </ul>	
4.2 Implementation of DIAPs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All 10 NSW Government clusters have DIAPs see <a href="#">Part 4</a>.</li> <li>All 128 Local Councils have DIAPs see <a href="#">Part 5</a></li> </ul>
<b>5. Governance and reporting</b>		
Disability Inclusion Plan Implementation Committee (DIPIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representatives of government, community groups and the disability sector oversee the implementation of the NSW DIP</li> </ul>	The DIPIC has been operating since 2015 with good attendance from the 10 clusters and other agencies. Further details about the DIPIC are provided in <a href="#">Part 3</a> .

# Review approach and questions

## Review questions

The primary aim of the review was to understand whether the goals set out in the NSW DIP continue to support the inclusion in the community of people with disability and improve their access to mainstream services and facilities. The core review questions focused on process, in terms of understanding implementation, as well as documenting initial actions and progress achieved towards desired outcomes. The review explores the implementation of the NSW DIP, with a focus on the DIAPs across government that operationalise the DIP. The review does not consider the work undertaken under objective 1.1 of the State Plan which includes the public awareness campaigns on disability inclusion, as a separate evaluation of these campaigns has been produced by UTS.<sup>2</sup>

The review questions were:

**Process:** How well were the Disability Inclusion Action Plans implemented?

1. How were the DIAPs developed?
  - What was the context for development including governance, responsibility and building on existing strategies?
  - How were people with disability consulted as part of DIAP development?
  - What was the role of FACS in supporting development and what was the perceived value of this support?
2. How well were the DIAPs implemented?
  - What were the key activities and actions in the DIAPs?
  - What progress has been made in implementation?
  - What support has been provided by FACS and how has this been perceived?
  - What monitoring and evaluation processes have been put in place?
  - What was the role of the DIPIC in supporting implementation?
  - What have been the key barriers and enablers to implementation of DIAPs?

**Outcomes:** How well did the DIAPs work?

3. What has been the progress towards outcomes i.e. how do the DIAPs support inclusion and improve access for people with disability?
  - What has been the progress towards outcomes set out in the DIAP?
  - What are the key achievements, highlights and successes?
  - What has been the perceived impact on people with a disability?
  - To what extent have processes, policies and activities been embedded to promote sustainability?

## Review approach

The review included the following data sources:

- consultation with the Disability Council NSW
- interviews with representatives from disability sector organisations and people with lived experience. Organisations included the Disability Council NSW, Australian Network on Disability, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability, NSW Council of Social Services, National Disability Services NSW Committee, and Carers NSW
- interviews with representatives from the clusters with lived experience, two of whom had been involved in the DENs
- consultation with the DIPIC
- interviews with 23 representatives from seven of the NSW Government clusters
- in-depth document review of cluster DIAPS and 124 council DIAPs
- review of annual reports and other data provided by key stakeholders
- an online survey of local government representatives targeted through an electronic mailout by Local Government NSW to members of their Ageing and Disability Network (n=249) from NSW local councils. In total 95 surveys were completed, 59 from rural/regional areas and 36 from metro areas
- interviews with 11 representatives from local government who were either identified from a list of regional champions provided by Local Government NSW or who nominated for an interview through the online survey
- interviews with three representatives from Local Government NSW and one private consultant who had been involved in supporting regional councils to develop their DIAPs
- interviews with two representatives involved in the funded cross-sector partnerships with Sport NSW and Settlement Services International (SSI). The other two partnerships with ClubsNSW and the NSW Business Chamber had ended at the time of data collection and we were unable to identify a suitable representative.

The data collection tools, including the interview guide and online survey are available in [Appendix 7](#).

The data from the consultations with key stakeholders was coded in NVivo and synthesised using a thematic analysis. Themes were derived primarily to answer the review questions, but emergent themes were also explored.

The quantitative survey data was analysed using Excel to produce frequencies, percentages and cross tabulations. The qualitative survey data was synthesised to identify key themes.

# Review findings

## Part 1: Overview

This section synthesises the findings of the review and is based on consultations with over 150 stakeholders who had various degrees of involvement with the DIP or DIAP.

- Interviews with 24 representatives from seven of the NSW Government clusters: Health, Education, Planning, FACS, DPC, Justice and Transport
- Interviews with three representatives from Local Government NSW and one private consultant
- Survey responses from 95 representatives from local councils, 59 of whom were from rural regional areas
- Interviews with 11 representatives from local councils. The local government areas represented were: Ballina, Port Macquarie Hastings, Central Coast, Kiama, Penrith, Inner West, Berrigan, City of Sydney, Tweed, Broken Hill and Willoughby
- Interviews with two representatives from the cross-sector partnerships (SSI and Sport NSW)
- Interviews with 20 people from disability sector organisations and/or with lived experience: NSW Council of Social Services, Australian Network on Disability, National Disability Services State Committee, NSW Council for Intellectual Disability, Carers NSW, Disability Council, Department of Education DEN, Department of Planning and Environment DEN.

### Key findings

- **Compliance:** All 10 NSW Government clusters and 128 local councils had DIAPs in place, although two local councils had incorporated a short section into their existing operating plans rather than producing a discrete DIAP.
- **Legislation:** The legislation was seen by most as highly effective in driving the prioritisation of inclusion, increasing awareness of disability and complementing the work of the NDIS. Many stakeholders recognised the confluence of factors that were contributing to great shifts in the inclusion space.
- **NSW DIP:** The NSW DIP was implemented as planned. Additional funding was available early in its rollout to deliver specific initiatives including media campaigns, human rights training, cross-sector partnerships and the Live Work Play conference, and to create positions in Local Government NSW to support local councils in their planning. These initiatives were perceived to add significant value to implementation and were recognised as creating a snowball effect.
- **DIAPs:** The documents provide evidence of significant activity in the inclusion space, both in terms of the processes undertaken to develop the DIAPs and the volume of actions documented by agencies. Many stakeholders also noted that inclusion work within their agencies extended well beyond what could be articulated in their DIAP. However, there was also a sense that some DIAPs were not ambitious enough and had recorded activities that may have already been planned in other contexts.
- **Consultation with people with disability:** This was done across clusters and local government, although lack of resources made it a challenge to do well in some cases. Disability sector agencies and people with lived experience perceived the consultations to be meaningful; although they also reported feeling somewhat overwhelmed by the level of requests to participate in these processes.

- **Ongoing engagement:** As the process continued, engagement with the sector and people with disability was not always achieved, although several agencies had processes in place to gather feedback and respond to complaints. There were some observations that local government was better at this, particularly if they already had a community access committee to provide input and oversight into the development and implementation of council planning.
- **Resourcing:** Lack of resources was cited frequently as a challenge for agencies in both developing and implementing their DIAPs. Regional local government areas in particular struggled with the process citing limited staff capacity to support consultation, engagement and planning and fewer financial resources to support the realisation of the initiatives. The Liveable Communities grants helped some local government areas implement smaller scale initiatives, such as installing 'lift and change' facilities.
- **DIAP implementation:** Critical to successful implementation were good governance, inclusion champions (including at the executive level), and drawing on the organisation's internal resources including human resources divisions and employees with lived experience. Another success factor was embedding responsibility for actions within and across agencies. For local councils, this often involved including DIAP actions in their Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) structures.
- **DIAP reporting:** Reporting was widely recognised as problematic. With little guidance provided, stakeholders agreed that reporting was largely anecdotal, giving little sense of impact or outcomes. Stakeholders commented that agencies had not reflected on their DIAP enough, particularly in terms of areas for further work, and there were concerns that there was little documentation of the challenges and limitations they faced. The need to carefully design and manage reporting requirements so as not to overburden agencies was also identified.
- **Supporting structures:** FACS, Local Government NSW, and the DIPIC were seen as useful resources and facilitators for planning and implementation. Some stakeholders felt they would have benefitted from more support, whereas others felt they required less as they were already leaders in the inclusion space. Some stakeholders said they would have liked the Disability Council to play a greater role in reviewing and monitoring DIAPs and holding agencies accountable; however, it was also recognised that the workload associated with this role meant that without additional resourcing this would not likely be feasible.
- **Disability Employee Networks (DENs):** Several NSW Government clusters had DENs actively championing and driving positive initiatives internally. These DENs represent some of the key work being done towards the employment target; however, members reported that the workload could be a significant addition to their substantive positions.
- **Impacts:** Most agencies were not actively monitoring or collecting data that could demonstrate meaningful outcomes making it difficult to quantify the tangible impacts of their DIAP. Despite this, many narratives of success have been gathered demonstrating the breadth of the groundswell towards inclusion.

### Impact and successes

The Disability Inclusion Act, the NSW DIP and the efforts of agencies, councils and community partners and stakeholders have generated broad changes across NSW. This should be recognised as a key success.

In some cases, DIAP work represents further progress towards gold-standard inclusion and for others, the development and implementation of a DIAP required a significant shift in thinking.

Some high-profile successes associated with the NSW DIP, which have had significant impacts in terms of gaining wide recognition and/or shifts in practice, included:

- The community partnerships with Sport NSW, Settlement Services International, Clubs NSW and the NSW Business Chamber demonstrates the value of partnering with organisations who can utilise their networks to promote disability inclusion within their sector, and deliver specific projects enhancing disability inclusion among their members. Several partners have recently been successful in receiving the NDIS Information Linkage and Capacity Building Grants, which demonstrates the enhanced knowledge, expertise and capacity of their organisation in disability inclusion.
- The *Employable Me* TV series, which was seen by two million people and won two international awards. Anecdotally, reports have been received of this series leading to attitudinal shifts towards people with disability within workplaces. Tangible benefits include the creation of employment pathways through organisations such as Jigsaw, Xceptional and Hireup.
- The Live Work Play conference attracted over 600 delegates and was a major focal point for the development of the Inclusion Plan goals; several stakeholders reflected on the significance of this achievement.
- The Inclusive Leadership forum hosted by the NSW Public Service Commission (PSC) and FACS convened around 300 public service senior executives to focus on meeting employment targets.
- Collaboration between the Department of Planning and the Environment and local government created several accessible play spaces across NSW with grant funding available to support further initiatives.
- Internships for people with disability were established in a few NSW Government agencies.
- Design for Dignity principles are being incorporated into the design of new NSW Government buildings.
- Most councils and agencies have planned or undertaken a review of website accessibility, reviewed recruitment policies and practices, procurement, and support processes. For customer-facing agencies and councils, changes to the physical environment are being prioritised (such as upgrades to footpaths, change facilities and wayfinding signage).
- Work associated with the DIAP has helped create a change in attitudes and approach to inclusivity so that many actions, such as changes to planning guidelines, will have ongoing impacts into the future.

## Part 2: Perceptions from the disability sector and people with lived experience

This section draws on interviews with representatives from disability sector organisations and representatives from the clusters with lived experience of disability. Participants were asked to comment on how they had been engaged as part of DIAP planning and implementation. They were also asked for feedback on what had worked and what had not worked, and to reflect on any early impacts they had observed or experienced.

### Involvement in the process of developing and implementing DIAPs

Participants felt that people with disability had been authentically engaged throughout the process of developing DIAPs, either as individuals or as part of a disability advocacy group, and that there was growing awareness of the need to include people with disability in the process for it to be effective. Generally, interviewees felt that their feedback was “received well” and “taken onboard”.

However, interviewees did raise some challenges and limitations of the process, including the extent to which consultation and involvement continued as plans were being implemented.

*“I would say that the consultation of people with disability has been there from the beginning for all of the DIAPs, because that’s a requirement. But the second part, as to the implementation, no, I don’t think so.”*

Other challenges identified in the interviews included:

- Agencies and individuals with disability becoming overwhelmed with the physical task of consulting on so many DIAPs “with no additional resources”. This made giving an appropriate and equitable level of input to all plans very challenging.
- Interviewees with disability feeling personally burdened with the task of being the main, or sometimes only, advocate for people with disability within their agency, with one interviewee commenting that she had come out of meetings thinking “I’m doing all the work and it’s just hard work”.
- Frustrations with the planning process and the DIAP document itself as it was not always accessible and inclusive of people with disability. One interviewee that she tended to “fall back a bit or miss out on some stuff” during planning meetings and that she found the DIAP too “wordy” and not very “user-friendly”.
- Some interviewees feeling that people with disability were not “embraced by DIAP” and that their consultation was more about ensuring “there’s nothing controversial” in the final stages of planning, rather than being involved from conception.

### Perceived impact of DIAP development and implementation

#### Positive impacts

Generally, interviewees perceived that it was good that there was a “requirement” to have a DIAP and “stipulations about how that’s meant to be done”. The feedback was that the requirement for agencies to develop and implement a DIAP had a positive impact on bringing disability issues to the fore, raising awareness, starting conversations that went beyond DIAP compliance, and enabling advocacy groups access and interaction with NSW Government agencies.

*“It was an enabler to have conversations because actually they have to comply with this... So it brought it first to mind and it also enabled conversations... that we may not have had. So it absolutely raised awareness.”*

Other positive impacts included the creation of specialist positions to develop and address DIAP actions, including the employment of a "recruitment specialist" and greater engagement of disability support services in recruitment and workplace support, such as Job Access.

Positive examples of the impact of DIAP development included the incorporation of disability awareness in workplace inductions, professional development modules and training sessions; the development of accessible content and systems, the use of inclusive language, and the development of inclusive recruitment and procurement processes. Interviewees reported instances of positive profiling and celebration of people with disability and increased involvement in the area by senior executives.

### **Challenges**

Despite these positives, several participants pointed out that there was still a lot of stigma surrounding disability, including "*invisible disabilities*" such as mental illness, and high rates of bullying and discrimination against people with disability. One interviewee explained that, even in her role as a disability consultant, she experienced many examples of exclusionary practices and structures in her workplace every day:

*"People with disabilities are always fighting battles every day. Why do we have to keep fighting the battle? It shouldn't be this hard."*

### **Feedback on DIAPs**

#### **What went well**

Face-to-face consultations and meetings were perceived by several interviewees as "*really helpful*" because it facilitated the voices of people with disability and disability advocacy groups who "*often tend to be a bit invisible in the space*", and, "*if facilitated well*", allowed an opportunity to "*progress a lot of the ideas*" and give facilitators a good idea "*about what the priorities are*".

Several interviewees spoke positively about "*some fantastic things*" that certain departments were doing as part of their DIAPs, including FACS and the Department of Transport. The International Day of People with Disability celebrations were highlighted by several interviewees, as well as the Inclusive Leadership forum organised by FACS.

#### **Where are the gaps?**

While substantial progress was identified, interviewees also referred to several gaps including the siloed approach to planning apparent in some organisations, and a lack of effective governance and reporting.

DIAP development and implementation was described by several interviewees as being "*fragmented into the HR section*" and written in "*isolation*" to the rest of the agency or department. One interviewee suggested that the lack of integration of the DIAP meant that divisions and teams within the agency had not been involved, and thus "*don't understand what they've been put forward to do*." This could be "*one reason why the actions (of the DIAP) haven't been delivered*".

Another concern raised by several interviewees was that the process of developing DIAPs, and the style and form of DIAPs, was so varied and dependent on "*who within the department or local council is overseeing the process*". This made it "*very difficult to learn and share from each other*". The variance in DIAPs across agencies and councils was attributed to the available expertise and funding. One interviewee observed that "*better resourced agencies and councils were able, in the whole, to do better DIAPs, because they had more resources*", and gave the example of "*Far West councils, who really struggled because they don't have much money*."

Interviewees were concerned about a lack of governance structures and suggested that existing DIAP reporting mechanism (through the annual reports) was "*not meaningful*".



Interviewees identified that the main challenge with the DIAPs was that there were *"no targets, nothing is measured"*, making it difficult to understand what they had achieved.

Another interviewee explained that *"it has been difficult at times getting information from different directors"* or getting *"access to accurate up to date information because there isn't any real accountability on it"*.

### **Future considerations**

Participants offered several suggestions with regards to moving forward with the NSW DIP and DIAPs.

Generally, participants wanted to see a more consolidated consultation process, more consistency in the structure of DIAPs, increased opportunities for collaboration and partnership and appropriate levels of resourcing, as described in more detail below.

#### ***A more centralised and guided process for consultation with people with disability***

While it was recognised that authentic consultation with people with disability did happen, there was a sense from some interviewees that the extent to which it occurred was a bit *"patchy and sporadic"* and that the process would have benefited from *"a bit more specific direction about what that needs to include"*.

One interviewee suggested that a *"more centralised process or a more collaborative process between all agencies and different peak bodies"* would limit the overwhelming number of requests advocacy groups received to consult on DIAPs. One advocacy group was considering generating *"some kind of generic resource"* for agencies seeking feedback, to cope with the demand.

One interviewee suggested the development of a *"Centre of Excellence for people with disability"*, a clearing house providing *"everything in one hit... where we can refer to and have all the resources and materials allocated or available for people"*.

#### ***A more consistent structure for DIAPs***

While there was general acknowledgement that DIAPs needed to be tailored to individual agencies or local councils, several interviewees suggested the need for more structure within the plans. They suggested providing guidance on certain actions that should be documented or *"some foundational fundamentals"* required in every plan, such as *"removing barriers to recruitment processes"* and ensuring robust workplace adjustment policies and procedures are in place.

One interviewee questioned the format of the DIAP, and whether there might be a better format for the future.

Authentic integration of DIAPs was highlighted as very important, with a priority placed on DIAPs resulting from a *"whole of government response"*, not *"fragmented into the HR section"*.

#### ***Opportunities for effective collaboration and knowledge sharing***

All interviewees mentioned the importance of involving people with disability, through disability advocacy groups, DENs and/or steering committees, in the development of DIAPs, ideally in regular and *"safe"*, round table meetings. The importance of having a *"champion"* or *"buy-in"* from a senior executive was highlighted by several interviewees as essential, with one suggesting that meeting DIAP outcomes should form part of senior managements' performance agreements.

There was some criticism of the DIPIC committee, with comments that it *"was not very useful at all"* and that the infrequent meetings made it *"hard to gain momentum"*.

#### ***Appropriate levels of funding and support***

Many interviewees pressed the importance of adequate funding and resourcing not only for agencies to enable implementation and evaluation of DIAPs, but also for disability advocacy groups to provide effective

consultation. Those who worked for disability advocacy groups highlighted the difficulties of being *“involved with many, many DIAPs”*, being asked *“more and more”* to comment and give feedback and to support people with disability on department committees *“with no additional resources”*.

Others talked of the difficulty of getting to meetings when it involved having to take people away from their (regular) jobs. A member of a DEN stated *“we need to allocate some dollars to it, because you can't do everything on good will”*.

## Part 3: Coordinating and supporting structures

This section draws together interviews with key representatives from the bodies or groups responsible for coordinating and supporting the implementation of the NSW DIP and DIAPs:

- NSW Family and Community Services (FACS): tasked with coordinating the NSW DIP and supporting implementation of the DIAPs within each of the clusters and agencies
- Local Government NSW: responsible for supporting the development and implementation of DIAPs in local government areas
- The Disability Inclusion Plan Implementation Committee (DIPIC): established by FACS with representation from each of the clusters, Local Government NSW and the disability sector. The DIPIC meets between two and four times per year
- The Disability Council NSW: responsible for advising the Minister for Disability Services on emerging issues relating to people with disability and about the content and implementation of the NSW DIP and DIAPs.

The DIPIC had broad representation across the clusters, so many of the stakeholders from the cluster agencies were also members of the DIPIC.

Throughout the review process, stakeholders from other agencies and organisations also had the opportunity to reflect on how the four structures operated in supporting their work. Where appropriate and relevant, input from these other stakeholders has also been included.

### NSW Family and Community Services

*"...the role of FACS was really going to be about the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Plan... at first supporting the implementation of specific activities within the plan and then supporting the other agencies to fulfil their obligations under the plan."*

The general sense from participants was that FACS performed its challenging role well and that the support provided was useful, particularly in the initial stages of DIAP development and rollout.

*"...the fact that every cluster and every council has a DIAP is an achievement in itself that's worth celebrating. Sometimes I think we get stuck in the nitty gritty in how they compare...I think it's amazing that we managed to get there."*

Several agencies came to the DIAP process having already undertaken a significant amount of work in the disability inclusion space. These agencies tended to find the support provided by FACS as less useful, seeing themselves more as leaders in inclusion than as organisations requiring support.

Some stakeholders commented that they would like to see more leadership in the disability space from a more central organisation, particularly around driving the employment target, although it was understood by most that the PSC has already started working towards this.

FACS also played the key role in facilitating the DIPIC and providing secretariat support to the Disability Council, although potential conflicts were noted in the latter role. FACS also prepares the annual report to the Minister and parliament and provides more informal reporting of updates, challenges, and successes.

FACS staff reflected that the process of reporting was not ideal, noting that guidance about reporting requirements was limited:

*"...agencies I don't think reflected on the actual plans themselves in that reporting process, we wanted them to capture quality and highlights, but I think there's also an opportunity for them*

*to highlight where they needed to do more work into the future or what the next priority was, I don't think we gave them enough guidance in terms of how to report in a consistent way."*

Staff also commented on the original intention to move away from DIAPs reportable to government and towards a system where agencies were held accountable for their progress by people with disability through extensive engagement, consultation and ongoing input and feedback mechanisms.

*"... the intent was always with the Disability Inclusion Plan that Disability Inclusion Action Plans were developed by, and people were held accountable by, people with disability, and I think that's a really important gauge of the success of them or not, is whether they actually check that..."*

Generally, it was recognised that reporting could be improved, taking into consideration the ability to manipulate existing data and reports to meet this function.

### Local Government NSW

Local Government NSW was commissioned by FACS to support the implementation of DIAPs within local government and achieve the target of full compliance. It also acted as an advocate on behalf of councils to the State Government.

Local Government NSW supported councils to conduct community consultations, develop their plans, and guide the implementation process. Comments from Local Government NSW representatives who were involved in supporting councils to undertake these processes, reflected on the significant amount of work this was for many councils, particularly those with fewer resources and no dedicated position. Local Government NSW conducted a number of forums and workshops for councils to facilitate these processes, and supported access to the Liveable Communities grants. Local Government NSW also developed some guidelines for councils on how to report on their DIAPs, although there was frustration that reports had taken a significant amount of time and effort to prepare and appeared to go into a black hole.

Stakeholders in FACS identified this as a very successful partnership that delivered excellent results. Stakeholders in local government also perceived the support provided by Local Government NSW to be useful, although many reported they would have benefited from more support and guidance on how to report on their DIAPs.

### The Disability Inclusion Plan Implementation Committee (DIPIC)

The DIPIC was created to oversee the delivery of the legislation, functioning primarily as a coordination and reporting group.

Generally, participants in the interviews reported that the DIPIC had been productive and supported implementation and had been particularly effective in providing a forum to share experiences and understand how other agencies were managing the challenges of planning and implementation.

Equally, though, participants recognised the limits as to what could be achieved by the DIPIC, given the level at which it operated. Some participants observed that frustration arose because the DIPIC was a forum where good ideas for collaboration and partnership emerged, but often would not be realised because the decision makers (i.e. the Ministers) were not in the room.

Other challenges experienced by the DIPIC included tensions arising between agencies who were well-progressed in inclusion and those who were less knowledgeable. Challenges also arose in settling on an appropriate frequency for meetings.

Participation of disability sector and peak organisations was perceived as being valuable because of their ability to contribute expertise and experience to the discussion. Reconsidering the role of the disability

sector is necessary, especially how their participation could be leveraged further and whether they could be given an expanded role on the committee in the future.

In terms of sustaining the DIPIC in the longer term, maintaining interest and enthusiasm was identified as a key challenge, particularly if the DIPIC could not find a strategic focus. Now that DIAP implementation is largely achieved, some stakeholders suggested that the DIPIC could perform a role overseeing more targeted and coordinated cross-government projects.

### Disability Council NSW

Although it was not originally in its remit, the Disability Council was highly engaged and enthusiastic about the development of DIAPs. The Council hoped to provide detailed and tailored support and advice on each of the DIAPs; however, it quickly became apparent that this was not feasible given the number of plans involved:

*"...When I took on responsibility to the Disability Council they actually had drawn up this really...very, very thorough, sort of a checklist, and had a plan to read every single one and they sort of said something to the effect that they had two people working on it and they put in 40 hours each and I asked them how far they'd gotten and they'd done three out of... I mean, it's how many councils and all that? So it sort of became clear that that was not going to be possible and so we sort of went back to what the legislation said and it doesn't say they need to read everything single one and critique it and provide feedback..."*

Instead, the Disability Council reviewed a sample of plans selected by FACS that represented a range of approaches. The Council's feedback was that many of the plans, particularly those from the NSW Government agencies, were very inward looking, with internally focused actions. The Council was also concerned that annual reports were not granular enough, and perhaps lacked honest reflection of the challenges and limitations.

Some stakeholders from outside the Council, commented that they would like to see them more engaged to provide a level of accountability around the DIAPs. Some further thought might be given to how the Disability Council could be more effectively used to provide oversight and advice on DIAP planning and implementation recognising the scope of the task.

The Disability Council has made it a priority to invite the Secretaries of the main NSW government agencies to outline to the Council the progress agencies are making against their Disability Inclusion Action plans. To date, three agencies have been invited to present.

## Part 4: NSW Government clusters

### Overview of DIAP planning in the clusters

Several of the clusters were not new to disability inclusion planning and had functioning Disability Action Plans or Disability Inclusion Plans before 2015. Other clusters and agencies had been comparatively slow to engage with disability inclusion. This is an important point because any progress in individual agencies and clusters must be measured in relation to this starting point.

Table 2 provides an overview of disability inclusion planning in the clusters before and after the introduction of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*. The table also provides information about the time period that each cluster's DIAP covers.

Table 2 Overview of disability inclusion planning in the NSW Government clusters 2012-2022

Clusters	Year											
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Transport	Disability Action Plan 2012-17						DIAP 2018-22					
DPC				DIAP 2015-18								
Planning				DIAP 2015-19								
Justice	Disability Action Plan			DIAP 2015-18								
Health	Disability Inclusion Plan				DIAP 2016-19							
Education	DIAP 2011-15				DIAP 2016-20							
FACS				DIAP 2015-19 (refreshed June 2018)								
Finance				DIAP 2015-18								
Treasury*				2015								
Industry					DIAP 2016-17							

\* The Treasury DIAP did not specify the timeframe it covered

### Analysis of NSW Government cluster plans

This section provides a brief synthesis of the cluster DIAPs. The analysis compares the DIAPs to the guidelines, requirements and legislation that underpinned their development which is described briefly at the beginning of each section. This section also synthesises the content and actions across the plans to draw out similarities and differences.

#### Consultation

*The Disability Inclusion Act mandated that DIAPs should provide a summary of the consultation process undertaken in developing the document, outlining the audiences/organisations involved; the methods used; the timeline from start to finish; a summary of the influence the consultation had on the content and structure of the DIAP; and plans for ongoing consultation.<sup>1</sup>*

While many DIAPs included a paragraph or two outlining the consultation process, the level of detail as prescribed in the Disability Inclusion Act was rarely delivered. Most commonly, consultation with the disability sector and with internal groups (comprising employees with disability) was reported.

Only three DIAPs (Health, Education and Justice) described consultation processes with the community and/or disability sector that appeared to be truly formative, feeding directly into the development of the DIAP. One DIAP (FACS) described a process of co-design with key stakeholders in the action formulation process.

Three DIAPs did not describe how plans were developed or what, if any, consultation processes occurred (DFSI, DPC and Treasury).

The NSW Transport DIAP referred to consultation as being very much integrated with its core business. For example, the disability sector is consulted as part of all major infrastructure projects from design to implementation. NSW Transport maintains an Accessible Transport Advisory Committee which meets at least four times a year for ongoing consultation about transport projects. There was no section dedicated specifically to the process of consultation for the development of the DIAP.

Variations in the nature of consultation between the different agencies was, in part, a reflection of the existing engagement processes and forums that agencies had in place before they began developing DIAPs. Some agencies were able to achieve a genuine consultation from a very low base. Others, such as the DPC, demonstrated a lower level of engagement than might be expected.

### **Governance and resources**

*The Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines stipulate that DIAP should describe governance and accountability arrangements and the resources and processes for developing actions.<sup>11</sup>*

Governance and accountability arrangements were described in various degrees of detail in all the DIAPs with the exception of DPC's DIAP.

Seven DIAPs (from Treasury, Transport, Planning, Justice, Industry, Health and FACS) described an implementation or steering group. Four (from Planning, Justice, Industry, FACS) nominated an executive sponsor as a critical element of the governance and accountability for the plan. One DIAP (Industry) referred to the role of a disability champion as part of the governance structure.

Only one DIAP (from Planning) contained a section detailing resourcing of the DIAP, including board-approved DIAP funding. Despite being a statutory requirement to allocate resources for reasonable workplace adjustments, only two DIAPs (Justice and Industry) specifically referenced this as an action.

### **Monitoring, review and reporting**

*The Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines specify that DIAPs should outline an evaluation framework and detailed plan to monitor, measure and review results to track and report on the Plan.<sup>11</sup>*

Most commonly, DIAPs included a brief section indicating that implementation monitoring would be undertaken and reported (typically quarterly) either by the implementation working group or the business area responsible (Planning, Justice, Industry, FACS, Transport, Education).

Feedback from customers and staff was recognised as an evaluation method in the DIAPs by Transport and FACS. Finance and DPC did not have a dedicated section describing monitoring and evaluation of the DIAP, rather integrating their performance indicators and measures against the action items in the plan.

The Justice DIAP indicated that a formal evaluation of the DIAP itself would take place in 2018. Similarly, the Treasury DIAP outlined that the "soon to be formed Diversity and Inclusion Council would have responsibility for evaluating and adjusting the plan in line with strategic and operational planning cycles".

Health included a detailed program logic and monitoring framework aligning the DIAP actions with specific indicators and data sources.

Transport, Education, Justice and FACS all made provision for ongoing engagement, feedback or advice from their disability sector stakeholders, employees with disability, and the community in their DIAPs.

Internal reporting included quarterly internal progress reviews and updates as well as documentation in the annual report submitted to parliament. Transport provided a comprehensive list of progress and outcomes from their previous Disability Action Plans, while Education provided highlights of their achievements from their plan.

### **Actions**

*The Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines state that actions should be as detailed as possible and organised under the four priority areas. Specific and measurable indicators of success should also be included for every action. Actions should nominate the individual or area responsible.<sup>11</sup>*

Most plans contained actions that were sufficiently specific, linked to an outcome area and nominated a person or business unit responsible. Not all contained indicators or success measures, although not all actions were measurable in nature.

Actions were mostly organisationally focused, with some attention to service delivery and engagement with the wider community. The DIAPs produced by Transport (and to a lesser extent Education, FACS and Health) contained actions that were more customer-focused, reflecting their core business in delivering accessible and inclusive public services.

Most DIAPs organised actions under the four priority areas established in the NSW DIP, although there were some variations.

Transport had additional focus areas (accessible customer information technology and research, and inclusive customer service and feedback) but did not address community attitudes and behaviours.

The Treasury DIAP did not follow the four priority areas, nominating five focus areas instead:

- Senior commitment to leading diversity and inclusion
- Incorporate diversity and inclusion into communications
- Improve recruitment practices to increase diversity
- Evolve to promote NSW Treasury as a leading inclusive accessible workplace
- Evolve work practice to increase accessibility of advice.

Not all agencies placed their action items under the same priority area, which suggested that the four priorities were not seen as discrete categories and were open to interpretation by the agency. Across the DIAPs, the priorities of 'systems and processes' and 'inclusive employment' contained the most actions.



A thematic analysis of the actions in the DIAPs (provided in Table 3) gives an illustrative (though not exhaustive) list of those most commonly included in DIAPs:

*Table 3 Thematic analysis of cluster DIAP actions.*

Theme identified	Scope of activity
<b>Priority 1: Community attitudes and behaviours</b>	
Training and raising awareness	Training included the AHRC training course, induction training for managers and employees, and disability awareness and confidence training. Most training and awareness-raising activity was workforce-focused rather than community-based.
Celebrating and campaigning	Opportunities identified included celebrating International Day of People with Disability, running staff educational campaigns, and embedding the <i>Don't DIS my ABILITY</i> campaign within organisations.
Communicating progress, initiatives and successes	Agencies priorities included creating communication strategies for disability inclusion, sharing progress and outcomes, and promoting the DIAP to ensure it is transparent and accessible.
Engaging senior leaders and appointing champions	<p>The importance of senior sponsorship of inclusion and the DIAP to raise the profile of the DIAP and promote implementation within their teams was a common theme.</p> <p>DIAPs also identified training senior management teams in disability confidence and awareness and maintaining disability inclusion as a standing agenda item at senior executive forums and meetings as areas for action.</p>
<b>Priority 2: Liveable communities</b>	
Creating accessible buildings, infrastructure and workplaces	Plans mostly focused on conducting audits and modifications of existing facilities and ensuring new buildings adhere to accessible and inclusive design principles.
Consulting and involving staff, stakeholders and service users	Activities focused on surveying stakeholders about their experience of the workplace environment, ensuring customer feedback channels are accessible, and surveying disability peak bodies and representative groups on prioritisation to support DIAP actions.
Supporting accessible service design and delivery	<p>Plans focused on ensuring public-facing services and facilities are accessible and inclusive.</p> <p>Specifically, plans identified transport accessibility, accessible social housing (FACS), and flexible service delivery principles as areas for focus.</p>
Improving access to external events and training	Plans identified the need to look at accessibility of external training, meetings and events for staff and stakeholders, as well as supporting access and inclusion for the community at public events through accessible transport.

Theme identified	Scope of activity
<b>Priority 3: Inclusive employment</b>	
Building disability networks and diversity committees	DIAPs prioritised creating/maintaining a disability or diversity network, increasing membership, engaging with the network to identify barriers and develop solutions, and using the network to support and mentor existing and new staff with disability.
Creating employee pathways with targeted entries	<p>Activities focused on supporting people with disability to enter the workforce by increasing employment opportunities and creating pathways and targeted positions.</p> <p>They also identified as priorities: linking in with disability employment service providers to extend networks and increase recruitment, establishing graduate programs and internships, and encouraging providers to offer accessible programs to support candidates with disability to apply for roles.</p>
Strengthening learning and development	Priorities in this theme included promoting opportunities for career development, ensuring opportunities are accessible, monitoring and reviewing career progression and increasing take-up of learning opportunities by people with disabilities.
Managing and supporting employees with disabilities	<p>Building disability awareness and confidence in managers was identified as an area of focus.</p> <p>Other priorities included supporting workplace adjustments and flexible working, auditing onboarding processes to identify barriers, and developing resources to provide guidance to managers and supervisors on inclusion.</p> <p>A common element of plans was supporting, fostering and mentoring partnerships to support employees.</p>
Implementing supportive recruitment processes	DIAPs focused on reviewing recruitment processes to ensure they are accessible and barrier-free; embedding reasonable adjustment procedures across the recruitment process; and educating managers to be disability-confident at recruitment.
Facilitating workplace adjustments, accessibility and flexible working	Plans focused on communicating with the staff about adjustment guidelines; providing access to workplace assessments; establishing a process and budget to support adjustments; and promoting flexible working practices.
Revising supporting guidelines, policies, processes	Agencies prioritised reviewing and amending human resources policies, guidelines and employment practices to support access and inclusion.

Theme identified	Scope of activity
Training managers and recruiters	<p>DIAPs identified building management capability to ensure that the needs of people with disability are considered and addressed in activities to recruit, retain and support staff.</p> <p>Activities to building and promote a culture of inclusion were also identified.</p>
<b>Priority 4: Systems and processes</b>	
Ensuring accessible web, IT, software and information	<p>The priority in activities was ensuring compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines so that websites and information are barrier-free and easily accessible was prioritised.</p> <p>DIAPs also identified activities to ensure that organisational IT systems and software meet accessibility standards.</p>
Reforming procurement practices for accessibility	<p>Activities identified aimed to adjust procurement practices at several stages of the process.</p> <p>They also emphasised ensuring accessibility is a factor considered in procurement decisions, identifying and supporting contracts which impact on employment inclusion for people with disability, and articulating requirements for third parties to address inclusion and dignified access in contracts.</p>
Revising strategic policies, processes guidelines	<p>DIAPs identified the need to take a 'top-down' approach, ensuring that strategic policy reflects inclusive practices and contemporary commitments to people with disability.</p> <p>These high-level policies and strategies need to incorporate access and inclusion into the policy development process, using the objectives of the legislation to influence policy development, projects and programs.</p>
Providing assistive technology to employees	<p>The availability of assistive technology solutions and maximising their value was highlighted as a priority in DIAPs. Supporting this was a focus on maintaining regular consultation and feedback processes with assistive technology users.</p>
Strengthening complaint handling and feedback processes	<p>Agencies identified the importance of creating opportunities for ongoing feedback through staff and customer surveys, robust complaint handling processes, and undertaking consultation with advisory groups.</p> <p>A foundational activity identified in this area was reviewing processes and providing a range of formats and avenues to ensure people with disability can participate in feedback and complaint resolution processes.</p>

## Consultations with the NSW Government clusters

Eleven interviews with 24 representatives were conducted across seven cluster areas: DPC, Justice, Planning, Education, FACS, Health and Transport. In several instances, we spoke to multiple representatives from a cluster, occasionally in separate sessions. We also spoke to some agencies within clusters. Across the cluster interviews, four interviewees reported lived experience with disability.

Specific agencies from within clusters that participated in the consultations included the Public Service Commission, a part of DPC, and the Art Gallery of NSW, part of the Planning cluster.

Several attempts were made to contact representatives from the Industry, Finance, and Treasury clusters; however, interviews were unable to be arranged.

The cluster representatives reported varying degrees of involvement with their DIAPs. Four of the clusters (Health, Education, Transport and Justice) had been involved in the development of their cluster's DIAP from the beginning and had good knowledge of the early consultation and implementation processes.

Representatives from other clusters had come in to the process more recently and thus had limited knowledge of the initial stages.

The following section presents the themes from the analysis of the interviews. The analysis is presented primarily to answer the review questions, but also examines emergent and cross cutting themes.

## Developing and implementing the plans

For many of the agencies who participated in the review, disability inclusion planning was not a new thing. Previous 'action plans' had existed in different forms prior to the introduction of the legislation, and so many agencies had reasonably well-established processes around consultation and action development.

### *The impetus of the Disability Inclusion Act*

The legislation was seen as an important force in driving the inclusion agenda forward. Even though disability inclusion planning was not new, the legislation and the NSW DIP was seen as providing weight to efforts to improve inclusion. This was reinforced by the fact that the cluster DIAPs were endorsed at a very high level within most of the agencies, which was felt to enhance accountability.

*"The change in legislation in 2014 made it more imperative. It also came into light that we were applying for increased funding for a new building, so we had to be relevant to all people so that became imperative that we really needed to update our documents and be relevant to the wider community."*

Several review participants noted that, while the legislation played a significant role in driving change, there were a number of other factors also progressing the inclusion agenda. Several agencies reported they had other compliance requirements such as Commonwealth standards around disability and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The NDIS was also identified as adding significant force to the momentum.

Some participants commented that agencies with no previous inclusion plan were "thrown" by the requirement to prepare a DIAP and the pressure to put something in place without really knowing what to do.

### *Promoting ownership and engagement across the agency*

Many participants recognised that, for a DIAP to be successful, it needed ownership and buy-in from across the agency. Some expressed concern that the DIAP could become "just an HR document", if there was not agency-wide engagement and accountability for the actions. A key countermeasure was to ensure that the executive was also engaged across all stages of the DIAP's development.

### **Accessing support and guidance and sharing experiences**

Having access to advice and support throughout the development and implementation process was perceived by stakeholders as useful. Support included written resources, such as the guides and templates provided by FACS, although agencies for the most part translated the FACS guidance into a form more relevant to the context of their work.

*"We listened to what FACS said and looked at the guidelines- Those were helpful... but we also had to do what worked for our system."*

Hearing from other agencies about what they were doing in their plans was identified as being particularly valuable. The DIPIC was a good forum for this, and those who attended these meetings appreciated learning about how actions were being developed, sharing stories, highlighting successes and exploring innovations.

Participants felt it was particularly challenging to sustain interest and enthusiasm in the DIPIC. There was a sense from many that it had been particularly helpful in the early stages of development and implementation, but that reinvigoration and perhaps a more strategic remit might be required for the future.

*"Because I think one of the challenges we even face it with our committees, if it's just reporting back all the time, people lose interest, so you've got to have something in there for them to want to come along for they feel that they're making a difference, contributing, getting something out of it."*

The DIPIC was perceived to have significant potential, particularly if it was used to 'leverage up' within organisations to gain buy-in for some more strategic activities.

*"And leveraging up then to the secretaries because you can send all the directors and executive directors in the world to meeting, which absolutely should happen, and it should be driven at that level, but it also needs the imprimatur and the buy-in and the accountability at the secretary level for some of those targets and that sort of thing."*

### **Implementation mechanisms**

Most agencies described three key elements of successful implementation. First, the DIAP needed strong executive engagement and sponsorship which extended across the life of the process. Second, the agency needed a steering group which met regularly to oversee implementation of the DIAP. Finally, accountabilities had to be assigned and owned. Some agencies also opted to appoint a diversity or disability champion.

One agency implemented a strategy of rotating secretariat responsibility for the implementation group to promote awareness, ownership and ongoing engagement.

Another agency developed a comprehensive communication plan which aligned with their DIAP, identifying the key audiences, targeted messages and a risk management section and used it as a tool to drive implementation.

### **Ongoing implementation**

While DIAPs are in place, there was some anecdotal feedback from stakeholders that they felt the plans were 'gathering dust'.

*"The DIAP is one thing, but what are you doing about it, what are you actually doing about it? I don't know how many executives or other people would actually go and spend time going through the DIAP."*

Some agencies also reported that the landscape had changed a lot since their first forays into the inclusion space. They commented that the disability community had become much more active and prominent, and that the introduction of the legislation had helped them to secure funding and resources from within their agencies to support the development and achievement of their plans. There was a sense from some stakeholders that their plans had become more dynamic and responsive, with some actions progressing quite rapidly as a result.

It is important to note that not all agencies were equally resourced after the legislation commenced, so there was much variation in this experience.

## Involvement of people with disability

### Consultation

Several agencies reported engaging directly with disability sector organisations to assist with managing the consultations and development of the plans. The Art Gallery of NSW, for example, recruited a consultant with lived experience from Accessible Arts to lead consultations both internally and externally and guide the development of their DIAP. They described a move away from just participation to disability led models.

*"I think having the consultation led by a person with a disability is really powerful."*

Transport reported an extensive consultation process that, while not co-designed, received 43 submissions from organisations and individuals. Transport also maintains a very active Accessible Transport Advisory Committee that was highly engaged throughout the process.

Agencies which had undertaken consultations to develop their plans described seeking input from external disability stakeholder groups, internal groups such as the DEN, and diversity and inclusion networks. The nature of consultations ranged from public forums to calling for written submissions and comments on draft plans.

One participant who supported consultation across multiple agencies, perceived that the consultation process was relatively consistent. The variation he observed was in the depth at which the consultations had been conducted.

*"The consultation process I think from my experience has been consistent across all agencies involved in formulating their own respective DIAPS. And, I think that's really important. I think the only variation is, to what level the consultation piece has been..."*

### Ongoing feedback and engagement

DIAPs were intended to be dynamic documents. However, mechanisms for providing feedback and ongoing input into plans did not appear to be widely used.

Some agencies reported that even in cases where an implementation committee, steering committee or consultation group had oversight, the processes and arrangements for feedback did not always lead to changes or adaptations to the plan. For other agencies, there were less visible mechanisms for providing feedback or ongoing input, creating a sense that the DIAP was more static.

Some agencies identified that for big agencies it is a challenge to be dynamic, because the capacity to revise, re-consult and re-develop a plan is not in place. In their position, the DIAP needed to thus be something relatively high-level that would not go out of date quickly.

*"And in a really large agency like this, it's very hard then to land something that's going to be ...a public position for a period of years that can wind up being out of date very quickly, but the capacity to then go out and revise, re-develop, re-consult on a plan, it's really not practicable for an agency this size."*

## Actions in the DIAPs

The four priority areas were generally perceived as a useful structure to work within, although it was recognised that they were not mutually exclusive areas and so some agencies had reported challenges in pulling the areas apart and working out where to place particular actions. The analysis of the DIAPs illustrates how the themes were interpreted differently by agencies.

Many participants reflected that DIAP actions tended to document a range of things that the system was already doing. They also noted that there was significant body of activity that was not captured in the DIAP. Some initiatives, such as changes in culture and practices, were recognised as difficult to capture as an action-focused initiative in an action plan.

Agencies were generally cautious in detailing their actions so as to not be too prescriptive and to enable a degree of flexibility in case actions could not be achieved within allocated resources or if priorities needed to change.

*"I think at the end of the day, I prefer to see a DIAP that's one page with one page of actions that they'll become a reality than 20 pages of actions that just don't become anything. I think pivotal to the DIAP is like I said, the operational, operating [aspect]."*

Participants commented that actions needed to be transparent and capable of being executed with designated 'owners' responsible for delivering the actions. Most agencies assigned an organisation unit to hold responsibility, though some agencies found it challenging to locate a unit within the organisation where some actions or focus areas could sit. Some struggled with employment, whereas others reported this was one of their strongest parts of their plans. Agencies which reported strong actions and progress towards outcomes also reported being very engaged and established at inclusion planning.

A key criticism was that the scope of the DIAP had been restrictive. For agencies who were very active in the inclusion spaces before the introduction of the NSW DIP, the DIAPs resulted in a dramatic narrowing of their focus. There were also reports that the core business of some agencies did not fit with the four priority areas.

## Evaluating and reporting

### Monitoring and evaluation

Most participants reported superficial monitoring of actions in plans, relying on the business unit allocated responsibility for the action to provide updates on achievements. These progress updates tended to be presented to steering committees or working groups, but were described as informal processes. More formal evaluation of some discrete actions, such as attendance at training, was reported to occur in some agencies.

*"... we tend to provide a more narrative-based reporting about what the department's been doing and where some of the key metrics are up to..."*

Most agencies are tracking their employment of people with disability through HR systems, although this was widely recognised as flawed, given many employees would not disclose a disability.

*"We've still got a long way to go in making our employees feel comfortable in sharing that information with us."*

A few agencies described using a performance template which they would send around to their different business units to complete which then fed up into more formal reporting processes.

### Reporting

*"It was very anecdotal. It was very much on what agencies wanted to tell."*

Reporting was acknowledged to be less than ideal though some participants felt it was important to promote broader awareness and to ensure that inclusion stays on the agenda. Agencies recognised that increased requirements to report can be burdensome and take resources away from action but felt that a lack of guidance around what to report and how to provide the information meant that reporting tended to be very anecdotal with a limited sense of impact or outcomes.

Agencies sometimes felt that reporting included in annual reports was often relegated to the appendices and did not capture the real achievements. Others indicated that they felt compelled to report more broadly on their inclusion work and approach to supporting people with disability rather than reporting solely on what was in their DIAP.

One cluster referred to their obligation as an outward facing agency to demonstrate to the public how they were addressing inclusion. They produced a summary snapshot report that was publicly available.

*"... we also do a summary report that's available publicly... So that's really just a highlight of some of the achievements for the year."*

Some stakeholders questioned whether reporting to the Minister was the best approach to promote accountability, whereas others felt this added weight to the whole process.

*"The process of having a formal annual report has helped raise the profile a little bit, or capitalise on the context for disability and inclusion."*

### **Feedback and recognition**

Some participants recognised that a particularly challenging aspect of reporting was that reports often seemed to go 'into the ether' with units receiving little feedback on their progress. However, one participant reported that their Deputy Secretary had written letters back to each reporting area, acknowledging their achievements and communicating the focus area for the next year. This was felt to be a useful feedback loop and mechanism to maintain engagement.

### **Progress towards outcomes**

Quite a few agencies reported that most of the actions in their plans had been completed, were ongoing or were now embedded in 'business as usual'. Some agencies reported that parts of their system had already been doing inclusion work prior to the DIAP, so it was considered part of core business.

*"Last time we did a big report on it, almost everything was either completed or ongoing and embedded in practice."*

However, the reality for people with disability within these agencies is that there is still much more work to be done to achieve inclusion. Employees with disability reported a constant battle to get what they need. For some, there is an increased workload associated with being involved in employee networks and consultative forums which is "not in the job description". They also reported spending additional time supporting, mentoring and advocating for colleagues.

Some of the bigger challenges, such as increasing employment, are ongoing and are widely recognised to be more challenging goals to progress. Despite this, agencies provided examples of several successes resulting from their DIAP, including:

- increases in the number of employees who reported a disability, reflecting more inclusive recruitment practices and targeted positions
- internships for people with disability
- the establishment of DENs across or within agencies



- celebrating the International Day of Disability
- Design for Dignity principles incorporated into new building design
- workshops, training and professional development for staff in areas such as inclusive communication, designing accessible content, web accessibility, and disability awareness training
- providing personalised learning support in the education system
- workplace adjustments, and creating a passport for adjustments which you can carry within an organisation to avoid the need for re-assessment
- creation and commission of accessible play spaces
- attaining the status of Disability Confident Recruiter
- using data to report the experiences of people with disability (such as Bureau of Health Information reports)
- staging accessible community and public events such as Vivid Sydney and New Year's Eve celebrations
- implementing closed captioning for public videos.

Agencies also referred to achievements in the inclusion space that had happened outside their DIAPs, illustrating increased momentum generated by multiple drivers.

### Critical factors associated with DIAP planning and implementation

#### ***The role and impact of the Disability Inclusion Act***

The Disability Inclusion Act and the supporting NSW DIP were recognised as important enablers, kickstarting conversations and encouraging agencies and individuals to think about what could be done. Agencies felt it was important to set plans and goals, and that the four priority areas had generally been a useful framework to work within.

However, the new approach also narrowed the scope of priority areas and actions to be included in the DIAPs, which some agencies found challenging:

*"...we went from a very strong piece of legislation to a plan that was then diluted into four priority areas."*

There were also reports that some core business actions did not clearly align with the four priorities, so agencies excluded them.

*"When I started in this role, there was a draft Disability Action Plan that was twice the size of this. And then because the new framework came out, we had to scale it back quite a lot."*

The legislation also redefined the list of agencies required to produce a DIAP. The NSW Police Force, for example, is no longer required to prepare a DIAP, though it has had a Disability Action Plan in the past.

#### ***Embedding responsibility across organisations***

Executive support was seen as a critical factor for success. Because most cluster DIAPs were endorsed by the Deputy Secretary or the Secretary, accountability was high and DIAPs were seen as having more credibility and weight. Staff reported having increased confidence to enforce to the plan.

Having responsibility and ownership of the DIAP embedded in the organisation, rather than being held by a single business unit was identified as a good strategy for increasing engagement and accountability:

*"I have to say, in a large organisation like this, while the DIAP's got its limitations in terms of how you practicably turn something into it, it's in fact a very useful thing to have as a mechanism to engage different parts of the system"*

### **Momentum from multiple drivers**

Participants reported that multiple forces (including the NDIS roll out and Commonwealth standards for disability) are combining to propel the inclusion agenda, creating momentum for successful DIAPs.

### **The challenge of a 'plan' in a constantly changing organisation**

Although there was a desire to see plans that were more interactive and would not becoming irrelevant static documents, some agencies reported that the DIAP was not flexible enough to meet the needs of a constantly changing organisation. Given the resource commitment required to consult and develop a meaningful plan, agencies were cautious to create plans that might be quickly out of date. Often this translated to DIAPs populated with actions that were high-level and general to retain relevance in the face of changing agendas.

### **Barriers to realising the actions**

Agencies reported several challenges met when trying to implement actions. Sometimes, uptake of training and mentoring programs was poor. Increasing employment of people with disability was also reported as difficult because of a lack of knowledge about where and how to do this.

A dual challenge in increasing employment is under-reporting of disability by employees. This was recognised to be in part an issue of organisational culture and trust, but also has to be understood as the right of the person to not disclose their disability.

### **Silos, lethargy and resistance**

Some participants comment that DIAPs were developed in silos. Agencies focused very much on what was in their remit, with little consideration of how their work might overlap with other clusters or how they could contribute to a more strategic and coordinated inclusion agenda.

Some agencies spoke about how they would like to be involved in more collaborative efforts across clusters and work towards bigger goals, but cautioned that such an approach would require allocated funding support. Others commented on societal or cultural resistance or lethargy to examine the more structural elements that create and reinforce exclusion, hence the focus on the 'lower hanging fruit'.

In developing their DIAPs, some agencies also focused on internal efforts, identifying actions they could achieve within their own organisations, with less consideration given to how they might encourage inclusion in the wider community.

### **Resourcing**

Limited resources was identified by most agencies as a challenge. Agencies had varying access to resources to support their plans, and with no specific funding attached to the DIAPs, actions had to be designed within existing resource allocations. Stakeholders commented that when they could embed disability inclusion within broader business agendas, it gathered more traction.

Funding physical accessibility remains a significant challenge, particularly as the cost of modifying buildings and infrastructure are huge.

*"Whenever you get agencies to put down what they're doing, that's a process in and of itself. Yeah, I think it's really developed a discourse and I think that it is the discourse in the long term is around inclusion and I think it's contributed a lot to that."*

## Impact and importance of the DIAP

While there was some caution in attributing outcomes directly to DIAPs, especially recognising the different forces in play in the inclusion space, participants generally agreed that DIAPs were having a positive impact. It was also agreed that there was a lot more work to be done at a system level.

*"So I think it is a confluence of factors. I'm really proud of our DIAP and I think we've produced a lot of really good things from it... but whether or not it has shifted the whole system..."*

The DIAP was reported to provide a lot of leverage within organisations to advocate for change, and some cultural and attitudinal changes had been observed, including the embedding of inclusion in day-to-day business.

*"I think that it's just embedded into what we do now. When I first came to the organisation, whilst it was quite empathetic and proactive to a degree, you still had to raise it as you know, I was thinking about Access and Inclusion for this, or this, or this. But now, it's just basically front of mind, and people are openly talking about it, I'm not the one saying it, someone else is saying it..."*

Ultimately, stakeholders agreed that DIAPs perform an important function in initiating discussion and action on inclusion and ensuring it remained on the agenda.

*"I think we continue to need them because if we don't have a plan it won't happen. Having a plan doesn't mean it happens - but monitoring it in the way in which we do, and working with people means it hasn't been a plan that's just sat on the shelf ... And I think we need to have them because within the current context, to not have something would be perceived as taking away and government shifting the focus away from people with disabilities, I think that will be a real risk..."*

## Future considerations for disability inclusion

### ***Moving towards a broader inclusion agenda and universal access***

Several agencies talked about embedding disability inclusion within broader diversity and inclusion agendas, which was seen as a useful strategy to optimise limited resources. However, at least one participant expressed concern that this approach was risky, and that disability inclusion was not established enough to be bundled together with a more general diversity agenda.

The other concept frequently referred to was the universal design principle. Many agencies discussed how this was being integrated into the commissioning of new buildings and infrastructure to improve access, recognising that design that works better for people with disabilities works better for everyone in society. The concept also works to mainstream the experience of disability by acknowledging that anyone can experience a change in health and experience some form of disability in their life.

### ***Cross-government cooperation and leadership***

Where there are systemic issues impacting on inclusion, cross-government leadership is essential to drive change. Clusters have a role to play but cannot achieve what is needed in isolation. Many stakeholders expressed a desire to see some strong leadership for cross-government work. The role of the PSC in driving the employment target was recognised widely as being an important one. As one stakeholder commented, the fact that this responsibility has been handed to a central agency as opposed to a community services agency reflects a huge attitudinal shift.

Although collaboration and coordination between agencies was identified as something that could be strengthened going forward, there were a few examples where clusters had been working together in strategic partnerships, including:

- collaboration between Planning and local governments on accessible playgrounds
- Treasury and DPC sharing the Diversity and Inclusion Council – two central agencies in the same building working on bigger scale projects, including exerting external influence
- creating interagency ‘communities of practice’ to share innovative approaches to disability inclusion.

## Part 5: Local government

NSW local government councils were required to produce a DIAP by 30 June 2017. Local Government NSW was engaged to assist councils to develop their plans and, in partnership with FACS, produced planning guidelines and held workshops for council staff to discuss ideas, implementation and challenges. Given there has been limited time for local councils to realise actions and outcomes, this section of the report focuses on the planning and implementation processes.

This section synthesises data gathered from an online survey (n=95), qualitative interviews with representatives from 11 local councils (five metro and six regional), and analysis of almost all local government DIAPs (124 in total).

### Planning

The development of the DIAPs coincided with considerable local government reform, such as the “Fit for the Future” process and associated NSW council amalgamations, which had an impact on the capacity of councils to dedicate resources to the DIAP planning process. Many interviewees identified challenges in developing the DIAP because of this. For example, in the Inner West Council, the amalgamation of three former councils meant that each council’s access committee was disbanded and a single access committee for the new council has only recently been established.

Aligning the DIAP timelines and approaches with existing local government planning processes, including the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework, assisted councils in the planning process.

Most council representatives interviewed reported that their council had considerable experience in disability inclusion prior to the DIAP, and the DIAP was an extension of this work. There were also a few council representatives where disability inclusion was relatively new, particularly those councils who did not have dedicated community development or community services sections. Some interviewees noted that having a background in disability work had helped them, and for others accessibility training had been valuable, especially when meeting with planners, engineers and other council divisions.

For those who completed the online survey, 40% reported that their council has a dedicated role that has responsibility for disability inclusion, and 9% had a dedicated position initially, but do not have this any longer. The interviewees highlighted the importance of these structures for the effective planning and implementation of the DIAPs.

Most council representatives found the Local Government NSW’ planning guidelines a useful and important tool that helped categorise actions and ensure a breadth of disability inclusion activities were included, and this was especially true for smaller councils who had limited human resources directed towards DIAP development. While feedback on the guidelines was generally positive, one council interviewee found some conflict with the methodology of co-design and co-produced community work.

The Local Government NSW workshops were cited as helpful for the council representatives that were able to attend, as they gave staff an opportunity to discuss challenges and barriers.

A few councils suggested that it would be helpful to have more guidance on what was expected of them in terms of reporting on the DIAP, as December 2018 was the first reporting period. As per the legislation, all councils were required to include a section relating to the DIAP in their annual report.

## Involvement of people with disability

Analysis of the DIAPs, the online survey and the interviewees all highlighted the value of consultation with people with disability in the local government DIAPs. Almost all respondents of the online survey (97%) reported that their council had consulted organisations from the disability sector, community members or staff with disability as part of developing the DIAP, with most consulting both internally and externally (75%). Many councils also had mechanisms in place to gather feedback on implementation from the community, particularly people with disability, with 64% councils having utilised access committees, 35% conducted community surveys, 37% had used council meetings and 38% conducted community forums ([Appendix 6](#)).

These mechanisms are crucial for ongoing input from stakeholders. All respondents of the online survey felt input and consultation with people with disability is important in supporting the DIAPs success, with 81% rating this as very important ([Appendix 2](#)). This demonstrates a strong understanding across councils of the significance of the voice of people with lived experiences in leading disability inclusion work.

Analysis of the DIAPs also demonstrates the value placed on consultation with people with disability; 117 DIAPs (of the 124 DIAPs reviewed) described the consultation approach with people with lived experience in developing the DIAP, with many identifying engagement with disability sector organisations (105) and with a formal access committee, and 73 DIAPs referenced 'ongoing consultation with an access committee throughout the implementation process' in their actions ([Appendix 1](#)).

Most interviewees described the consultation process where their council worked with their access committee, the broader community (through consultation and, later, public exhibition) to develop the DIAP and then passed the plan through the executive prior to publication.

The important role of Disability Inclusion Access Committees in informing the development of the DIAPs and ongoing implementation was discussed in the interviews with council representatives, and many noted that their council had access committees for many years prior to developing the DIAP, and that these committees are very engaged. These committees comprise a variety of community members, including those with disabilities, carers, family, and representatives from the disability sector, and meetings are held regularly to receive feedback on planning proposals, or to hear suggestions for work that needed to happen. Importantly, the focus of these committees is on inclusion more broadly including services for those with hearing, intellectual, vision-related and physical disabilities. Interviewees acknowledged and greatly appreciated the contribution and expertise of these committees in providing oversight and direction.

*"It's also recognition that we want people in the community to be involved in decision-making and consultation and feel like they're equal and respected."*

Metro council representatives were more likely have well-established access committees that informed work in the disability space. For smaller/rural councils, the DIAP process provided the impetus to set up an access committee to inform future work.

*"So our panel is something we do really heavily rely on and I provide them an update of our progress twice a year. They helped us develop this plan and I give them the annual report and they provided feedback, ongoing feedback throughout the year to me directly on actions and things that they hold us really accountable for."*

The online survey results also highlight the ongoing engagement with people with disability in the implementation of the DIAPs. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents said that their council had fully or partially implemented activities that regularly engage with people with disability to inform policies, programs and services, with 7% yet to implement this action.

## Implementation

The online survey gathered information on perceptions of the implementation to date. Most respondents (63%) felt that the DIAP actions for their council are on track, with 26% noting that less had been implemented than expected, and 9% felt that more had been implemented than expected.

Overall, the findings indicate that council DIAPs have resulted in considerable activity for enhancing disability inclusion, and 58% of survey respondents felt that the DIAP has contributed to positive change to inclusion for people with disability to a great or moderate extent, with a further 38% saying it had contributed to some extent. This is a positive result given the limited time for implementation of the council DIAPs.

Table 4 below summarises the key findings in relation to implementation across each of the key action areas, and this is discussed in more detail at the end of this section. Further data on the actions included in the DIAPs can be found in [Appendix 1](#), and survey results can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

*Table 4 Key activities across each action area*

Theme identified	Scope of activity
<b>Priority 1: Community attitudes and behaviours</b>	
Community inclusivity training and awareness raising in the community	Identified in 109 DIAPs 75% of survey respondents reported that their council had fully or partially implemented public information and awareness-raising activities regarding disability inclusion, with 16% still to implement this.
Celebrations for International Day of People with Disability	Identified in 60 DIAPS
Deliver inclusion training for employees	Identified in 108 DIAPs 62% of survey respondents said their council had fully or partially implemented training for staff about disability awareness, with 29% yet to implement this training.  Most council representatives interviewed noted that staff training had been prioritised to ensure that employees are able to provide services more responsively and better meet the needs of members of the community with disability and their carers.
<b>Priority 2: Liveable communities</b>	
Make the physical environment more accessible	A significant priority across councils - identified in 113 DIAPs and included a wide range of strategies. 94% of survey respondents said their council had fully or partially implemented actions to improve accessibility for public facilities, and 6% were yet to implement this action.  Several strategies have ongoing benefits by embedding disability inclusion in council guidelines and standards.  Challenges in resourcing infrastructure activities consistently identified.  115 councils also identified actions for communicating the availability of facilities and services in their DIAPs.

Theme identified	Scope of activity
Improving the accessibility of community events	Identified in 103 DIAPS. Councils identified a range of strategies in this area, including engaging with access issues at an early stage of event planning and practical measures such as providing event tents to allow people with disability to take a break, and then re-engage with the event.
<b>Priority 3: Inclusive employment</b>	
Improve employment opportunities and experience for people with disability.	<p>103 had changes to recruitment procedures in the DIAP.</p> <p>61% of survey respondents said their council had fully or partially implemented actions to revise recruitment, retention and promotion policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive, and 29% were yet to implement this action.</p> <p>This theme presented the most challenges for local councils on two levels. First, managing and planning for disability inclusion can be a more complex and demanding role than it appears. Second, many smaller councils have very limited resources, creating a gap between what they would like to achieve in terms of inclusion and what they are practically and financially able to deliver.</p>
<b>Priority 4: Systems and processes</b>	
Improve information accessibility	<p>80% of survey respondents said their council had fully or partially implemented actions to improve accessibility of information for the community.</p> <p>Council representatives emphasised the value of staff training to improve the delivery of information, plans and proposals to the community in accessible language and different formats. They also prioritised the provision of information in different formats and using accessibility functions such as text-to-speech.</p>
Update websites to meet accessibility standards	<p>112 councils identified actions in relation to accessible documents and website materials in their DIAPs.</p> <p>74% of survey respondents said their council had fully or partially implemented actions to improve website accessibility.</p> <p>This priority included reviewing and updating language and graphics on websites to use of simple English and implementing technical changes to improve accessibility for people using assistive technology.</p>
Make disability inclusion 'business as usual'	<p>49% of survey respondents felt that disability inclusion activities have been embedded in business as usual in their council to a great or moderate extent, with a further 49% saying it had been embedded to some extent.</p> <p>Local councils planned to implement accessibility and inclusion-focussed changes to their business systems and processes across the breadth of council activities so that inclusion became integrated in council operations.</p>



### ***Community attitudes and behaviours***

Analysis of the DIAPs found that the most common action in this domain was community inclusivity training and awareness raising in the community, which was identified in 109 DIAPS, and 60 councils identified celebrations for International Day of People with Disability in their plans ([Appendix 1](#)).

Seventy-five percent (75%) of survey respondents reported that their council had fully or partially implemented public information and awareness-raising activities regarding disability inclusion, with 16% still to implement this. As well, 62% said their council had fully or partially implemented training for staff about disability awareness, with 29% yet to implement this training. Staff training was also identified as a key strategy to improve community attitudes and behaviours in the qualitative interviews. As an example, Penrith Council provides staff with disability training, which most recently involved introductory Auslan training, so they can respond more effectively to individual customer needs. Positive staff feedback on this training was received, with staff reporting that they were able to use their skills to assist customers.

Other councils ran lunch time training/awareness-raising sessions, inviting guest speakers to present such as representatives from the Deaf Society and other disability sector organisations.

### ***Liveable communities***

Actions to improve physical infrastructure were very common across the council DIAPs, and the DIAP review found that (as per [Appendix 1](#)):

- 113 councils included actions to review or make improvements to facilities
- 105 councils had plans to enhance capacity to meet design standards or universal access requirements
- 104 were planning improvements to continuous accessible paths of travel
- 98 had plans to improve parks, natural heritage sites, playgrounds or sports facilities
- 85 had plans to improve accessibility of public toilets (38 had plans to upgrade or install lift and change facilities)
- 75 had plans to improve footpaths or cycleways
- 74 had plans to increase disability parking

Other actions identified in the DIAPS less frequently included improvements to streetscapes/street furniture/rest areas and bus shelters (43 councils), community transport options (34 councils), installing hearing loops (35 councils), and enhancing/developing standards/guidelines for community housing (42 councils).

The qualitative interviews highlighted several positive outcomes in relation to infrastructure actions. For example, one council had changed processes so inclusive design was incorporated into the plans for the renovation of a community centre; and, through the DIAP development process, had ensured that there was greater awareness across council of disability inclusion issues and language. There were also many council representatives who spoke about the lift and change facilities they had installed or were planning to install.

One council was able to secure funding for this by using a personal example of the challenges faced by the family of someone working in council. Lift and change facilities are an example of inclusive design that is not required by compliance, and it was felt that disability advocates can play a role in influencing designers to work towards higher standards of inclusivity than the levels required to achieve compliance.

The challenges that councils faced with funding for infrastructure actions were widely acknowledged in the qualitative interviews. Some council representatives noted that their council was able to access partial grant

funding through FACS to install lift and change facilities, which was critical for this action to be realised, as the cost is around \$80,000, which for many councils is prohibitive.

Improving the accessibility of community events was a key action for improving disability inclusion and was identified in 103 DIAPs. The most common actions within this domain included partnering with community organisations to support inclusive community events (identified in 76 DIAPs), and changing promotional materials to use inclusive imagery, where people with disabilities were regularly featured on marketing and event posters (identified in 47 DIAPs) ([Appendix 1](#)).

The qualitative interviews noted that consideration of accessibility for people with disability in event planning and organisation is an important way to promote inclusion and will likely assist people with disabilities and carers to more fully participate in public events. For example, the Inner West Council has initiated a partnership project to provide event tents so that people with disability can take a break and then enjoy festivals for a longer period.

In one council, communication approaches had changed to include pictures of people with disabilities in event marketing (not just for disability focused events) to demonstrate that inclusion had been considered and to increase visibility of people with disabilities.

One area of focus raised by several interviewees was providing information regarding the location of accessible services (such as which parks had accessible toilets, pathways and so on). This information is important because it allows people with disabilities and their carers to plan ahead and feel confident they can access the services they need.

Making this information available is particularly important at the local council level, where funding constraints sometimes limit the scope of accessibility upgrades (particularly retrofits). Improving the provision of accessibility information was an action point found in 115 of the council DIAPs we reviewed ([Appendix 1](#)). This indicates that, almost across the board, councils are working towards better (clearer and/or more comprehensive) information on what services are available to people with disability throughout the council area.

### ***Systems and processes***

Many councils discussed the importance of language accessibility as a means of making community activities and facilities more accessible and inclusive. Offering training for staff so that they could produce more documents in easy English was a priority for most councils. Many of the representatives interviewed had produced easy English versions of their DIAPs and had made electronic versions of their DIAPs compatible with text-to-speech format for people with vision impairment.

Another council used easy English in consultation processes for developments and council plans. Posters displayed in public spaces (such as the library) had space for simple feedback to be given (i.e. *yes, I agree with this proposal* or *no I do not support the proposal*). These posters had previously been produced in more formal academic writing, so they may have been inaccessible to a large section of the population. This change in language made communication easier, not just for people with disability, but for many people with lower literacy skills in the community.

Most councils were planning improvements to their websites to meet accessibility compliance standards. This theme emerged in our interviews with council representatives and also in the review of the council DIAPs; 112 councils had actioned improving document accessibility (i.e. creating more documents in easy English) or updating their website to include accessibility compliance. Inclusive website design involves changes to the placement of information on the page, so that the text makes sense to someone working with an electronic reader or other assistive technologies. Many councils that we interviewed had sent staff

on specific training courses on website accessibility, so councils would have capacity in-house to create reader-compatible websites for those with vision impairment.

Changes made to systems and processes in the councils, such as updating accessibility planning guidelines or improving website accessibility, were seen as positive long-term changes that were improving inclusion and accessibility immediately, as well as ensuring inclusion would be considered in future projects.

*"...through this process each part of the council has actually gotten so much better at considering access and inclusion at the beginning of their processes."*

Working across divisions seemed to be most effective at creating lasting change by updating compliance standards, policies, guidelines and procedures. Many councils mentioned the importance of having the DIAP tied to its IP&R framework as a means of driving implementation and holding different areas of council responsible for inclusivity goals and actions.

*"I think there is a level of embeddedness now, I don't think it would ever go back to non-inclusion, I think people basically in key positions have just accepted that this is it and it's not negotiable."*

In terms of embeddedness, the survey ([Appendix 4](#), question 8) also found that 49% of councils believed their council had embedded disability inclusion activities in business as usual (to a great or moderate extent).

Some councils discussed success stories of when inclusive design had been integrated into normal protocol. This meant that divisions within the council would directly approach the DIAP representative before starting a project to identify opportunities to improve inclusion. This was often tied to the DIAP being brought into the IP&R framework, which positioned responsibility for reporting and following up on commitments with several position-holders within council. Our analysis of Disability Inclusion Action Plans ([Appendix 1](#)) revealed that almost all councils had evaluation frameworks in place for their DIAP actions, or had used IP&R structures already in place to follow through on the DIAP actions (n=103).

Embedding inclusion in all work, specifically at the design stage of council projects, necessitates the upskilling of key staff across the organisation. Some councils used their access committee to help different divisions (and employees with engineering and planning backgrounds) to understand what was needed to create inclusive spaces for all people.

Disability inclusion for the engineer, design and construction teams in council is not new, as these teams are already required to meet compliance. However, in some situations, compliance is a starting point and inclusion requires additional effort and consideration.

### **Employment**

All councils felt that disability inclusion in employment, particularly internally, was one of the more significant challenges of the DIAP, where they had made the least progress.

Disability inclusion in employment is arguably less of a 'low hanging fruit' and requires deeper organisational and systemic change. Changes to hiring and management systems to encourage applicants with disabilities were cited as the main barrier to creating this change.

Indeed, many councils reported that the complexity of disability inclusion issues was a challenge in their work. One of our interviewees discussed the problem that although disability inclusion may appear at first glance to be a very intuitive problem to solve, the reality is that it is far more complex. Some interviewees indicated that they thought their backgrounds in aged care or social work helped them in their role working on the DIAP, and that those with human services backgrounds and/or professional qualifications would be best suited to the roles. Financial barriers in terms of staffing were also raised, and some councils believed that more funding for roles and projects was necessary.

Some councils did work with local businesses providing training and encouragement to employ people with disabilities or to sponsor work experience placements. This may be an area in which councils need more support to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

From our survey data, 60.8% of respondents reported that they had fully or partially implemented strategies for employment inclusion in the past year (i.e. they had revised recruitment, retention and promotion policies and procedure to ensure they are inclusive) ([Appendix 3](#)). This is a positive sign considering the challenges discussed in our interviews with council representatives.

In the document review of council DIAPs ([Appendix 1](#)), we found that 108 councils had actioned 'staff training for disability inclusion'; 103 had actioned 'changes to recruitment procedures'; and 67 had plans in place to build external capacity and work in partnership with local organisations to build opportunities for people with disability.

Smaller councils without dedicated roles for disability inclusion experienced additional challenges. In these cases, the burden of multitasking for employees managing multiple portfolios left councils with limited capacity to engage in disability inclusion work despite the best of intentions. Larger councils with greater budgets were more generally able to have at least one full-time equivalent staff member working on the DIAP and related activities.

### **Critical factors associated with DIAP planning and implementation**

#### ***Leadership support***

Having a supportive executive was cited by all interviewees as an enabler of the DIAP planning and early implementation process. This helped build relationships between different areas of the council that was facilitated indirectly because of the senior level support for disability inclusion work. All council representatives interviewed had experienced support or buy-in from their executive/directors, and 67% ([Appendix 4](#), Question 5) of survey respondents believed they had been provided ongoing support from the executive of their council for the implementation of their DIAP.

#### ***The impetus of the Disability Inclusion Act***

The legislation was seen as an important force in driving the inclusion agenda forward and the DIAP was felt to enable a whole-of-council approach to disability inclusion. Council disability representatives reported that having the legislation helped prioritise the disability inclusion work across councils and increased the visibility of these issues for the directors and other leaders.

Interviewees indicated that they thought the mandatory nature of the DIAPs was positive, because it ensured all councils thought about the work they were doing in the disability space. For councils that were already doing disability inclusion work, having the legal mandate was believed to 'give it teeth'.

#### ***Alignment with existing reporting frameworks***

For many councils, embedding the DIAP goals into their IP&R created truly multidisciplinary thinking about barriers to information, services and facilities across council. There were however a few councils who did not have the DIAP embedded in the IP&R framework, which was felt to be a barrier that limited implementation.

#### ***Resourcing***

In the survey of council representatives, 64% of respondents believed funding for initiatives was 'very important' to the success of their disability inclusion work ([Appendix 2](#)). This theme was identified in the qualitative consultations, and all interviewees discussed funding challenges and felt limited by budgetary constraints, particularly in the context of upgrades to existing infrastructure and related costs. Despite the

funding challenges, all councils we spoke to reiterated that they considered the work to be important and worthwhile.

Grant funding was cited as one potential avenue to access funds, and some councils had secured grant funding which was instrumental in their ability to take on larger projects, such as installing lift and change facilities.

Heritage-listed and historic buildings posed additional challenges for councils because of the strict regulations for renovations and the costs associated with heritage-compliant upgrades. Other infrastructure development costs were also identified, such as the cost for curb ramps.

Councils with smaller townships within their geographical area, particularly those with old buildings and facilities (i.e. shops, banks etc.) found that there were many upgrades that were needed, but that business owners were not always prepared to make necessary changes.

Budgetary difficulties were described not just in relation to infrastructure, but also in terms of funding specialist positions to create accessible documents and websites.

The two rural council representatives we spoke to felt stretched by the legislative requirement of the DIAP process. Although they believed the work to be of great importance, they identified the need for additional funding for necessary changes and had been struggling in terms of capacity to meet community and state requirements. Findings from the online survey highlight the differing human resources available across metro and regional councils, with 51% of metro councils having ongoing dedicated roles for disability inclusion, compared with 31% of rural/regional councils ([Appendix 5](#)). In addition to this, some rural councils did not feel they had the expertise or support necessary within their council to develop the DIAP and relied on consultants to develop the DIAP.

## Part 6: Cross-sector partnerships and capacity building

### Cross-sector partnerships

In late 2015, FACS partnered with the Business Chamber of NSW, ClubsNSW and Sport NSW to promote disability inclusion within each organisation and among their members. In late 2016, the program was extended to include Settlement Services International (SSI). In each organisation, a Disability Inclusion Promotion Officer (DIPO) was employed to support the implementation of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan.

This section is based on a review of the reports provided by each partner organisation (*ClubsNSW First Year Report September 2015 to August 2016*, *NSW Business Chamber Disability Inclusion Report September 2015 – June 2018*, *Multicultural Disability Inclusion and Promotion Officer project report: November 2016 – November 2018*, SSI), and interviews with DIPOs from SSI and Sport NSW.

The reports and consultations demonstrate the value of the cross-sector partnerships with peak organisations who were able to use their networks to promote disability inclusion within their sector, and deliver specific projects enhancing disability inclusion among their members.

There was extensive collaboration among the partners, local councils and a wide range of organisations, including those from the disability sector peak bodies, FACS and Local Government NSW. This collaboration was viewed as a key strength of this approach. The employment of a dedicated officer to drive the disability inclusion program was also seen as critical to the success of this strategy, as the DIPO played a key role in developing collaborative approaches, providing resources and support, and enhancing access to funding opportunities.

Another critical success factor was the strong support provided from leaders within the partner organisations, with support and commitment demonstrated from the CEOs and other key leaders.

Three partner organisations have dedicated funding to continue the DIPO role beyond 2018.

Several partners have recently received NDIS Information Linkage and Capacity Building Grants, which recognised the enhanced knowledge, expertise and capacity of their organisation in disability inclusion. For example, SSI and several multicultural organisations that were part of the NSW Settlement Partnership (led by SSI) received funding, as did the NSW Business Chamber. The NSW Business Chamber grant will focus on disseminating information to 12 regional and remote areas across NSW on making their communities more accessible and inclusive for people with disability.

This section provides a summary of the key highlights of each partnership.

### ClubsNSW

ClubsNSW represents more than 1200-member clubs, with the aim of leading a sustainable industry that makes a growing contribution to the NSW community, strengthens conditions for those working within the industry, and supports the local communities they serve.

Key achievements of the ClubsNSW partnership include:

- Developing *“Part of the Club: A guide to Creating an Inclusive Club Industry”* which provides guidance on assessing how inclusive a club is, and practical examples for improving accessibility, customer service and employment practices for people with disability. The guide was developed with support from the Australian Network on Disability.

- Building partnerships with several Disability Employment Service providers to assist clubs wishing to employ people with disability in their organisations.
- Establishing the “Disability, Welfare and Social Inclusion” category in the Clubs and Community NSW awards (from 2016).
- Establishing partnerships with Local Government NSW and several local councils to support the implementation of DIAPs.
- Encouraging clubs to engage with local community groups working within the disability sector including wheelchair and accessible sports groups, schools for children with disability and support groups in the local area.

### **NSW Business Chamber**

The NSW Business Chamber is a membership organisation connected to more than 20,000 businesses across NSW. The Chamber has more than 650 employees and aims to help members and businesses maximise their business potential by providing advice, products and services to its members. Their approach to disability inclusion planning also extended their reach to non-members.

Key achievements of the NSW Business Chamber partnership include:

- Developing a series of Disability Tip Sheets, including concise information tailored for business on disability, accessibility, communication, inclusion, government services, and employment. These resources were distributed to Local Chambers of Commerce and Councils and are available on the website.
- Issuing the Missed Business guide, highlighting cost-effective and practical ways to attract more customers by becoming more accessible and inclusive.
- Delivering webinars to more than 2000 businesses and workshops to more than 150 businesses on workplace diversity, access and inclusion.
- Providing advice to 28 Councils on how to engage with local businesses on access, inclusion and employment.
- Responding to 1000 enquires from businesses in relation to making their business more accessible and/or inclusive.
- Creating the “Excellence in Workplace Inclusion Award” for the regional and state Business Chamber Awards.
- Working with Local Government NSW to develop the online inclusive tourism training course for businesses.
- Trialling a Statement of Attainment on Disability Awareness for businesses in the Illawarra region, in partnership with State Training Services, the University of Wollongong and Illawarra Business Chamber.

### **Settlement Services International (SSI)**

SSI provides settlement services to newly arrived migrants and refugees and is the umbrella organisation for the consortium of the NSW Settlement Partnership, which includes 22 Migrant Resource Centres and community organisations across NSW. SSI implements a wide range of programs for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including (but not limited to) Ability Links, Disability Employment Services, Community Support Program, and the Arts and Culture Program. SSI has more than 700

employees and 200 active volunteers, with more than 100 languages and dialects spoken across the organisation.

The disability inclusion work of SSI focused on building their internal capacity as a leader in disability inclusion within the multicultural sector, and on building the capacity of other organisations, businesses and community members to promote disability inclusion within their communities.

Key achievements of this partnership included:

- SSI was accredited as Disability Confident Recruiter status
- mandatory training delivered to SSI employees and volunteers on disability inclusion, with 300 participants completing the training in 2017
- developed disability access and inclusion guidelines for arts and culture programs supported by SSI, and more than 20 events included people with disability in the planning and/or execution of the event
- SSI communications (website and external) met accessibility certification requirements
- developed the Disability Inclusion Network, which included eight multicultural organisations who met regularly to identify opportunities for collaboration in disability inclusion, with the aim of building champions in the multicultural sector
- hosted the International Day of People with Disability in 2017 with 100 attendees and 15 awards presented, highlighting disability inclusion success stories for individuals, organisations and businesses in the multicultural sector
- delivered community leaders training for the promotion of disability inclusion, a joint project with NSW Business Chamber and Ability Links (part of SSI), involving 28 community leaders from seven local government areas.

### ***Sport NSW***

Sport NSW is the peak member-based sporting industry body in NSW, representing more than 95 organisations, over 3 million participants and more than 670,000 volunteers. Sport NSW provides support, knowledge sharing, recognition, networking and advocacy to build connected, healthy and active communities.

Key achievements of this partnership included:

- Delivered the *Activate Inclusion Sports Days* program, focusing on adaptive sport and recreation for students aged 5 to 18 years of age with disability. Students are provided the opportunity to try several sports in a positive and adaptive environment with specialised coaches running each activity. In 2018, 15 events were held, with 1857 participants, 145 teachers, 50 schools and 20 sports involved, across 23 councils. This program is supported by Variety - The Children's Charity NSW.
- Developed *Knowledge Exchange Inclusion*, which supports coaches, sporting codes and associations to make their sport more inclusive, with information on adapting rules, equipment and training techniques. Sport NSW worked with 36 councils, sporting and community organisations to implement inclusion projects, such as Inclusion Leagues and Activate Inclusion Days. Several of the Inclusion Leagues are ongoing: the touch football program is in its third year and indoor soccer is in its sixth season.
- Delivered the Sport NSW Awards which include awards for Athlete of the Year with a Disability, Young Athlete of the Year with a Disability and Team of the Year with a Disability.



- Created Local Council of the Year award for sport and active recreation as part of Champions of Sports Awards.
- Developed Academy games, to start in 2019, with 11 sports academies who have a disability program as part of their remit, where inclusion events will be incorporated in the mainstream games.
- Secured funding from Northcott to start a program in five universities for inclusive and adaptive social recreation.
- Utilised student placements through universities, which included training for students on disability inclusion.
- Collaborated with disability sector peak bodies, councils, and state disability sporting organisations (of which there are 19).
- Developed a strategy for working with health professionals, to increase awareness of the benefits of staying active for people with disability and build referral pathways. This included engaging with health networks, developing a referral database, and engaging major industry disability bodies to build memorandums of understanding across the referral space, including hospitals.

## Capacity building

### *Australian Human Rights Commission Inclusion Training*

In 2014, FACS commissioned the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to develop a half-day training package on the Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities. The training was intended for policy and project staff working across the NSW public sector. In February 2015, the training became a full day including an interactive e-module and a face-to-face component. The training aimed to increase participants:

- knowledge of the rights set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
- understanding of the disability policy frameworks that exist in Australia at the state and national level
- understanding of the barriers to the full and equal participation of people with disability
- ability to apply disability rights knowledge and skills to project and policy work.

A comprehensive pre- and post-evaluation of the pilot training was undertaken (n=50 participants). The results indicated a high level of satisfaction with the training program, with 91% of participants reporting they would recommend the training to a colleague. Participants also demonstrated increased knowledge across the four indicators by an average of 23%.

Since it began, the training has reached 197 participants across the public service receiving generally positive feedback. A breakdown of participation by government agency for the nine post-pilot sessions is provided in Table 5 below.

*Table 5 Break down of training participation by agency*

Department	Participants (n)
Pilot sessions (departments not specified)	50
Family and Community Services	14
Department of Justice	9
Department of Premier and Cabinet	5
Department of Education	3
Office of Local Government	2
NSW Public Service Commission	106
iCare	2
Treasury	1
Transport for NSW	1
Department of Finance, Services and Innovation	1
Board of Studies Teaching and Education Standards NSW	1
DEN delegate (Disability Education Network)	1
Consultant	1
<b>Total participants</b>	<b>197</b>

In the evaluation for these sessions, participants rated the course highly for relevance and delivery style. Where pre- and post-surveys were completed, improvements in participant knowledge and ability to apply that knowledge to their role were evident. Most participants reported that the content was interesting and well put together.

Participant engagement in the course was high overall, with many participants taking time to express their appreciation for the course upon completion. Furthermore, most participants engaged well in group activities and appreciated the awareness-raising aspects of the course.

Some questions scored particularly highly with the sessions for NSW PSC graduates, where most graduates reported that they would recommend the training to a colleague and reported that they benefitted from the training.

A small number of participants (from sessions with mostly project officers and senior staff) raised the issue that the course could have gone further into policy and practice approaches to inclusivity. This was related to the fact that those who attended the course were likely to already be 'on board' with the importance of disability inclusion as an issue.

### ***Live Work Play Conference***

In May 2017, FACS hosted the Live Work Play conference. The conference focused on the themes of disability employment, inclusive tourism, assistive technology and liveable communities. Over the two-day period, there were four keynote sessions and more than 70 presentations from local and international speakers. The conference was attended by over 600 delegates.

The conference showcased several key ideas and programs, including:

- innovative approaches to recruitment and professional development such as job matching and carving programs that harness the skills and capabilities of people with disability
- the importance of school and work preparation programs, particularly those that begin early, for people with disability
- the value of peer support networks for people with disability and training for line managers
- the potential for collaboration between business, state and local government to improve accessibility and inclusiveness of tourism and recreation precincts and activities
- the value of engaging people with disability in the development and design of infrastructure standards and principles
- approaches to increasing access to assistive technologies, including the importance of involving people with disability in product development
- promoting digital citizenship to enhance access and use.

As part of the conference evaluation, delegates were invited to complete a short online survey. A total of 115 delegates responded (approximately 30% response rate) with results showing:

- 79% thought the presentations were interesting and informative
- 76% learned something new and thought there was a good mix of topics
- 63% thought the conference was relevant for their work
- 78% thought the conference would have at least some impact on what they do in the future
- 90% thought the networking opportunities were good and that they made useful connections at the conference

Several participants in the consultation interviews reflected positively about the conference stating it was one of the great achievements under the NSW DIP.

# Discussion

At the outset of this report we reflected on the gradual movement over the last decade towards inclusion of people with disability in the language and actions of the NSW Government, and on the importance of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act for propelling action. The interviews and analysis conducted to inform the review of the NSW DIP and agency and council DIAPs revealed considerable success in improving disability inclusion within those contexts over a relatively short period of time.

But they also highlighted important steps to be taken to reinforce the gains made in recognising disability inclusion as a central part of the work of government at the state and local level, particularly in the context of the NDIS.

In this discussion we reflect on the main themes that emerged from the review and on the contextual changes that have taken place in the disability sphere. We also propose some considerations for the development of the next stage of work in relation to the NSW DIP.

Overall, feedback about the implementation of the NSW DIP has been positive. It has been used as a guiding document to implement both state-wide programs and strategies and discrete programs of work by agencies and local councils, primarily through the development of DIAPs.

Prior to the NSW DIP and DIAP processes, work on disability inclusion was inconsistent between agencies and councils. In some cases, this was driven by external mandates and standards (as for the department of transport), while in others by individuals with a focus on inclusivity. This led to an uneven focus which meant that the degree of inclusion of people with disability varied significantly across agency or geographical area. Now, each government agency and local council has a DIAP and people with a lived experience of disability were included in their development, with some sites, such as the Art Gallery of NSW engaging in truly consumer-led processes.

The mandated aspects of the process required people to talk and think about disability where they weren't already doing so. As one participant put it, the process surrounding the development of the DIAPs "enabled conversations" around disability. These conversations, along with the implementation of resulting programs of work, placed people with a lived experience of disability at the centre of planning and activity.

Processes from within government which supported the DIP program were highlighted as important by review participants. Participants in the interviews particularly mentioned the strongly supportive work of FACS and the DIPIC, who have achieved a significant amount of change from a small team with limited funding available to resource the change required. They also cited cross-government or cross-council working as being particularly helpful. This buy-in was important in building movement around the agenda as the cooperation reinforced that disability is a core part of the business of governing, and not the sole remit of agencies that directly provide disability services. Where cross-organisational working was less evident or less effective, the development and implementation of the DIAPs was correspondingly viewed as less successful.

Disability 'champions', including local DENs, were seen as an important lever for pushing disability-related work within agencies and councils. Champions are successful for raising the profile of disability but have limited success if there is not an associated culture change towards disability inclusion being everyone's business. Where neither champions nor cross-government approaches are successful, the drivers for change may turn to the availability of financial grants. 'Buying' disability inclusion through funding grants may be successful in the short term but is rarely sustainable given funding uncertainty and limitations.

It is important to recognise the different capability points at which agencies and councils engaged with the process. Organisations whose DIAPs seemed relatively modest may in fact have made very significant progress in disability inclusion, while organisations with a history of engaging with disability produced DIAPs and related workplans that were understandably more sophisticated than those new to inclusion concepts.

Some agencies with an established track record of working with disability inclusion were using the DIAP to document work already under way or planned. This is a significant point and needs to be carefully thought out when DIAP achievements are advertised or indicators of success developed. Significant success to one agency may look very different to the progress made in another context. Another related point was that for those agencies already working in a very inclusive way across multiple threads of work, the DIAPs may serve to constrain action into limited streams of work.

A large range of positive actions resulting from the DIP were easy to identify, with strong and significant programs of state-wide work having noticeable effect for specific communities and the NSW community as a whole. Examples include key community partnerships, the *Employable Me* TV series, the Don't DIS my ABILITY campaign, and the Live Work Play conference.

The findings reported here highlight challenges to the implementation of the program clustered around three main areas: reporting, implementation and resourcing. For some people that we spoke to there was a concern that the DIAP process was being mandated but there was little funding to go along with it, meaning that positive statements could be made about disability inclusion, but little action would then result. This was viewed as particularly problematic for regional councils where services must be spread over large regions and the existing infrastructure around disability is poor. There was a concern that the development of the DIAPs was not being sustained into the implementation of strategies into practice. There was also a concern that while people with disability may have been involved in the development of the DIAPs they were not being included on an ongoing basis.

Reporting of DIAP outcomes emerged as a significant issue within the findings. Reporting was not consistent, with some agencies, such as the Department of Family and Community Services, providing comprehensive reports and others providing only very basic data related to disability. Reporting is mandated annually, and most agencies and councils do this within their annual reports. It was difficult to locate and synthesise information about the success of implementation from data given in these reports. The data that was reported upon was viewed as lacking meaning in relation to the work that was actually being done and there were few examples of local evaluations or tracking of outcomes.

The implementation of the Act, the DIP and the DIAPs, has created a movement towards change around practice driven by the New South Wales Government. This is accompanied by an equally strong set of Federally-driven changes that have impacted NSW government practices. This has been primarily through the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme which is partly funded through the NSW Government and which has had significant impact on the social care and non-government sector offering support to people with disability in NSW. This changing context is important for internal government planning because it has both increased visibility around disability and changed the funding structures which operate around disability. The increasing visibility of disability in the state and national government discourses may have been a positive factor in the implementation of the DIAPs. However, it has also been a negative factor in that all disability work (and its funding) has become conceptualised in relation to the NDIS. The NDIS agreement between the NSW Government and the Commonwealth requires the transfer of existing specialist disability funding to the NDIS. While that funding does not generally fund the disability-related work covered in the DIAPs, in this context there may be an assumption that 'disability is done by the NDIS', meaning that the government can now step out of disability inclusion work. On the face of it, the Information Linkage and Capacity Building grants distributed through the National Disability Insurance

Agency are designed to do the work of inclusion in that they aim to create “connections between people with disability and the communities they live in”. While this funding is important, what it lacks and what the DIAP process provided, is a dedicated commitment to inclusion work that goes beyond individual projects to change overall practice within agencies and councils. It will do little to provide an overarching inclusion strategy for NSW or address the concerns about funding the DIAP strategy implementation as mentioned above.

The 2017 update to the Disability Inclusion Plan states that the success of the plan will be due to Government commitment to the following:

- model inclusive practice and demonstrate leadership and innovation across government
- engage with and respond to the 1.4 million people with disability in NSW
- work with all levels of government, community and business partners to promote inclusion
- recognise that inclusion is everybody’s responsibility and use the influence of government to promote inclusion across the community
- support the effective roll-out of the NDIS across NSW

Based on the findings of the review, and as outlined in this report, there is demonstrated movement towards the fulfillment of these commitments. However, work will need to be ongoing for the commitments to be achieved with consistency across state and local government agencies. We propose the following considerations for future work.

#### Theme 1: Engagement

- Strengthen ongoing engagement with people with disability (including DENs, community access committees, carers and other consumer groups) to better capitalise on the enormous interest in this process from within the sector.
- Establish mechanisms to more actively involve people with disability in implementation, including consumer-led implementation and processes wherever possible.
- While children, women, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal people are identified under the Act as groups requiring special attention, we found limited evidence of these groups being consulted with. It is important that these groups are strongly included in the review of DIAPs and their implementation so that discrete and meaningful strategies are developed to address their needs.

#### Theme 2: Reporting

- Track implementation across agencies and councils more uniformly across agencies and councils in order to enable comparisons where this is realistic.
- Establish a reporting format that provides a better picture of outcomes using narratives and describing the impact on the community, rather than solely relying on statistical data to indicate impact.
- Accounting for and measuring change needs to take place at a state level. This could be achieved through a state-wide survey of people with disability to develop a sound understanding of the changing context of inclusion from their perspectives. Such an approach could be complemented by a survey of attitudes towards people with disability in the general population. Baseline data may already be available, drawing on social inclusion measures reported as part of the National Disability Agreement.

- Reporting must specifically focus on the groups identified in the Act and elsewhere as having specific needs (children, women, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal people).

#### Theme 3: Communication

- Communicating the successes and innovations delivered under the NSW DIP and DIAPs should be regular and wide-reaching. In doing so, care needs to be taken to contextualise work so that agencies new to disability inclusion are not discouraged from undertaking their important foundational work by the achievements of more advanced agencies.
- Communication around the DIAP requirements should ensure that the structures and processes do not unnecessarily constrain work by focusing action exclusively on the NSW DIP's priority areas.
- The language of reporting should be made accessible and an accessible version of the report be produced.

#### Theme 4: Strategy

- A dedicated strategy should be considered to inform work with agencies that were slower to take up the inclusion agenda in order to encourage them to engage deeply and broadly with inclusion.
- A program of forward policy planning work needs to consider how the DIP and other initiatives generated by the Act fit within the context of the NDIS; the findings of the recent review of the National Disability Agreement; and the next phase of the National Disability Strategy. This would place the NSW DIP within a map of the disability work in NSW more broadly and support funding and resources allocation discussions.
- A mapping exercise should be undertaken to identify the resourcing options available in the new funding environment and to measure those against the resourcing requirements of agencies and local councils.
- Clear and realistic strategies for the implementation and monitoring of DIAP goals should be produced for each agency.
- Strategies to specifically target the access and inclusion needs of children and young people with disability, women with disability, Aboriginal people with disability and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds should be developed and implemented. While these specific groups are identified in the Act, consideration should also be given to understanding the specific needs of other marginalised groups.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Document review of council DIAPS

The table below sets out the results from the in-depth document review of 124 council DIAPs. Actions have been grouped under the four broad themes laid out in the DIAP planning guide: Attitudes and behaviours, improving systems and processes, creating liveable communities, and supporting access to meaningful employment. Under this, subthemes have been identified and actions recorded under each of the subthemes. For each action, the number of councils who have planned (or are currently implementing) work related to this theme have been summarised in the table below.

Table 6 Analysis of themes and actions from local government DIAPs

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Specific Actions set out in the plans	Number of councils including this action in their plans
Attitudes and behaviours	Consultation (and ongoing engagement)	People with lived experience/ Access Committee	117
		Co-design workshops	11
		Community consultation	122
		Disability sector	104
		Ongoing consultation throughout DIAP implementation	73
		Internal stakeholders or working group	63
	Community actions	Community inclusivity training and awareness raising in the community	109
		Support and promote the work of carers (e.g. Support carers leave in the workforce)	17
		International day of people with disability celebration or similar celebrations	60
Improving systems and processes	Communication	Accessible documents (easy English) and website material (ensure compliance)	112
		Communicating availability of facilities and services	115
		Recognising and celebrating the work of people with disability	45
		Braille and audio information	35
		National Relay Service	21
		Signage	53
Creating Liveable Communities	Community inclusion in events	Cultural events (includes making events more disability friendly and running events just for people with disability)	103



Overarching theme	Subtheme	Specific Actions set out in the plans	Number of councils including this action in their plans	
		Imagery (including images of people with disability in promotional material for general events etc.)	47	
		Auslan interpreter (make available on request/build database of interpreters etc.)	19	
		Partnering with community organisations to support their capacity for inclusive events	76	
		Sporting activities	24	
	Infrastructure		Planned review or improvements to existing facilities – i.e. entrance ways	113
			CAPT (continuous accessible paths of travel)	104
			Public toilets	85
			Lift and change facilities	38
			Footpaths/ cycleways	75
			Housing standards/guidelines	42
			Improved capacity to meet design standards OR guidelines for universal access requirements developed	105
			Parking	74
			Community Transport	34
			streetscapes (street furniture/ rest areas etc.) and bus shelters	43
			Hearing Loops	35
			Parks, Natural heritage, playgrounds, sports facilities (gyms/pools etc.)	98
Supporting access to meaningful employment		Staff training for disability/inclusivity	108	
		Changes to recruitment procedures	103	
		Raise awareness (internally) and offer support to staff	70	
		Make work experience/volunteer opportunities available	66	
		Raise awareness (externally) and build community capacity i.e. work alongside TAFE to increase educational opportunities	67	
		Support businesses to promote inclusion	70	
Monitoring and Evaluation		Customer feedback	59	
		Employee surveys	4	

Overarching theme	Subtheme	Specific Actions set out in the plans	Number of councils including this action in their plans
		Implementation checklists and standards	116
		Monitoring and reporting framework or Integrated planning and reporting	103

## Appendix 2: Survey results

Responses to the question: How important are each of the following factors in supporting the success of Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) in a local council?

Statement	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not important	Not at all important
Champions	58.1	33.8	8.1	0.0	0.0
Access committees	43.2	41.9	12.2	2.7	0.0
Executive sponsorship	52.7	31.1	14.9	1.4	0.0
Funding for initiatives	63.5	32.4	4.1	0.0	0.0
Support from other agencies (e.g. Local Government NSW)	36.5	48.6	13.5	1.4	0.0
Collaborating with other councils	21.6	44.6	31.1	2.7	0.0
Internal working groups	27.0	54.1	18.9	0.0	0.0
Forums with other councils for sharing experiences and stories	20.3	56.8	20.3	2.7	0.0
Input and consultation from people with disability	81.1	18.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Monitoring and evaluating activities and progress	56.8	36.5	6.8	0.0	0.0
Having a dedicated disability inclusion role in the council	48.6	18.9	27.0	5.4	0.0

## Appendix 3: Survey results

*Responses to the statement: In the past year, to what extent has your council implemented the following activities...?*

Statement	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Not yet implemented	Not recognised as priority	Not sure
Developed or maintained a DEN	5.8%	10.1%	14.5%	56.5%	13.0%
Regularly engaged with people with disability to inform policies, programs, services etc.	36.2%	50.7%	7.2%	5.8%	0.0%
Delivered training for staff about disability awareness	27.5%	34.8%	29.0%	4.3%	4.3%
Improved website accessibility	26.1%	47.8%	20.3%	5.8%	0.0%
Developed and maintained an internal DIAP working group or similar	36.2%	21.7%	14.5%	26.1%	1.4%
Developed or maintained an Access Committee including external representatives	59.4%	15.9%	11.6%	8.7%	4.3%
Formal partnerships with other organisations to support and improve disability inclusion	36.2%	44.9%	10.1%	2.9%	5.8%
Revised recruitment, retention and promotion policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive	15.9%	44.9%	29.0%	1.4%	8.7%
Conducted/planned public information and awareness-raising activities regarding disability inclusion	18.8%	56.5%	15.9%	4.3%	4.3%
Formally monitored and evaluated disability inclusion activities	21.7%	43.5%	21.7%	5.8%	7.2%
Improved accessibility of information for the community	10.1%	69.6%	17.4%	2.9%	0.0%
Improved accessibility for public facilities	11.6%	82.6%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%

## Appendix 4: Survey results

### DIAP development and implementation in councils

**1) Are you aware of any actions or strategies that your council has planned and/ or implemented in the last 2 years to support disability inclusion in your community?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Yes	75	78.9	96.2	96.2
	No	3	3.2	3.8	100.0
	Total	78	82.1	100.0	
Missing	missing	17	17.9		
Total		95	100.0		

**2) Are you aware of your council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Yes	75	78.9	96.2	96.2
	No	3	3.2	3.8	100.0
	Total	78	82.1	100.0	
Missing	missing	17	17.9		
Total		95	100.0		

**3) Have you been involved in the development and/ or implementation of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) in your council?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Yes	71	74.7	93.4	93.4
	No	3	3.2	3.9	97.4
	Not sure	2	2.1	2.6	100.0
	Total	76	80.0	100.0	
Missing	missing	19	20.0		
Total		95	100.0		

**4) As part of developing the DIAP, were organisations from the disability sector, community members or staff with disability consulted?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Yes, externally	14	14.7	19.7	19.7
	Yes, internally	2	2.1	2.8	22.5
	Yes, both	53	55.8	74.6	97.2
	No	1	1.1	1.4	98.6
	Not sure	1	1.1	1.4	100.0
	Total	71	74.7	100.0	
Missing	missing	24	25.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**5) Do any executive members of your council provide ongoing support for the implementation of your DIAP?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Yes	47	49.5	67.1	67.1
	No	15	15.8	21.4	88.6
	Not sure	8	8.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	70	73.7	100.0	
Missing	missing	25	26.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**6) Are the DIAP actions in your council on track?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	More than I expected	6	6.3	8.6	8.6
	As I expected	44	46.3	62.9	71.4
	Less than I expected	18	18.9	25.7	97.1
	Not sure	2	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	70	73.7	100.0	
Missing	missing	25	26.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**7) To what extent do you think the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) has contributed to positive changes to inclusion for people with disability in your community?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	A great extent	12	12.6	16.4	16.4
	A moderate extent	30	31.6	41.1	57.5
	Some extent	28	29.5	38.4	95.9
	Not at all	2	2.1	2.7	98.6
	Not sure	1	1.1	1.4	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	missing	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**5) Do any executive members of your council provide ongoing support for the implementation of your DIAP?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Yes	47	49.5	67.1	67.1
	No	15	15.8	21.4	88.6
	Not sure	8	8.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	70	73.7	100.0	
Missing	missing	25	26.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**6) Are the DIAP actions in your council on track?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	More than I expected	6	6.3	8.6	8.6
	As I expected	44	46.3	62.9	71.4
	Less than I expected	18	18.9	25.7	97.1
	Not sure	2	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	70	73.7	100.0	
Missing	missing	25	26.3		
Total		95	100.0		

**7) To what extent do you think the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) has contributed to positive changes to inclusion for people with disability in your community?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	A great extent	12	12.6	16.4	16.4
	A moderate extent	30	31.6	41.1	57.5
	Some extent	28	29.5	38.4	95.9
	Not at all	2	2.1	2.7	98.6
	Not sure	1	1.1	1.4	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	missing	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

**8) To what extent do you think disability inclusion activities have been embedded in business as usual in your council?**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	A great extent	8	8.4	11.4	11.4
	A moderate extent	26	27.4	37.1	48.6
	Some extent	34	35.8	48.6	97.1
	Not at all	2	2.1	2.9	100.0
	Total	70	73.7	100.0	
Missing	missing	25	26.3		
Total		95	100.0		

## Appendix 5: Survey results

Responses to the question: Does your council have a dedicated role for disability? presented by geographic region

			Roles for Disability Inclusion Action Plans by geography					
			Responses to the question 'Does your council have a dedicated role for disability?'					
			Yes, initially but not now	Yes, ongoing	Yes, only recently commenced	No	Not sure	Total
geographic	Metropolitan urban	Count	5	18	0	11	1	35
		% within geographic	14.3%	51.4%	0.0%	31.4%	2.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	5.3%	19.1%	0.0%	11.7%	1.1%	37.2%
	Rural regional	Count	3	18	2	32	4	59
		% within geographic	5.1%	30.5%	3.4%	54.2%	6.8%	100.0%
		% of Total	3.2%	19.1%	2.1%	34.0%	4.3%	62.8%
Total	Count	8	36	2	43	5	94	
	% within geographic	8.5%	38.3%	2.1%	45.7%	5.3%	100.0%	
	% of Total	8.5%	38.3%	2.1%	45.7%	5.3%	100.0%	



## Appendix 6: Survey results

Responses to the question: *What mechanisms are in place to gather feedback on implementation from the community, particularly people with disability?*

<b>Access committees</b>		Frequency	Per cent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	not selected	26	27.4	35.6	35.6
	selected	47	49.5	64.4	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	missing	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

<b>Community surveys</b>		Frequency	Per cent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	not selected	47	49.5	64.4	64.4
	selected	26	27.4	35.6	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	missing	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

<b>Council meetings</b>		Frequency	Per cent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	not selected	46	48.4	63.0	63.0
	selected	27	28.4	37.0	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	missing	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

<b>Community forums</b>		Frequency	Per cent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	not selected	45	47.4	61.6	61.6
	selected	28	29.5	38.4	100.0
	Total	73	76.8	100.0	
Missing	missing	22	23.2		
Total		95	100.0		

# Appendix 7: Data collection tools

## *Interview discussion Guide*

1. What is your **current role** and how does it relate to work around the DIP/DIAP or disability inclusion activities more broadly?
2. Can you describe **how your DIAP was developed**?
  - Who?
  - Consultation?
  - Building on what was previously in place?
  - Is it a dynamic document; has it been revised or updated?
3. **What role has FACS played** throughout the process? (development, implementation etc.).
4. Can you talk through how the plan was **implemented**?
  - Governance structures, responsibilities
  - Champions/ executive level sponsorship
  - Do you think it was implemented as planned?
  - Progress so far?
  - Any key examples, success stories, challenges?
  - How could implementation be strengthened?
5. What progress has been made **towards achieving outcomes**?
  - Concrete examples, success stories – what is the evidence for achieving outcomes?
  - Are there things that haven't yet been achieved?
  - Key barriers/enablers
6. How are outcomes (or progress towards outcomes) **evaluated and reported**?
7. Thinking across the process of planning, implementation and evaluating the plans, how have **people with disability been consulted/involved** in these processes?
  - Internally (DENS, internal advisory groups etc.)
  - Externally (disability sector agencies, peak organisations etc.)
8. To what extent do you think there is **collaboration and coordination between agencies** to meet the goals of the DIP?
9. To what extent do you think the DIAP itself has been responsible for **driving change for people with disability**?
  - What changes have you observed?
  - Internally (including for employees, or changes in culture)
  - Externally (service delivery)
  - Would this have happened anyway? (i.e. without the DIAP)
10. To what extent do you think disability inclusion activities initiated by the DIAP have been **embedded** within your organisation (i.e. beyond this initial period 2015-18)?
11. Key **lessons** learned
12. Any **other data sources**; people to speak to, or data/reports to look at?

### ***Survey for local government***

You are invited to complete this survey as part of a review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs). The review has been commissioned by FACS and is being conducted independently by the Sax Institute. This is not an audit or assessment and you will not be asked to name the council you are working for. All results will be analysed in aggregate and no identifying information will be reported.

The results of the survey, and the wider review will be used to inform the NSW Government's future plans for disability inclusion. This information will be available for councils to support future planning and implementation processes.

The survey asks questions about the development and implementation of DIAPs in local councils, including how consultation and planning occurred and what actions. The survey also asks about what progress there has been towards achieving actions recognising that plans have only in been in place since 2017.

This survey should take between 5-10 minutes to complete. All responses will remain anonymous and you can exit the survey at any time. Your contribution is highly valued.

If you have any questions about this survey or the wider review, please contact Greer Dawson either by phone 02 9188 9549 or email [greer.dawson@saxinstitute.org.au](mailto:greer.dawson@saxinstitute.org.au)

Thank you for considering this opportunity.

1. What is your role?
  - a) Disability Inclusion Officer
  - b) Ageing and Disability Officer
  - c) Community Services Officer/Manager
  - d) Other, please specify:
2. What is the geographic classification of your council:
  - a) Metropolitan urban
  - b) Rural regional
3. In your council, is there a dedicated role that has responsibility for disability inclusion?
  - a) Yes, initially when the Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed and launched but not anymore
  - b) Yes ongoing
  - c) Yes, but only recently commenced
  - d) No
  - e) Not sure
4. Are you aware of any actions or strategies that your council has planned and/or implemented in the last two years to support disability inclusion in your community?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No (> end survey)
  - c) Not sure
5. Are you aware of your council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) that was developed in 2016?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No (> skip to Question 11)

c) Not sure

6. Have you been involved in the development or implementation of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) in your council?

a) Yes

b) No (> skip to Question 11 [SURVEY PATH B](#))

c) Not sure (> skip to Question 11 [SURVEY PATH B](#))

If yes, what was your role (give your designation, and description of how you were involved):

*Free text box*

7. As part of developing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), were organisations from the disability sector, community members and/or staff with disability consulted?

a) Yes, externally through disability sector organisations

b) Yes, internal disability reference group and/or employees with disability

c) Yes – both internally and externally

d) Yes – other please specify

e) No

f) Not sure

8. Do any executive members of your council (e.g. mayor, councillor, general manager etc.) provide ongoing support for the implementation of your Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not sure

9. In your opinion, to what extent are actions in your Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) on track as intended?

a) Much more than expected

b) As I expected

c) less than expected

d) not sure

If option (a) or (b) selected, please outline why you think this?

*Free text box*

10. In the last year, to what extent has your council implemented the following activities:  
(Select one response for each)

	Fully implemented	Partially implemented	Planned but not yet implemented	Not recognised as a priority in our area yet	Not sure
Developed or maintained a disability employee network					
Regularly engaged with people with disability to inform policies, programs, services etc.					
Delivered training for staff about disability awareness					
Improved website accessibility					
Developed and maintained an internal DIAP working group or similar					
Developed or maintained an Access Committee including external representatives					
Formed partnerships with other organisations to support and improve disability inclusion					
Revised recruitment, retention and promotion policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive					
Conducted/planned public information and awareness-raising activities regarding disability inclusion					
Formally monitored and evaluated disability inclusion activities					
Improved accessibility of information for the community					
Improved accessibility for public facilities					

[NOTE: if skipped through from Q5 or Q6 i.e. with no knowledge of DIAP, then take SURVEY PATH B skip to Q14]

11. How important are each of the following factors in supporting the success of Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) in local council?

(Select one response for each)

	Not at all important	not important	neutral	important	Very important
Champions					
Executive sponsorship					
Access committees					
Funding for initiatives					
Support from other agencies (e.g. Local Government NSW)					
Collaborating with other councils					
Internal working groups					
Forums with other councils for sharing experiences and stories					
Input and consultation from people with disability					
Monitoring and evaluating activities and progress					
Having a dedicated disability inclusion role in the council					

Other important factor(s), please specify:

<i>Free text box</i>
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12. To what extent do you think the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) has contributed to positive changes in relation to inclusion for people with disability in your community?

- a) To a great extent
- b) To a moderate extent
- c) To some extent
- d) Not at all
- e) Not sure

13. Can you describe any successes or positive changes that have resulted from disability inclusion activities in your council (please provide one or two examples)?

Note: please provide some detail regarding the specific activity, the impact for people with disability (employees, customers or the wider community in New South Wales) and describe the evidence available to support your example/s.

Example:
Evidence:
Impact:

Example:
Evidence:
Impact:

14. What mechanisms are in place to gather feedback on implementation from the community, particularly people with disability?

(Select all that apply)

- a) Access committees
- b) Community Surveys
- c) Council meetings
- d) Community forums
- e) Other, please specify:

15. Can you describe any challenges or barriers that you have experienced in any aspect of disability inclusion planning or implementation?

<i>Free text box</i>
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16. To what extent do you think disability inclusion activities have been embedded in business as usual in your council?

- f) To a great extent
- g) To a moderate extent
- h) To some extent
- i) Not at all
- j) Not sure

17. Any other comments you would like to make in relation to the disability inclusion activities in your council?

<i>Free text box</i>
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[NOTE: if on SURVEY PATH B end survey here > skip to thank you and close]

18. Would you be interested in participating in a short phone interview to help us understand more about your experience of DIAP planning/implementation?

- a) Yes (please provide contact details below)
- b) No

First name

Phone number

Email

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

Your responses are highly valued. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact #####  
by phone on (02) 1234 5678 or email at name@saxinstitute.org.au.



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