

## PARKES SHIRE DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN





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#### **FOREWORD**

It is my pleasure to present Parkes Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026, which sets out our commitment to, and support of, improving accessing and inclusion of people with disability over the coming four years.

One in five people have some form of disability, and while we know that Parkes Shire is a great place to live, work and visit; we also recognise that there is much work that needs to be done to enhance access and inclusion for the benefit of people with disability and our wider community. Parkes Shire Council is strongly committed to doing everything it can to increase opportunities for those with disability - visible or invisible - living in, working in, and visiting our community.

An inclusive community promotes and supports diversity and offers choice: together, these lead to increased opportunity for people with disability. That is why Council is making sure access and inclusion is a key consideration in everything we do - whether it's how we plan our towns and villages and develop our built environment; how we provide information and services to our community, or how we promote positive community attitudes and behaviours toward people with disability.

This commitment is reflected in our Community Strategic Plan, Parkes+ 2035, which includes set out our objective - **Our community** is inclusive and accessible for people with disability - as well as a suite of strategies aligned against the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan that will help us achieve our objective:

- Promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability
- Improve access to buildings, spaces, places and activities for people with disability
- Improve access to meaningful employment for people with disability
- Improve access to services, systems and processes for people with disability

This Plan translates that vision into meaningful action and serves as our roadmap for the next four years, providing a level of action and accountability moving forward. It is my hope that our leadership in increasing access and championing a more inclusive culture will decrease the discrimination faced by people with disability and will be an example to lead the way for more other agencies, organisations and businesses to follow.

By working together, we can embrace the real challenge of inclusion people with disability and their families and friends in everyday community life.

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Cr Ken Keith OAM Mayor, Parkes Shire Council



## INTRODUCTION

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND STATE POLICY

**DEFINING DISABILITY** 

WHAT IS A DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN?

WHAT MUST A DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN INCLUDE?

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING



### INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND STATE POLICY

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan is Parkes Shire Council's commitment that people with disability are welcomed, accepted and respected in our community. The plan aligns with the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Person with Disabilities (2006), Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS) 2021-2031 and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2022-2026.

The Commonwealth and NSW Governments released their new Disability Plans in December 2021 and November 2021, respectively. Themes of each plan have remained consistent with the former plans, however the Commonwealth Government's ADS 2021-2031 also aims to deliver Targeted Action Plans on specific focus areas, which may present opportunities to deliver more closely aligned actions into the future.

Federal, State and local Disability Plans all recognise that people with disability should be treated equally to any other members of the community. The UN Convention, the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* state that people with disability are entitled to enjoy all human rights, and to have these rights protected by law.

Section 4 of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* sets out legal protection for people with disability to have the right to:

- Respect for their worth and dignity as individuals
- Participate in, and contribute to, social and economic life and be supported to develop and enhance their skills and experience
- Realise their physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and intellectual capacities
- Make decisions, as other members of the community do, 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
- Respect for their cultural and linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs
- · Have their privacy and confidentiality respected
- · Live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- Access information in a way that is appropriate for their disability and cultural background, and enables them to make informed choices
- · Pursue complaints, as other members of the community do
- Have acknowledgement of, and respect for, the crucial role of families, carers and other significant persons in the lives of people with disabilities, and the importance of preserving relationships with families and carers and other significant persons
- Respect for the needs of children with disability as they mature, and for their rights as equal members of the community
- Respect for the changing abilities, strengths, goals and needs of people with disabilities as they age.

The below diagram illustrates how International, National and State policy interact to inform the development of Disability Inclusion Action Plans.



### DEFINING DISABILITY

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 defines disability as: 'The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which an interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.'

The World Health Organisation (WHO) shifts the understanding of disability from a focus on impairment of individuals to improving barriers to access. WHO identifies not just physical or mental conditions but rather defines disability as being interconnected with features of the society in which he or she lives.

"Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers"

Council acknowledges all forms of disability, both visible and invisible, when identifying the importance of accessibility and inclusion for all. For the purpose of this DIAP, we will define disability to include, but not be limited to, the following types of disability:

- Intellectual
- Physical
- Auditory
- Cognitive
- · Significant mental health issues
- Visual
- Sensory
- Psychosocial

## WHAT IS A DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN?

Disability Inclusion Planning is one way that governments, public authorities and all organisations can reduce and remove barriers for people with disability and foster a more accessible and inclusive community. Disability Inclusion Planning is about making a plan that outlines the intention and actions that public authorities will take to remove barriers in access to their information, services, facilities, and employment as well as to foster the promotion of the rights of people with disability.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires all public authorities - including Parkes Shire Council as a local government organisation - to develop and adopt a DIAP spanning a four-year period, setting out the measures they will put in place to support people with disability to better access support and services available in the community, and participate fully in community life.

The purpose of this DIAP is to support disability inclusion in the Parkes Shire community. While the DIAP focuses on supporting people with disability, our actions support our wider goal for inclusion. Making it easier for people to get around and access information is beneficial to all members of our community.

### WHAT MUST A DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN INCLUDE?

Under Section 12(3) of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, this DIAP must:

- Specify how Council regards disability principles
- Include strategies to support people with disability, including strategies about the following:
  - Providing access to buildings, events and facilities
  - Providing access to information
  - Accommodating the specific needs of people with disability
  - Supporting employment of people with disability
  - Encouraging and creating opportunities for people with disability to access the full range of services and activities available in the community
- Include details of Council's consultation about the DIAP with people with disability
- Explain how the DIAP supports the goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan.

### INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

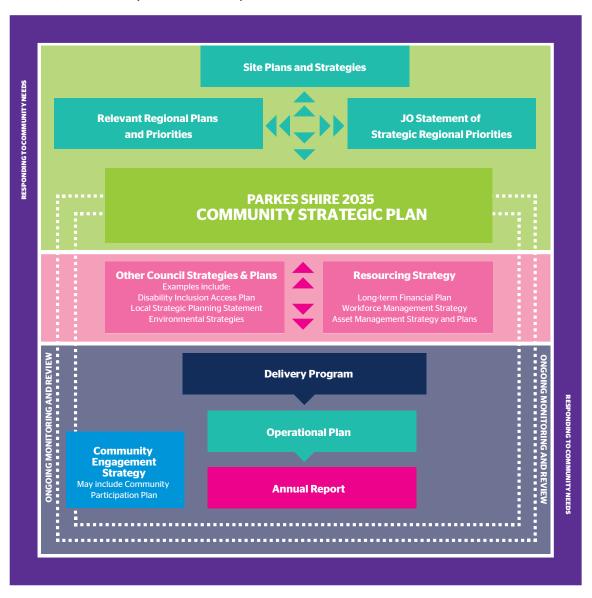
This Disability Inclusion Action Plan forms part of Parkes Shire Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, which brings together a suite of integrated strategic plans that set our vision for Parkes Shire and the goals, strategies and actions to achieve that vision.

The development of this DIAP has occurred using the principles identified in the *IP&R Guidelines for Local Government in NSW* and accompanying *IP&R Handbook for Local Government in NSW* published and prescribed by the Office of Local Government, and the priorities identified in the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*. This DIAP seeks to integrate with other strategies, including our Community Strategic Plan, to ensure the principles of inclusion and access are embedded in our all planning frameworks.

Individual actions contained in this DIAP will be resourced for delivery in our annual Operational Plans over the coming four-year period. Reporting is a key element of the IP&R framework, and we report on our progress in implementing our Operational Plans via Annual Reports, which are prepared within five months of the end of each financial year.

We also submit our DIAP to the NSW Disability Council and, as required under section 13 of the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, report to the Minister for Disability Services on our progress in achieving our DIAP on an annual basis. The Minister for Disability Services then tables a report in Parliament about the implementation of all DIAPs by public authorities, including local councils.

The following diagram illustrates how the IP&R framework ensures that local strategic planning and reporting is informed, relevant and responsive to community needs:



## CONTEXT

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES** 



#### **OUR COMMUNITY**

The Parkes Shire local government area sits at the heart of Central West NSW, strategically located on the Newell Highway - Australia's major inland touring route - and within five hours of Sydney and three hours of Canberra.

Covering an area of 5,919 square kilometres and taking in some of the richest and most productive farming and grazing land in NSW, Parkes Shire is renowned for our stunning natural beauty and friendly, welcoming community.

Just over 14,608 people call Parkes Shire home<sup>1</sup>, with more than two-thirds of our population living in the town of Parkes, which serves as the administrative, commercial and services hub of the local government area. Villages are located at Peak Hill, Trundle, Tullamore, Alectown, Bogan Gate and Cookamidgera.

Just over 10 per cent of the Parkes Shire's population identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, significantly higher than the respective state and national averages of 2.9 per and 2.8 per cent<sup>2</sup>.

Parkes Shire is located on the lands of the Bogan River people of the Wiradjuri nation - the largest Aboriginal territory at the time of European settlement - and continues to be the home of many Wiradjuri people, as well as those from other nations.

Parkes Shire also supports the surrounding region with health and education services through Lachlan Health Service, Western TAFE and Country Universities Centre, as well as various public and private schools, preschools and family day care services. Parkes Shire has modern health services, with a recently redeveloped hospital and strong network of local General Practitioners and is located within an hour's drive of other major hospital and health service providers at Dubbo and Orange.

Parkes Shire boasts a strong, diverse economy, with a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of \$845 million in 20213. Our economy is underpinned by the agriculture and mining industries and strengthened by the transport and logistics, retail and public administration sectors. Just over 1,300\* local business operate in Parkes Shire, with 6,565\* residents - around 44 per cent of our population - in the workforce.

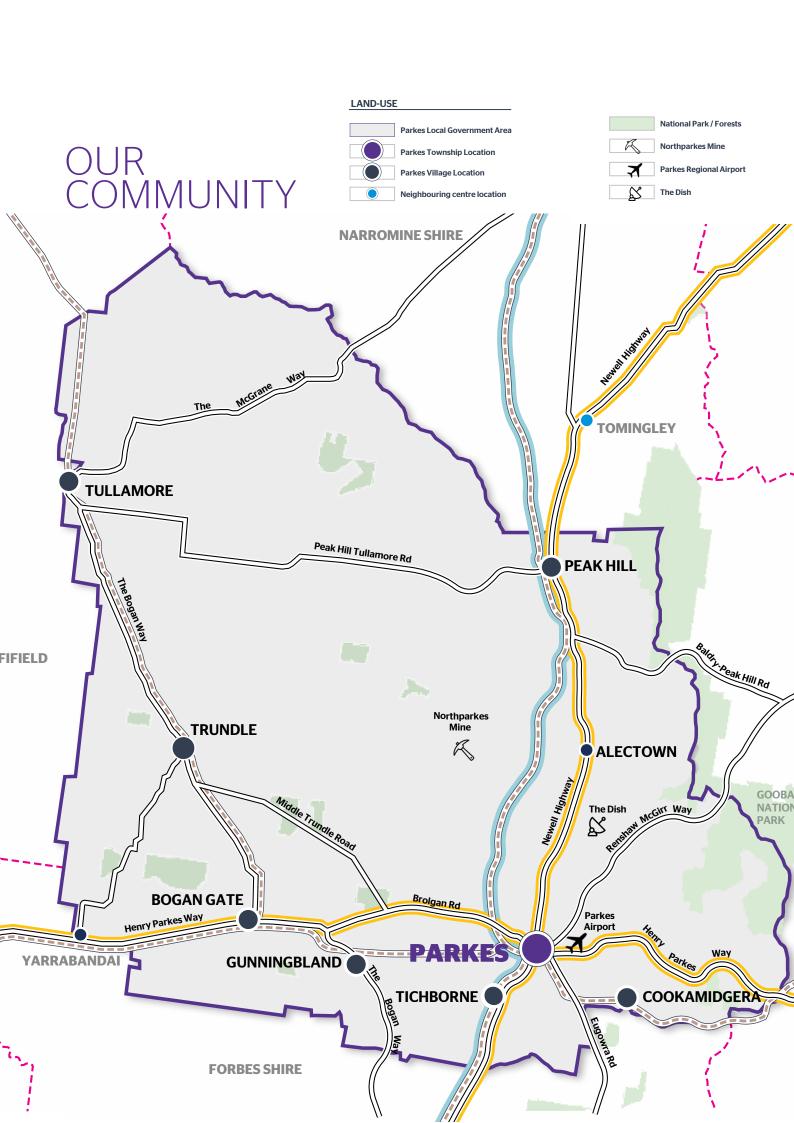
The development of the Parkes Special Activation Precinct (SAP) - the first SAP in regional NSW - will support continued business development and employment growth in the Central West. Taking advantage of Parkes' location on the Inland Rail and the Main Rail line, the Parkes SAP presents opportunities for value-add industries in the agricultural technology sector.

The Parkes Regional Airport is a major gateway to the Central West region, transporting 35,000 passengers annually through daily flights to Sydney. Through leveraging Parkes' well-established national transport hub, the development of the Parkes Airport Business Park provides potential for growth to support our strong, diverse economy.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census Results

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census Results

<sup>3</sup> National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, 2021



## ACCESS DEMOGRAPHICS IN PARKES SHIRE

People with disability are diverse, and disability can be very different from person to person. Disability affects many people, directly and indirectly, in large and small ways.

Disability can be physical, intellectual, sensory and/or psychosocial (i.e., arising from a person's mental health experience). It can be temporary or permanent and can occur from birth or during a person's lifetime. Some disabilities are visible, such as people using a mobility aid to get around, whereas others are invisible, such as a person who is hard of hearing or has Autism. Disability encompasses people across all socioeconomic and demographic groups.

Knowing how many people in an area are living with disabilities, as well as their characteristics, can improve our understanding of their varying experiences. This information helps to foster inclusivity for all by informing planning and provision of the supports, services and communities that enable people with disabilities to participate fully in everyday life.









PROVIDE UNPAID CARE

There are approximately 14,608 residents in Parkes Shire.<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics data identified the following residents as having circumstances that impact on physical access, community inclusion or access to information, services, and support:

- An estimated 1,407 residents (9.6 per cent) have a disability that limits, restricts, or impairs everyday activities and has lasted, or likely to last, for at least six months.5
- 948 residents (6.5 per cent) need help in their day-today lives due to severe or profound disability.6
- 2,066 residents within the Shire (14 per cent) are over the age of 70.7
- 1,515 (13 per cent) provide unpaid care to a person with disability, long-term illness, or person of older age.8

These statistics highlight that any one time, a significant number of our community are facing access challenges. They also remind us that each one of us is likely to have an access issue at some point during our lives, where it is temporary, ongoing or because of ageing.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census Results

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census Results

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census Results

## DEVELOPING OUR DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

**VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES** 



This Disability Inclusion Action Plan builds on, and succeeds, Parkes Shire Council's first DIAP, which was developed in 2017 through consultation with people with disability, their families, carers and service providers.

Since we developed our first DIAP in 2017, the Parkes Shire has experienced significant changes. Accordingly, in 2021, we undertook an extensive community engagement process to inform the review and development of our new suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) strategic documents, including our DIAP.

Our community engagement process was designed to ensure we gained as much input and feedback as possible. Due to the Public Health Orders and associated movement restrictions and social distancing requirements in place at various times throughout 2021, we incorporated a telephone survey and online consultation activities in addition to face-to-face consultation opportunities.

In April 2021, we engaged an independent market research firm, Micromex Research, to survey a representative sample of our community to gauge overall satisfaction with our performance; importance of various services, facilities, and activities; and support for Councils community vision and future directions.

During July and August 2021, we also met with our community advisory committees and held public drop-in sessions across the Parkes Shire and invited feedback via our online consultation platform, *Your Say Parkes*.

Our community engagement process results in over 800 suggestions, comments and concerns being provided, including from:

- 300 residents who participated in our Community Satisfaction Survey
- 136 residents who completed an online survey
- · 79 residents who attended a community forum
- 302 individual ideas shared with us via an ideas wall
- 67 ideas and suggestions pinned on an online mapping tool

### VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

During the preparation of our Community Strategic Plan, a vision for Parkes Shire's future was developed:

### Connected, vibrant and sustainable. Parkes Shire 2035, it all adds up

To ensure we achieve our community's vision in the future, we have considered the three principles of our vision statement in preparing this DIAP:

- Connected: The DIAP will consider we can all feel part of our community, built better relationships through attitudes and behaviours, and improve access through place and space integration
- Vibrant: The DIAP will consider how we can enhance the liveability of Parkes Shire and enable people with disability to better participate in our community and economy
- Sustainable: The DIAP will consider we can create efficient and effective systems and processes to better accommodate people living and to create

## ACTION PLAN

PARKES SHIRE ACTION PLAN



## PARKES SHIRE ACTION PLAN

Our action plan identifies four Focus Areas, including:

- 1. ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS
- 2. LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES
- 3. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES
- 4. SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Our action plan is structured to identify the following:

ID	Identification Number		
Action	Strategy and respective actions to achieve the action.		
Responsibility	Council service area primarily responsibility for strategy and action delivery.		
Timing	Timing for implementation.		
Outcome	Measurement of implementation (output) or improvement (outcome).		

The actions listed in the DIAP are designed to be flexible to change as technologies and ideas about best practice develop.

### FOCUS AREA 1: ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS



ONE

Promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability.

Parkes Shire Council will **promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability** across all aspects of our organisation through increasing awareness of ability and changing language to reflect the capabilities of individuals

ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
1.1.1	Provide disability awareness and inclusion training to all Council staff and Councillors including human rights and anti-discrimination.	People, Safety and Culture	2022/23	Completion of training for staff and Councillors.
1.1.2	Ensure leadership on positive disability inclusion through positive attitudes towards inclusion in the Parkes Shire.	Governance, Insurance and Risk	2022/23	Councillor representation on the Access Committee.
1.1.3	Review Council Induction materials to incorporate the topic of disability inclusion to ensure our staff have the knowledge to communicate with people respectfully, confidently, and effectively with a disability.	People, Safety and Culture	2022/23	Council Induction materials reviewed and updated.
		People, Safety and Culture	2023/24	Customer Service training held with the inclusion of disability awareness and person-centred communication.
Outc	ome 1.2: Foster understanding and connections within ou	r community		
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
1.2.1	Contribute positive media stories about what Council is doing to build inclusion with people with a disability.	Brand and Corporate Communications	2022/23	Updates posted on Council public communication channels.
1.2.2	Provide six-monthly update on the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan to staff and Councillors to promote and encourage inclusive practices.	Strategy, Systems and Performance	Ongoing	Updates tabled at Parkes Delivery Plus Workshops every six months.
Outc	ome 1.3: Improve accessibility of Council's buildings and i	nfrastructure assets		
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
1.3.1	Increase accessibility and inclusion at Council Meetings.	Governance, Insurance and Risk	Ongoing	Access needs of people with disability attending meetings held at Council are specifically addressed and catered for.
1.3.2	Encourage people with disability and their families to attend Council events through provision of accessible events.	Visitor Economy and Major Events	Ongoing	Promote accessible and inclusion events.
		Visitor Economy and Major Events	Ongoing	Consult with the Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee as part of the events planning process.
1.3.3	Ensure that all relevant staff have knowledge of accessibility features of venues and buildings.	Planning and Certification	2023/24	Resources developed with accessibility features of Council venues and buildings.

## FOCUS AREA 2: LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES





Improve access to buildings, spaces, places and activities for people with disability.

Parkes Shire Council will **improve access to buildings, spaces, places and activities for people with disability** through applying universal design principles, improving connectivity, and engaging with people with disability, their families, carers and service providers, to co-design on key projects.

ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled	How we will measure our performance
			Delivery	The wife with measure out performance
2.1.1	Progressively improve the accessibility of footpaths in Parkes Shire	Operations	Ongoing	Number of footpaths / shared paths per lineal metre constructed.
2.1.2	Prepare a self-assessment checklist for local businesses and tourist attractions to encourage them to meet accessibility needs	Economy and Engagement	2023/24	Self-assessment prepared and distributed via Council's public communication channels and industry groups.
Outco	ome 2.2: Ensure Council's events, open spaces and sporti	ing recreation facilities	are accessib	le and inclusive
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
2.2.1	Improve the accessibility of public toilets, including way finding.	Brand and Corporate Communications	2022/23	Council's website is updated with the location of public toilets and their access features.
2.2.2	Improve accessibility and inclusion of Council operated public recreation, learning and leisure facilities.	Planning and Certification	2022/23	Review access to town libraries, aquatic centres, the Little Theatre, sports fields, and playgrounds.
		Brand and Corporate Communications	2022/23	Council's website is updated with the details of access features of public facilities and playgrounds.
		Visitor Economy and Major Events	2023/24	Review Parkes Shire Visitor Guide to ensure the details of access features of places and interest in the Parkes Shire are included.
Outco	ome 2.3: Improve accessibility of Council's buildings and	infrastructure assets		
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
2.3.1	Improve access to Council Administration Centre, and Visitor's Information Centre, including way finding.	Planning and Certification	2023/24	Review undertaken on Council's Administration Centre and Visitor Information Centre to determine if buildings are accessible and fitted with advanced technologies to meet the varied needs of users.
2.3.2	Upgrade and renew the provision of public accessible toilets in key facilities.	Operations	Needs basis	Public toilets modified or replaced by accessible toilet.
		Planning and Certification	Needs basis	Access and Inclusion Advisory Group consulted about the priorities for enhancements of public toilets.

# FOCUS AREA 3: EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES



THREE

Improve access to meaningful employment for people with disability.

Parkes Shire Council will champion diversity and inclusion in the workplace and act to **improve access to meaningful employment for people with disability** and their carers, both within our organisation and across our community.

ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
3.1.1	Review the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy to facilitate Council being a more inclusive employer, including recruiting, retaining and supporting employees with disability.	People, Safety and Culture	2022/23	Policy reviewed and updated.
3.1.2	Promote representation of people with disability in Council's workforce to the public.	Brand and Corporate Communications	2023/24	Council website updated to promote representation of employees with disability.
3.1.3	Identify and implement services and systems that support people with disability being retained within the workforce.	People, Safety and Culture	2023/24	Services and systems identified and improved/implemented.
3.1.4	Develop and promote flexible working arrangements and in-house support to recruit and retain people with disability in Council's workforce.	People, Safety and Culture	2023/24	Flexible Working Arrangements Policy reviewed.
3.1.5	Promote work experience and traineeship opportunities for people with disability through local schools and service providers.	People, Safety and Culture	2022/23	Inclusive employment opportunities promoted to local schools, disability employment agencies and service providers.
Outco	ome 3.2: Support people with disability in finding local en	nployment		
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
3.2.1	Promote information for people with disability on how to volunteer and access work experience.	Brand and Corporate Communications	2023/24	Council website updated to include information for people with disability on how to volunteer and access work experience.
Outco	ome 3.3: Foster skills, training and social contribution of p	people with disability		
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
3.3.1	Facilitate programs to assist to address the gap in servicing the early education needs for children with disability in the Parkes Shire.	Central West Childcare Services	2023/24	Programs delivered to early childhood children with disability.

## FOCUS AREA 4: SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES



FOUR

Improve access to services, systems, and processes for people with disability.

Parkes Shire Council will continuously **improve access to services**, **systems**, **and processes for people with disability** through enhanced usability and availability of information, enabling and empowering people with disability to participate fully in all aspects of citizenship.

Outco	Outcome 4.1: Ensure Parkes Shire Council is a leader in equal employment				
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance	
4.1.1	Establish an Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee.	Planning and Certification	2022/23	Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee established.	
4.1.2	Review the Community Engagement Strategy to improve representation of people with disability, their families and supporters.	Brand and Corporate Communications	2024/25	Community Engagement Strategy updated.	
Outco	Outcome 4.2: Improve access and diversity of information services				
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance	
4.2.1	Review Council's websites to ensure WCAG 2.0 AA compliance.	Brand and Corporate Communications	2022/23	Website compliance reviewed.	
4.2.2	Review Council's emergency evacuation procedures to ensure consideration of the needs of people with disability.	Work Health Safety	2022/23	Emergency evacuation procedures updated.	





