

BLAYNEY, CABONNE & ORANGE

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

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A Message from the Mayors of Blayney, Cabonne and Orange

Blayney Shire Council, Cabonne Council and Orange City Council are working together to build communities that are accessible, welcoming and inclusive for everyone.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) sets out the practical steps our three councils will take to improve inclusion for people with disability across our region.

It acknowledges the contribution people with disability make to community life and recognises that inclusion is a shared responsibility. Councils, community organisations, businesses and residents all have a role to play in creating communities where everyone can participate with dignity, confidence and independence.

The plan recognises that disability is not always visible, and that people can experience barriers in different ways and at different stages of life. Inclusion shapes whether people can move safely through public spaces, access information easily, take part in events and activities, and engage with everyday services with dignity and confidence.

The plan is guided by the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2026–2029 and the NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines. It focuses on removing barriers and improving access across four key areas:

- Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability
- Creating liveable and safer communities
- Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence
- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

These focus areas help councils turn good intentions into clear actions that make a measurable difference for residents, visitors, families, carers and the wider community.

A regional approach strengthens our ability to deliver meaningful outcomes. While Blayney, Cabonne and Orange each have their own communities and priorities, we share many of the same challenges and opportunities. Working together allows the three councils to align expectations, share ideas, build consistent approaches, and deliver improvements that support people with disability no matter which town, village or neighbourhood they are in.

This plan has been shaped through engagement with community members, including people with disability, their families and carers, local services and advocates. Their experiences and insights help ensure the actions in this plan respond to real needs and reflect what inclusion looks like on the ground, not just on paper.

Implementation matters. Actions in this plan will be delivered through council operations and embedded into each council's planning and reporting, including Delivery Programs and Operational Plans. Progress will be monitored and reported so our communities can see what has been achieved, what is underway, and where we need to keep improving.

This plan is presented jointly by the Mayors of Blayney, Cabonne and Orange:

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Mayor
Blayney Shire Council

Cr Kevin Beatty
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Plain English summary

This plan explains what Blayney Shire Council will do between 2026 and 2030 to make Blayney more accessible and inclusive for people with disability.

It focuses on four areas:

- positive community attitudes and the rights of people with disability
- liveable and safer communities
- meaningful employment and independence
- accessible systems, processes and services.

The plan includes actions about accessible events, footpaths, parking, public toilets, information, Council websites, employment, staff training, local businesses, consultation and community programs.

Council will report on progress through its annual reporting process and will continue to work with people with disability, carers, service providers and the broader community while the plan is delivered.

1. Overview

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 is Blayney Shire Council's local plan for improving access and inclusion for people with disability. It identifies practical actions Council will take across services, facilities, information, employment practices, events and public spaces.

The plan builds on the regional approach taken by Blayney Shire Council, Cabonne Council and Orange City Council. It keeps a shared commitment to inclusion across the region, while recognising that each council has different services, facilities, community needs and resourcing.

The plan is designed to be practical. Some actions are new, while others build on work already included in Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, including community programs, footpaths, inclusive events, customer service, communications and the review of the existing Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Inclusion benefits everyone. When information, places, services and opportunities are accessible, the whole community benefits: older people, children, families, carers, people with temporary injuries, visitors and people who experience disability in different ways.

STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

The previous regional plan included a shared regional framework and council specific action sections.

This draft follows a similar structure, with updated policy context, available community data, the 2025 consultation findings and Blayney Shire Council's proposed action plan for 2026-2030. Sections 1 to 5 provide the background, community context and strategic alignment. Section 6 sets out Blayney Shire Council's actions. Section 7 explains how progress will be monitored and reported.

DISABILITY INCLUSION FOCUS AREAS

The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan identifies four key outcome areas. These key outcome areas guided the community consultation process and formed the structure for this Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP):

- Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability
- Creating liveable and safer communities
- Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence
- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been prepared under the guidelines established by the Office of Local Government having regard to the legislative context. The three councils worked closely to develop a consultation strategy that enabled both targeted and broader stakeholder and community engagement.

The plan sets out a series of principles, strategies and actions that will guide Council operations over the next four years. These align with the principles of the Disability Inclusion Act (2014), as well as the NSW Government's Disability Inclusion Plan focus areas.

2. Purpose of this plan

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

The purpose of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to effectively identify actions that deliver on the diverse needs of people with disability in our community. The rights of people with disability to access services and facilities is fundamental to the disability inclusion process.

In 2008, the Australian Government committed to implementing the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”

Subsequently the Commonwealth Government prepared Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2031 which sets out a plan to change the lives of people with disability over ten years. In 2014 the NSW Government enacted the Disability Inclusion Act (DIA). The DIA requires local councils to prepare disability inclusion action plans to deliver on the diverse needs of people with disability in the community as part of their Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

Framework	Purpose
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Recognises people with disability as rights holders and supports their equal participation in society.
Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031	Sets the national policy framework for improving outcomes for people with disability across employment, inclusive communities, rights, services, education, health and community attitudes.
Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)	Requires public authorities, including councils, to prepare disability inclusion action plans and report on their implementation.
NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2026-2029	Sets the state focus areas and actions that guide NSW public authorities and local councils.
NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines	Provide guidance for developing, implementing and reporting on disability inclusion action plans.
Blayney Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2025-2035	Sets the long-term community vision and strategic direction for Blayney Shire Council.
Blayney Shire Council Delivery Program 2026-2030 and Operational Plan 2026-2027	Identify Council’s four-year commitments and annual actions that help deliver the Community Strategic Plan.

3. Demographic context

Disability is a broad and diverse experience. It can be physical, mental, intellectual, neurological or sensory. It can be visible or non-visible, permanent, temporary, changing or age-related. It can also interact with other life experiences, including age, cultural background, language, gender, income, transport access and caring responsibilities.

Disability is also difficult to measure. Different data sources use different definitions. Census data gives useful local information about people who need assistance with core activities, while national survey data gives a broader picture of disability across Australia.

For this plan, local data for Orange, Blayney and Cabonne has been drawn from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, using the Core Activity Need for Assistance measure. This measure records people who need help in their day-to-day lives with self-care, mobility or communication because of a disability, long-term health condition or age.

These figures help identify people who need daily support, but they do not capture everyone who lives with disability, experiences access barriers, supports someone with disability, or needs inclusive services, information and public spaces. For this reason, the plan also considers national disability data and local community feedback.

Nationally, the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that in 2022, 5.5 million Australians, or 21.4% of the population, had disability. This was an increase from 4.4 million people, or 17.7%, in 2018. The ABS also found that 7.9% of all Australians had a profound or severe disability.

Disability prevalence increases with age. In 2022, 15.0% of people aged 0 to 64 years had disability, compared with 52.3% of people aged 65 years and over. This is important for Orange, Blayney and Cabonne because the region has ageing communities, and access needs are likely to grow over time.

Caring responsibilities are also part of the inclusion picture. In 2022, there were 3.0 million carers in Australia, representing 11.9% of Australians living in households. There were also 391,300 young carers under the age of 25.

The data reinforces that disability inclusion is not only about specialist services. It is about how councils design places, information, events, employment, transport connections, customer service and community programs so more people can participate safely, confidently and independently.

4. Developing the plan in Blayney

Orange, Blayney and Cabonne councils launched a joint consultation process in August 2025 to update their Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

The Disability, Inclusion and Accessibility Survey was open on Council's website and consultation closed at the end of October 2025. Community members were invited to share their views on accessibility and inclusion across the region. Feedback was sought from people with disability, carers, family members, service providers, organisations and community members. The survey explored accessibility in local communities, changes people wanted to see, employment and workplace inclusion, recreation, local businesses, communications, public spaces, mobility and access challenges.

A Reference Group Forum was held in Blayney on Tuesday 4 August 2026. The session gave participants an opportunity to hear feedback on the Disability and Inclusion Survey and speak directly with Council staff about the challenges people with disability experience in everyday life, including access to public spaces, shops, events, transport, employment, information and community programs.

Participants raised practical issues such as the need for improved accessible parking at Council facilities hosting community events, permanent accessible facilities at Council sites, improved accessible parking at high-traffic locations e.g. chemist and post office and better promotion and communication to encourage feedback on disability-related issues, while also raising awareness of other services, programs, and activities available in the local area. Feedback also highlighted the need for signage and mapping of accessible parking space locations and a change in attitude through improved and positive promotion.

The consultation reinforced that inclusion is not only about infrastructure. It is also about communication, employment pathways, social connection, community attitudes and involving people with disability earlier in planning. The feedback gathered through the survey and reference group forum has helped shape the actions in this plan.

ABOUT THE SURVEY RESULTS

The following survey results present responses collected through the Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Survey conducted by Blayney Shire Council. The survey was promoted through Council's media and social media channels.

A total of 47 participants completed the survey. The results therefore reflect feedback gathered through both online participation and manually submitted survey responses

Key priorities identified through the survey

The community survey addressed the four focus areas and asked respondents to identify the most important issues within each area. The top issues identified in the updated Blayney survey were:

Focus area	Top priorities identified
Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability	1. Communicate with the person with disability, rather than just the carer: 30 responses (66.7%) 2. Hold public events that are accessible: 28 responses (62.2%) 3. Provide training to staff on access, inclusion and communication: 24 responses (53.33%) 4. Use positive images of people with disability: 23 responses (51.1%)
Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence	1. Provide accessible workplaces: 30 responses (65.2%) 2. Provide flexible working times and places: 31 responses (67.4%) 3. Look at existing roles to see how these can be made more inclusive: 25 responses (52.4%) 4. Educate other staff and the community: 24 responses (52.1%)
Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes	1. Keep communication simple and clear: 35 responses (77.8%) 2. Provide information in different formats: 25 responses (55.6%) 3. Provide accessible communication options in the workplace: 20 responses (44.4%) Provide accessible toilets in all public buildings: 30 responses (69.8%) 2. Make community programs and events accessible: 24 responses (55.8%) 3. Promote accessible-for-all design: 23 responses (53.5%)
Creating liveable and safer communities	Other issues: accessing local shops 1. Uneven footpaths: 33 responses (70.2%) 2. Steps with no ramp: 28 responses (59.6%) 3. Accessible parking: 28 responses (59.6%)

REFERENCE GROUP FORUM

The reference group forum at the Blayney Shire Community Centre heard directly from people with disability, carers, service providers, Councillors, Council staff and community members. The workshop reviewed survey outcomes and explored personal experiences, challenges with mobility and participation, inclusive employment, communication, community events and practical follow-up actions.

Participants described practical barriers that affect everyday participation in the Blayney local government area. These included event wayfinding, Council's role in improving the accessibility of community events, accessible parking, community attitudes and understanding, promotion and communication, and accessibility of accessible toilets and facilities lacking accessible fittings such as tapware.

FORUM ACTION IDEAS

1. Improve signage and provide an up-to-date map identifying accessible parking spaces across the Blayney Shire Local Government Area.
2. Identify and provide appropriately located accessible parking spaces at frequently visited community facilities, services and public places.
3. Ensure venues that regularly host community events, such as the Showground, have appropriate permanent accessible facilities to support participation by people with disability.
4. Promote opportunities for people with disability, carers and the broader community to provide feedback, raise accessibility concerns and suggest practical improvements across the Local Government Area.
5. Develop and promote positive messages that challenge stereotypes, celebrate individual strengths and abilities, and encourage a more inclusive community—for example, *“My ability is stronger than my disability.”*
6. Increase awareness and promotion of other activities, programs and initiatives in the local government area targeting disability.

5. Blayney Community Strategic Plan

Sections 5 and 6 of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan have been tailored to relate specifically to the individual Council.

While the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been a collaborative process, the operational differences in terms of organisational structure, capacity and resourcing between the three Councils have resulted in the development of slightly different deliverables.

To provide context to the strategies and actions in Section 5, an overview of the relevant Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is provided for the individual Council, in this case, Blayney.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been prepared under the broader umbrella of the 2025–2035 CSP.

The CSP is the primary forward planning document, aligning the community's vision with a clear strategic direction for the long-term future of Blayney Shire.

The 2025–2035 CSP consists of five themes: Leadership, Community, Infrastructure, Economy and Natural Built Environment.

	Leadership	Prioritise transparency, financial sustainability and strong partnerships with and for our community
	Community	A connected, healthy and inclusive community
	Infrastructure	Infrastructure is resilient, fit for purpose and maintained to support our community
	Economy	A diverse, vibrant and sustainable economy
	Natural & Built Environment	Protecting our assets for future generations

6. Action plan

There is a series of objectives and strategies under the strategic directions in the Community Strategic Plan 2025–2035 that link directly to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. These have been linked to specific actions in the plan in this section and are identified as follows:

LEADERSHIP

CSP Objective: Prioritise transparency, financial sustainability and strong partnerships with and for our community.

Community Priority:

- 1.1 Transparent and accountable Council trusted by the community
- 1.2 Local priorities are championed through advocacy
- 1.3 The community is informed and engaged
- 1.4 Finances are managed sustainably and responsibly

COMMUNITY

CSP Objective: A connected, healthy and inclusive community.

Community Priority:

- 2.2 Social connection and learning opportunities are available for all
- 2.4 An inclusive and liveable community

INFRASTRUCTURE

CSP Objective: Infrastructure is resilient, fit for purpose and maintained to support our community.

Community Priority:

- 3.1 Infrastructure is planned and managed sustainably
- 3.2 Community facilities are fit for purpose and accessible

ECONOMY

CSP Objective: A diverse, vibrant and sustainable economy.

Community Priority:

- 4.1 Our economy is strong and diverse
- 4.4 Sustainable growth of our community

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability

ACTIONS	RESP.	CSP	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME
Create community awareness around the needs and issues facing people living with disability.				
Promote an Access and Inclusion Checklist for businesses, service clubs and community groups.	CS	4.1	Checklist developed and promoted.	2029
Improve staff and councillor awareness of disability in the community to provide responsive services for customers with a disability				
All staff assigned online disability awareness training and respect in the workplace training on commencement, with regular refresher training required.	ES	1.4	Staff have better awareness of diversity in the workplace, and a greater understanding how to treat customers and colleagues in a respectful way	2029
Disability awareness training for councillors	ES	1.1	Training incorporated into Councillor training plan	2029
Embed respectful, person-first engagement practices, including speaking directly with people with disability rather than only with carers or support people.	CS	1.4	Staff engagement reflects inclusion and helps reduce stigma.	Ongoing
Positive representation of the diversity of people with disability in the community				
Use Council's social media, publications and events to promote inclusion for everyone in the community.	ES	1.3	Minimum of one campaign or other activity annually to celebrate International Day of People with Disability	Ongoing
		1.3	Positive messages that challenge stereotypes, celebrate individual strengths and abilities, and encourage a more inclusive community.	Ongoing
		1.3	Promotion of other activities, programs and initiatives in the local government area targeting disability	Ongoing
Include features in Council's communications to the community about accessibility in and around the Shire.	ES	1.3	Include accessibility in at least one community newsletter / Council notices page annually.	Ongoing

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Creating liveable and safer communities

ACTIONS	RESP.	CSP	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME
Improve accessible paths of travel				
Implement projects, that include footpaths, road crossings and kerb ramps, identified in the Active Movement Strategy and apply for Grant funding for any other priority accessibility projects.	IS	3.2	Delivery of scheduled priorities identified in the Active Movement Strategy.	Annually
Promote universal design standards with new development				
Encourage application of universal design in planning of new housing, infrastructure and buildings.	PES	4.4	Facilities and infrastructure meet Access to Premises Standards.	Ongoing
Improve transport and accessible parking				
Review of accessible parking in LGA.	IS	3.1	Number of additional and upgraded accessible parking spaces	Annually
		3.1	Review and improve accessible parking signage	2029
		3.1	Develop map of accessible parking locations across Blayney LGA	2027
		3.1	Review and implement permanent accessible parking spaces near the Pavilion at Blayney Showground.	2028
Provide inclusive recreational facilities				
Ensure local parks are accessible and inclusive as funds become available.	IS	3.2	Accessibility and disability inclusion are key considerations in the design, planning, and delivery of improvements to local parks.	Ongoing
Online and printed resources are available at the Blayney Library to support the diverse needs of the community				
Provide access to high-quality accessible collection materials and digital collections at Blayney Library.	CS	2.2	Inclusive resources, including large-print and audiobooks, are available for loan.	Ongoing
Make community events programs and activities more inclusive of people with disability				
Promote accessible public events and programs.	ES	2.2	Residents and visitors can make informed decisions before attending events.	Ongoing

WORK (EMPLOYMENT)

Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence

ACTIONS	RESP.	CSP	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME
Inclusive recruitment practices and processes				
Promote Council as an inclusive employer to encourage people with disability to apply for jobs.	ES	1.4	Inclusive employment promotion and application process.	Ongoing
Ensure the workplace is accessible for staff.	ES	1.4	Flexible work practices / reasonable adjustments are implemented and staff with disability are supported if their workplace needs change.	Ongoing
Ensure employment opportunities are available in formats that allow access to information to all people				
Review recruitment practices to remove barriers to employment including: • Job ad formats • non-essential criteria • pre-interview information • accessible and inclusive interview methods	ES	1.4	Recruitment practices reviewed and updated.	Annually
Enhance local workforce inclusion and work opportunities for people with disability				
EEO Management Plan is revised and updated and actions included in the plan are implemented on an ongoing basis.	ES	1.4	Plan reviewed and actions implemented.	2030

INFORMATION AND UNDERSTANDING (SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES)

Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

ACTIONS	RESP.	CSP	OUTCOME	TIMEFRAME
Ensure accessible and inclusive communication with the community				
Apply access and inclusion principles to Council's communication channels.	ES	1.3	Council communication is in plain English and accessible.	Ongoing
Maintain websites and digital platforms that meet accessibility standards.	CS	1.1	People with disability can access, understand and respond to Council information easily.	Ongoing
Promote a culture of inclusive processes				
Review and update Council's event management processes and procedures to include access and inclusion criteria and information.	CS	2.2	Event management processes updated and distributed	Annually
A coordinated approach to disability inclusion across all Council departments, including promotion of the National Relay Service.	CS	1.3	Customer Service Team understand and use the National Relay Service	Ongoing
	ES	1.3	Accessible venues are used for Council meetings, activities and events	Ongoing
Disability Inclusion Action Plan reporting complies with IP&R Guidelines and the Disability Inclusion Act 2014				
Reporting on Disability Inclusion Plan undertaken as per statutory requirements.	CS	2.4	Six monthly and annual reporting completed by all responsible.	Six-monthly
	CS	2.4	Reports presented to Disability Inclusion Working Group and Council.	Six-monthly
Council's Disability Inclusion Plan is acknowledged in Council's Delivery Program and Annual Operational Plan.	CS	2.4	Reference to Disability Inclusion Action Plan included in Council's Delivery Program and Annual Operational Plan.	Annually
Consultation mechanisms for people with disability are established				
Accessible consultation channels and regular engagement opportunities for people with disability through Disability Inclusion Working Group.	CS	1.2	Meetings held as per Disability Inclusion Working Group terms of reference.	Ongoing

7. Monitoring and reporting

Council will continue to work towards the creation of an inclusive community. It is a legislative requirement that the process of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan is included as part of the Annual Report and sent to the Minister.

A summary of achievements and highlights will be prepared and provided to the NSW Disability Council as required under the Disability Inclusion Act.