

# CARRATHOOL SHIRE COUNCIL

## DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN



# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND STATE POLICY .....	4
DEFINING DISABILITY .....	6
WHAT IS A DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN .....	6
WHAT MUST A DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN INCLUDE .....	7
INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING .....	7
OUR COMMUNITY .....	9
VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES .....	11
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY .....	12
ACTION PLAN .....	14

Adopted Minute: 0653/19 September 2023

# INTRODUCTION

We want our community to be a place where all people can participate equally. Carrathool Shire offers the best of country living, history and tradition, and a range of supporting services and amenities. There is a strong sense of community pride. The vision of Carrathool Shire Council is to offer opportunity together with the best of country living.

The challenge in this Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) is to extend the things that make Carrathool Shire great to all in the community and to build a reputation of inclusion and accessibility.

This DIAP seeks to make things fairer, easier and more spontaneous for all people with disability regardless of how significant the disability. This includes people with autism, neurological, intellectual, sensory and physical disability; and mental health and chronic health conditions. Some disabilities, such as Crohn's Disease, may not be visible.

Making things inclusive for people with disability has advantages for most people across diverse abilities and ages, including:

- good seating and a place to rest along the way is important to many older people
- ramps may be better than steps if you have a young family
- subtitles on visual media are great in noisy places

In preparing this DIAP we made sure that people with disability were included in making decision about making Carrathool Shire more accessible. We asked the community about the barriers that people with disability face and their ideas for improvement.

This DIAP explains the actions we will take to improve the lives of people with disability in our community. The plan will foster and advocate for a community and built environment that supports people with disability of all ages to be included in social and economic life to the extent of their ability, to contribute as valued community members and to achieve good life outcomes.

Carrathool Shire Council is committed to promoting a community where people can feel welcome and included, with dignified and equal access to places, events, information and opportunities. A Shire that builds confidence, resilience, optimises independence and strengthens people's engagement in community life.



# INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL & STATE POLICY

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan is Carrathool 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 Action 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 acknowledgment 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 shows the Commonwealth and State legislation that informs the development of local government disability access and inclusion planning:

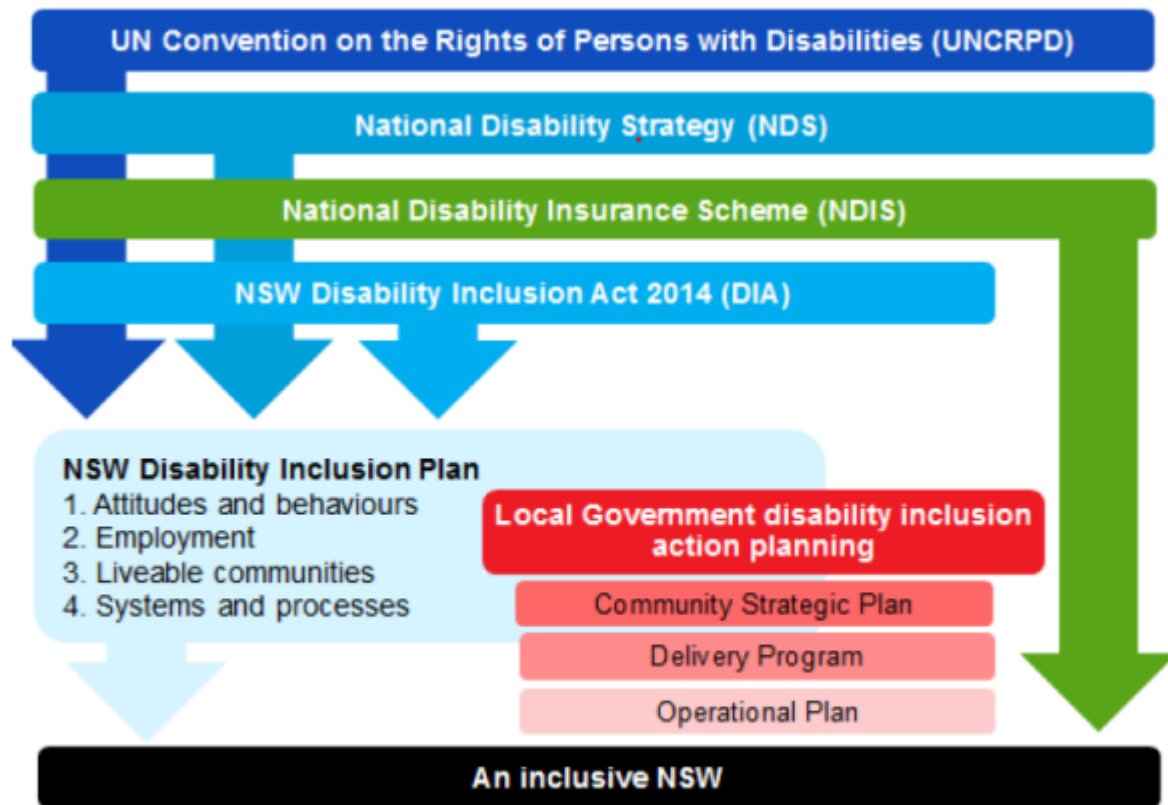


Image source: Local Government NSW and NSW Family and Community Service - Disability Inclusion Action Plan guidelines

# 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 Carrathool 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 Carrathool 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 of disability
- Explain how the DIAP supports the goals of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan.



# INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

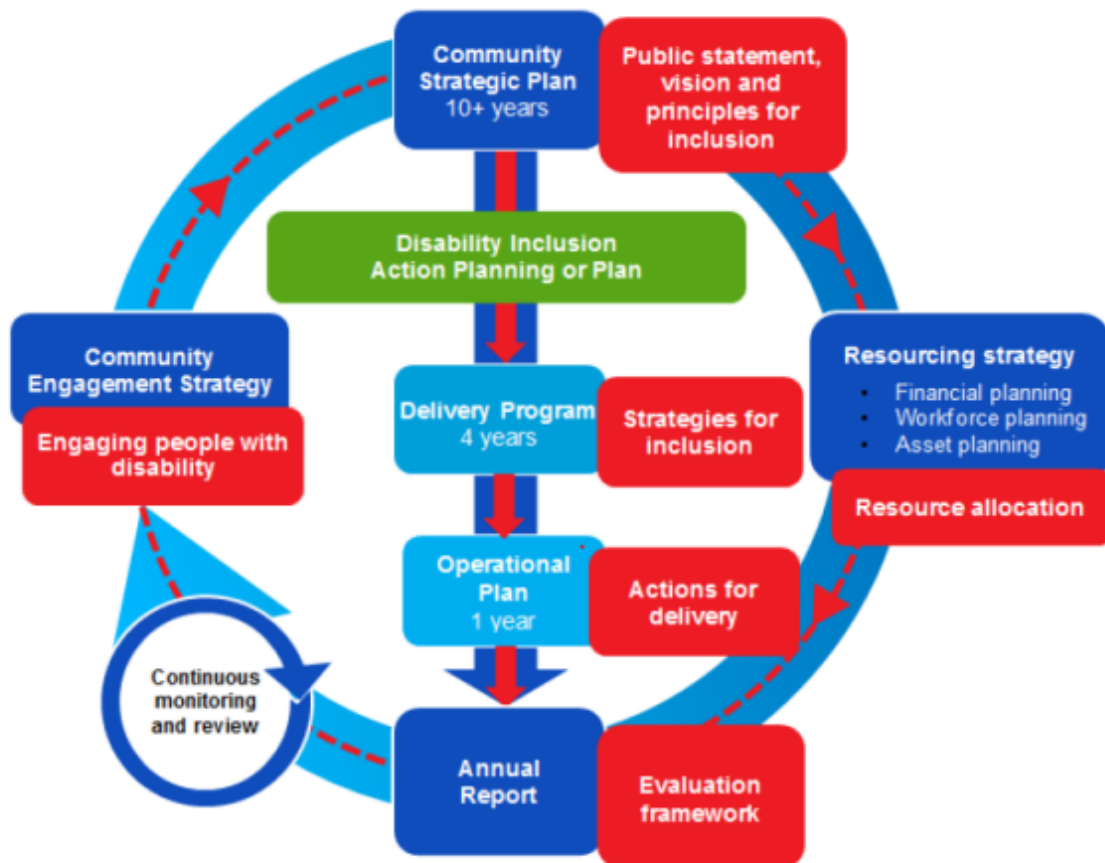
This Disability Action Inclusion Plan forms part of Carrathool Shire Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, which brings together a suite of integrated strategic plans that set our vision for Carrathool Shire and the goals, strategies and actions combining to achieve that vision.

The development of this DIAP has occurred using the principles identified in the *IP&R Guidelines for Local Government in NSW* and the *IP&R Handbook for Local Government in NSW* together with the priorities identified in the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014*. This DIAP seeks to integrate with other strategies, including our Community Strategic Plan (Towards 2032 – *our vision, our plan*), to ensure the principles of inclusion and access are embedded in all our planning frameworks.

Individual actions contained in this DIAP will be resourced for delivery in Operational Plans over the life of each Delivery Program. 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 by the end of November each year.

We also submit our DIAP to the NSW Disability Council and, as required under s13 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 Disability Inclusion Action Plan fits into the integrated planning and reporting framework of local government.



## OUR COMMUNITY

Located in the Riverina region of NSW, Carrathool Shire is about 570km north of Melbourne and 680km west of Sydney and covers an area of almost 19,000 square kilometres.

Carrathool Shire is a predominantly rural area, made up of the town of Hillston and the surrounding villages of Goolgowi, Merriwagga, Rankins Springs and Carrathool. At the 2021 census, the Shire had a resident population of approximately 2,866 people.

Within the Shire, the fertile soil, access to irrigation schemes and gentle topography creates opportunity for continued growth of the Shire's agri-business and supporting services. The land is used largely for agriculture and horticulture.

Carrathool Shire's topography and climate are also favourable for alternate sources of energy production. Solar farms are increasing in prevalence throughout western NSW.

Carrathool Shire Council's vision is to have a connected and thriving community enjoying active and fulfilling lives while protecting and appreciating our environment and unique way of life.

Council's mission is to provide the community of Carrathool Shire with cost effective works, services and planning – fundamental to the progression of quality of life.

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, 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 our 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.



## OUR COMMUNITY'S PROFILE

2,871

**ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION**

253

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER PEOPLES**

200

**AGED PENSIONS**



636

**PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY**



197

**PERSONS WITH A PROFOUND OR SEVERE  
CORE ACTIVITY LIMITATION**



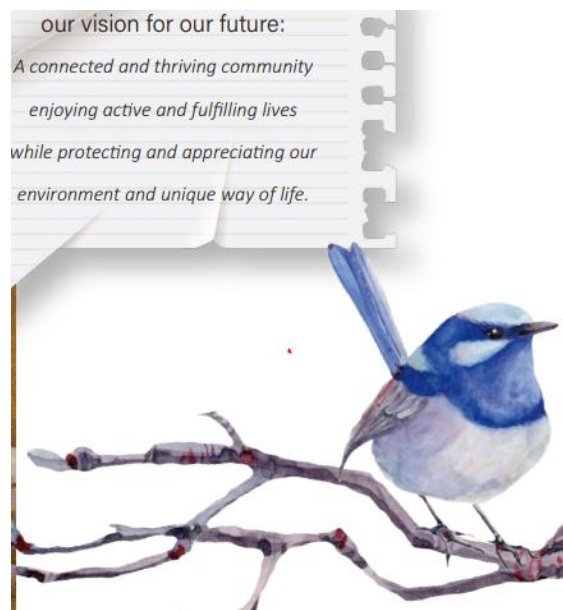
484

**PERSONS WHO ARE CARERS**



# VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

During the preparation of our Community Strategic Plan. *Towards 2032*, a vision for Carrathool Shire's future was developed.



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

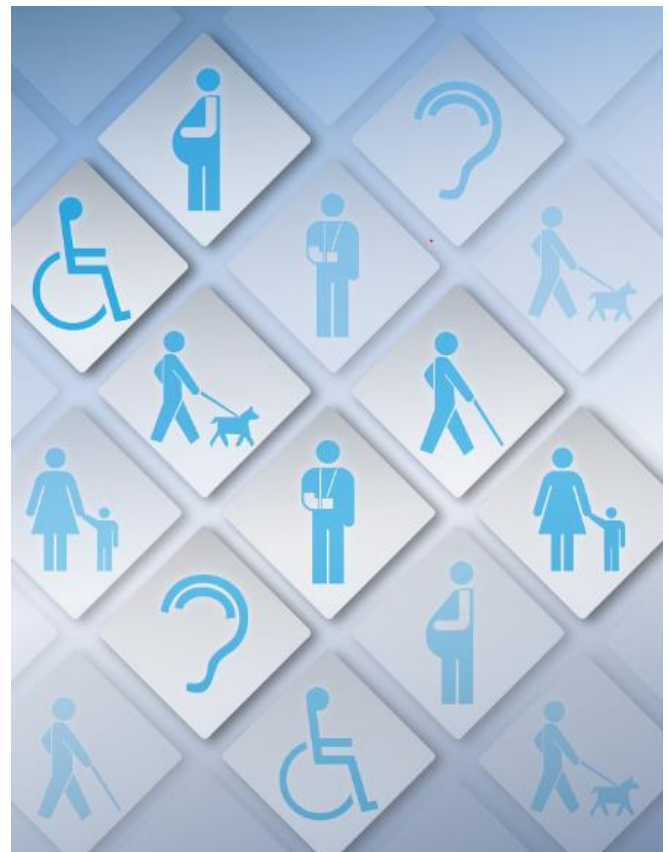
- **Connected:** This DIAP will consider how we can all feel part of our community, build better relationships through attitudes and behaviours and improve access through place and space integration.
- **Active/Fulfilling:** This DIAP will consider how we can enhance the liveability of Carrathool Shire and enable people with disability to better participate in our community and economy.
- **Environment:** This DIAP will consider how we can create efficient and effective systems and processes to better accommodate people living with disability while protecting and appreciating our environment and unique way of life.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan identifies four key areas, nominated by people with a disability, as being of primary importance in creating an inclusive community.

These are:

- Developing positive community **attitudes and behaviours**
- Creating **liveable communities**
- Supporting access to **meaningful employment**, and
- Improving access to services through better **systems and processes**.

The importance of these four areas carries through the planning process for the DIAP and Council must address each key area when developing their action plan.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Participants consider the Carrathool Shire community to be welcoming to all people and people with disability felt included in all aspects of the community.

Increased awareness is required around the different types of disability in the community and how that impacts on an individual and their families. The following points were highlighted:

What are people satisfied with?	What is causing dissatisfaction?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong anecdotal social capital (strong social and support networks, high levels of engagement, and civic and social trust).</li> <li>• People with disabilities feel included in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses often have poor physical access and minimal awareness of disability.</li> <li>• Stigma associated with disability.</li> <li>• Access to public events.</li> <li>• Lack of people with disability in images and campaigns.</li> </ul>

## LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

It was generally recognised that services and infrastructure were at an adequate level to enable people with disability to engage in the community. Improvements were suggested that would address perceived limitations.

For example, car parking was a key concern in Hillston together with the provision of accessible toilets. The following points have been highlighted in community consultation:

What are people satisfied with?	What is causing dissatisfaction?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of programs and services delivered for people with disability.</li> <li>• Interagency group is an important networking tool and is valued by service providers but does require additional support.</li> <li>• Council offices, town halls and libraries were all rated highly for accessibility.</li> <li>• Community transport is seen as being a vital part of the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parking for people with disability needs to be improved.</li> <li>• Accessible toilets should be provided in all public buildings.</li> <li>• The requirement to travel to access services causes difficulty.</li> <li>• Poor connectivity of accessible paths in town centres and public areas.</li> <li>• Barriers in local businesses such as lack of physical accessibility, lack of staff awareness and lack of accessible toilets.</li> <li>• Universal design across public facilities.</li> </ul>

## MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

All community consultation suggests that there is little to no opportunity for people with disability to be employed within Carrathool Shire. In considering this, it must be recognised that all communities within

Carrathool Shire are small and opportunities are limited regardless of disability. The community felt that there were some areas that could be focussed on and the following outlines the issues presented:

What are people satisfied with?	What is causing dissatisfaction?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited opportunities available.</li><li>• Return to work opportunities after accidents is limited and often has stigma attached.</li><li>• There are limited support programs to assist people and businesses in employing people with disability.</li></ul>

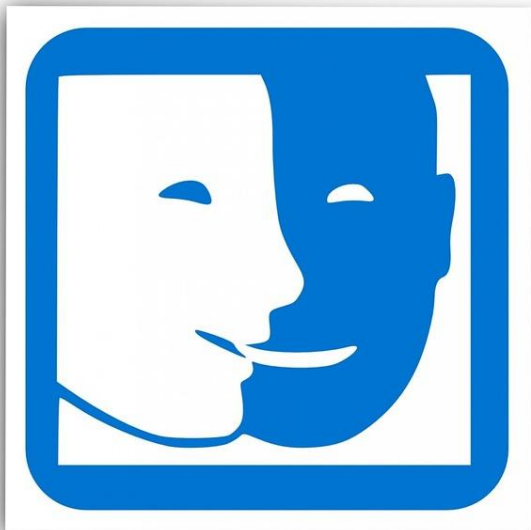
## ACCESS TO SERVICES

Community consultation considered that communication with Council was open and interactive. The community felt supported by the services offered by Council. There was

consensus that services for people with disability are often confusing but this confusion is not directly related to Council services. The following key messages were discussed during the consultation:

What are people satisfied with?	What is causing dissatisfaction?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Council's open communication with the community.</li><li>• The community newsletter was valued.</li><li>• Customer service provided by Council (both by phone and in person) was valued by the community.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of understanding on services that are available/provided (not just by Council).</li><li>• Access to information linkages about service availability.</li><li>• Council's website and Facebook posts could be improved.</li><li>• Narrow availability of accessible communication.</li></ul>

# ACTION PLAN



# CARRATHOOL SHIRE ACTION PLAN

## FOCUS AREA ONE

Our goal is to promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability

## FOCUS AREA TWO

Our goal is to (wherever possible) improve access to buildings, spaces, places and activities for people with disability

## FOCUS AREA THREE

Our goal is to improve access to meaningful employment for people with disability within Council constraints

## FOCUS AREA FOUR

Our goal is to improve access to services, systems and processes for people with disability

**OUTCOME 1.1: CELEBRATE & VALUE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN OUR COMMUNITY**

ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
1.1.1	Ensure leadership on positive disability inclusion through positive attitudes towards inclusion in Carrathool Shire	GM	Ongoing	
1.1.2	Review Council induction tools to incorporate the topic of disability inclusion in order to ensure that staff have adequate knowledge to communicate respectfully, confidently & effectively with people with disability	HR	2023/24	Council induction materials reviewed and updated where applicable.

**OUTCOME 1.2: FOSTER UNDERSTANDING & CONNECTIONS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY**

ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
1.2.1	Positive media about Council efforts to build inclusion for people with disability	DCCS	2023/24	Updates posted on Council social media channels & in publications
1.2.2	Provide annual update on the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan	DCCS	2023/24	Report to Council

**OUTCOME 1.3: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY OF COUNCIL BUILDINGS & INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS**

ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
1.3.1	Encourage people with disability & their families to attend Council functions through the provision of accessible events	CDO	Ongoing	Promote accessible & inclusive events
1.3.2	Ensure that all relevant staff have knowledge of accessibility features of Council buildings.	MBRS	2023/24	Resources developed detailing accessibility features of Council buildings

OUTCOME 2.1: MAKE IT SAFE & EASY TO GET AROUND				
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
2.1.1	Progressively improve the accessibility of footpaths in Carrathool Shire	DIS	Ongoing	Footpaths/shared paths constructed
2.1.2	Prepare a self-assessment checklist for local businesses and tourist attractions to encourage them to meet accessibility needs	CDPM	2023/24	Self-assessment checklist prepared & distributed

OUTCOME 2.2: ENSURE COUNCIL EVENTS, OPENS SPACES & RECREATION FACILITIES ARE ACCESSIBLE & 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	DCCS	2023/24	Council's website is updated with the location of public toilets and their access features
2.2.2	Improve accessibility & inclusion of Council-operated public recreation, learning & leisure facilities	DIS	2023/24	Review access to library, pools, sports grounds and parks.
		DCCS	2023/24	Council's website is updated with the details of access features of public facilities and parks

OUTCOME 2.3: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY OF COUNCIL BUILDINGS & INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS				
ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
2.3.1	Improve access to Council offices, including way finding.	MBRS	2023/24	Undertake review of Council offices to determine whether buildings are accessible & fitted with advanced technologies to meet the varied needs of users.
2.3.2	Upgrade & renew the provision of public accessible toilets in key facilities.	MBRS	Needs basis	Public toilets modified or replaced with accessible toilet.

**OUTCOME 3.1: ENSURE CARRATHOOL SHIRE PROVIDES EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

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).	HR	2023/24	Policy reviewed & updated.
3.1.2	Identify & implement services & systems that support people with disability being retained within the workforce.	HR	2023/24	Services & systems identified & improved/implemented.
3.1.3	Promote work experience & traineeship opportunities for people with disability through local schools & service providers.	HR	Ongoing	Inclusive employment opportunities promoted to local schools, disability agencies and service providers.

**OUTCOME 3.2: SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN FINDING LOCAL EMPLOYMENT**

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 & access work experience	HR/DCCS	2023/24	Council website updated to include information for people with disability on how to volunteer and access work experience.

**OUTCOME 4.1: ENSURE CARRATHOOL SHIRE ENGAGES WITH THE COMMUNITY**

ID	Output to achieve this outcome	Responsible	Scheduled Delivery	How we will measure our performance
1.1.1	Review the Community Engagement Strategy to improve representation of people with disability, their families & supporters.	DCCS	2022/23	Community Engagement strategy reviewed & approved by Council.

**OUTCOME 4.2: IMPROVE ACCESS & DIVERSITY OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Output to achieve this outcome</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Scheduled Delivery</b>	<b>How we will measure our performance</b>
4.2.1	Review Council's website to ensure WCAG 2.0 AA compliance.	DCCS	2023/24	Website compliance reviewed.
4.2.2	Review Council's emergency evacuation procedures to ensure consideration of the needs of people with disability.	HR	2023/24	Emergency evacuation procedures reviewed & updated.