



Mackay Regional Council

Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

Action Plan

December 2009

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Background:

The aim of the project has been to develop a Disability Action Plan for the Mackay Regional Council to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) which makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful in a number of areas of public life including employment, education and the provision of goods and services and facilities used by the public.

The boundaries of the newly formed Mackay Regional Council include the geographical areas of Mackay City Council, Sarina Shire Council and Mirani Shire Council as a result of the local government reforms taking effect in March 2008. Previously the Mackay City Council's DDA Action Plan was developed in 1997, reviewed in 2002 and is now due for renewal. Sarina Shire Council also had a DDA Action Plan developed in 2002 in the process of implementation at the time of amalgamation.

In addition to the DDA Action Plan Mackay Regional Council sought the services of a consultant firm to have a presentation for key council staff (engineers, designers, planners and relevant construction staff) on local government responsibilities under the DDA (1992) and how to specifically meet DDA requirements in current practices.

An Action Plan is a proactive way for council to ensure that there are appropriate policies, programs, services and facilities that are accessible and not discriminatory. The process of developing an Action Plan can raise awareness around disability matters, review current practices and produce change in systems and practices to create a more inclusive organisation and community. In other words Action Plans do not just eliminate discrimination and avoid complaints but they are good governance for councils.

This consultancy was initiated in early 2008 in the period just prior to the March 2008 elections (pre-amalgamation) with the lead being taken by the then Mackay City Council. The project has been completed with contributions from Bryce Tolliday of Access ALL WAYS, Mackay Regional Council Community Development Staff and Michelle Feenan of Engagement Plus.

Project Scope:

The scope of the project is to review the DDA plans for Mackay City Council and Sarina Shire Council and following a process of consulting relevant council staff and external stakeholders develop a new Disability Action Plan that meets the requirements of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992). The Action Plan would reflect the policy, facilities, services and programs provided through the Mackay Regional Council for its local government area.

The emphasis with this project was not just to focus on disability but to consider the needs of an ageing population as many of the benefits from making adjustments for people with disabilities also benefit older persons within this community. In essence the intent with this project was to focus more on access and equity for all citizens not just those with an explicit disability.

Definition of Disability Discrimination:

Disability discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently because of their disability in comparison to another person who does not have that disability. This can be in relation to access to premises, access to services, access to information or in any other way¹.

There are many different types of disability including:

- Total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- Total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- The presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment of that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes that:
 - Presently exists; or
 - Previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - May exist in the future; or
 - Is imputed to a person.

In other words we may all fall within this definition and so the Action Plan is about achieving an inclusive community.

¹ Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Act No. 135 of 1992 as amended.

Mackay Region:

The Mackay Regional Council now covers a geographical area of 7,261 sq km and provides local government services to some 110,000 residents. The area extends from Bloomsbury and Midge Point in the north to Koumala and Cape Palmerston in the south and west to Eungella Dam.

The Mackay region is the third fastest growing region in Queensland, with a projected annual growth rate of 2.1%. The region's estimated population in 2031 is about 173,000 people.

The Mackay region is characterised by 31 beautiful beaches, a rainforest hinterland and the Pioneer River system. The economy is strengthened by the fact that the Mackay region is the largest sugar producing region in Australia and nearly a third of Queensland's export goods originate from the Mackay region. Aside from the strong agricultural industries, the Mackay region boasts a strong retail trade industry and it is the gateway to the prosperous mining district of the Bowen basin.

Disability & Ageing profile:

Specific data on the prevalence of persons with a disability in the Mackay Regional Council are not readily available however it is reasonable to make comparison to the data for all Australians. The ABS has provided a publication entitled *Disability, Australia, 2003*² wherein there is some summary information that can be used as a guide to consider the nature of disability in our communities.

The 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) estimate that one in five Australians (3,951,000 or 20%) had a disability. The rate was the same for males and females. The rate increased with age, reaching 81% for those aged 85 years and over. The 2003 SDAC also showed that one in seventeen people (5.9%) had a profound or severe level of core activity limitation (ie. they needed help with one or more self-care, mobility or communication activities).

People with a disability were less likely to have completed a higher educational qualification than those without a disability. In 2003, one in five people aged 15-64 years living in households who had no disability had completed a bachelor degree or higher, compared to one in eight people (13%) with a disability.

In terms of employment statistics and considering those people of an employable age, people with a disability had a higher unemployment rate (8.6%) than those without a disability (5.0%) and people with a disability who were employed were more likely to work in a part-time job (37%) than those who were employed and did not have a disability (29%).

There has been much reported in recent years about the impact of an ageing population in Australia. To understand what might be the significance of this for the Mackay region the

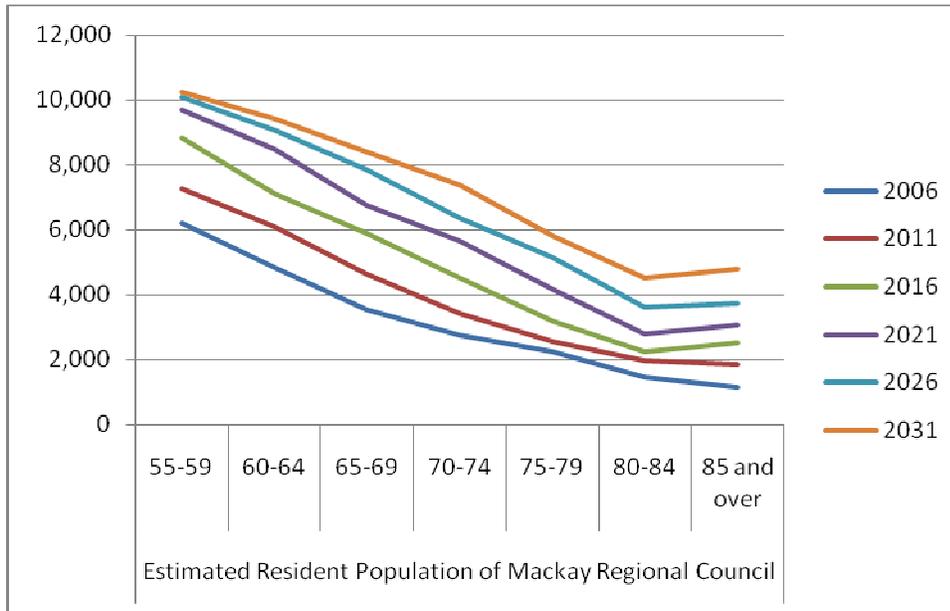
² *Disability, Australia, 2003*; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003.

following data has been extrapolated from PIFU's data for the 2008 future population trends for Queensland³.

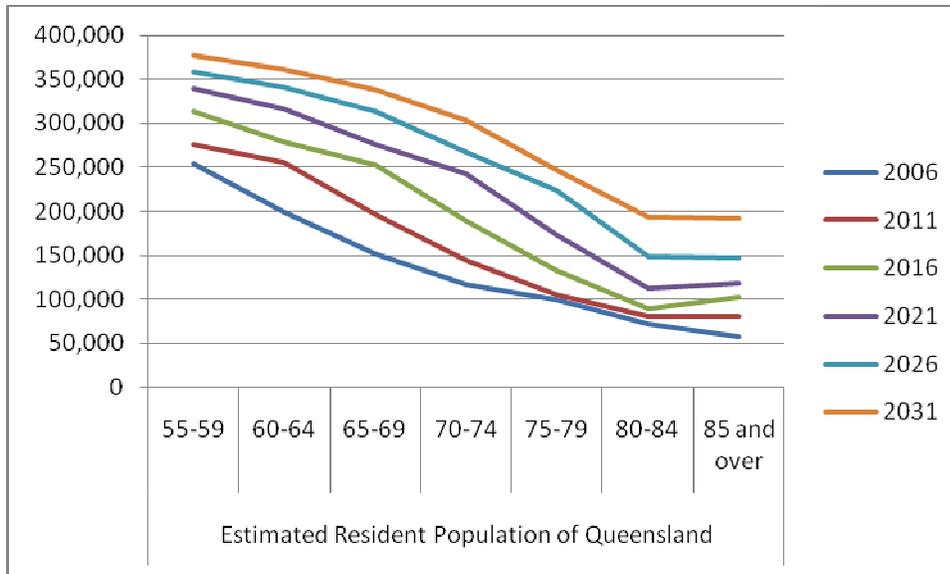
In considering the projected population trends from 2006 to 2031 (25 year project) specifically for persons aged 65 years and older the following key points are made:

- The **Mackay** region (SD) may see a **176%** increase in the number of persons aged 65 years and over (this represents an increase from 11,160 persons in 2006 to 30,847 persons in 2031), while
- The **Queensland** figures for persons aged 65 years and older for the same period may rise by approximately **157%** representing an estimated growth from 494,396 persons in 2006 to 1,274,624 in 2031;
- The proportion of persons aged 65 years and older in the Mackay region for 2006 was 10.4% and is estimated to increase to 17.8% in 2031;
- The median age of persons in Mackay may rise from 36 years in 2006 to 40 years in 2031.

The following two graphs show the estimated resident population for the years 2006 until 2031 (in 5 year intervals) for both Mackay region and Queensland.



³ Department of Infrastructure & Planning, Planning Information & Forecasting Unit (PIFU), Appendix G Queensland's future population 2008 edition.



Corporate Plan:

The Corporate Plan for Mackay Regional Council states the council’s Mission:

*Our Mission is to deliver the vision for the Mackay region in partnership with our community and to strive for excellence in planning, delivering and managing community services and facilities.*⁴

Also outlined in the Corporate Plan are the strategic priorities, related corporate objectives and then specific strategies that will govern the council’s focus and resources for the next 5 years. Specific reference that give meaning and fundamental support for the implementation of a DDA Action Plan are:

Key Strategic Priority

Corporate Objectives

Community & Lifestyle

To build safe, strong and self-reliant communities with access to a diverse range of community services and facilities aimed at providing opportunities for participation in community life.

The relevant strategies include:

1.5 Facilitate and provide equitable access to facilities, services, information and opportunities across the region.

7.2 Provide professional, responsible, timely and accessible services to external and internal customers that reflect the values of the organisation.

⁴ Mackay Regional Council Corporate Plan 2009 – 2014 , p. 10

Council's future direction therefore implies:

- People with disabilities have the same rights to active citizenship as all members of the Mackay region;
- People with disabilities have the right to access services and facilities within the Mackay region which will enable equitable opportunities for participation in community life.

The development of the DDA Action Plan has been completed in recognition of:

- The definitions of disability discrimination and the many different types of disability;
- The diverse context of the Mackay region, its people and its many townships;
- The governance and corporate context of the Mackay Regional Council.

Corporate structure:

The Mackay Regional Council is made up of a Mayor and 10 councilors. The structure of the council is made up of 5 Directorates covering the following core functions:

- Community Services: Convention Precinct and Events, Recreation Services, Community Development and Libraries, Property Services and Urban Renewal and Economy.
- Corporate Services: Customer Service, Corporate Communications, Financial Services, Information Services, Human Resources, Procurement and Plant, Governance.
- Development Services: Strategic Planning, Development Assessment, Development and Subdivision Services and Health and Regulatory.
- Engineering Services: Construction, Maintenance, Parks and Environment, Technical Services and Emergency Management.
- Commercial Services: Water Services and Waste Services.

Access & Equity Policy and the Mobility & Access Advisory Committee (MAAC):

The Mackay Regional Council has in place an Access & Equity Policy. The policy sets out definitions, guiding principles and objectives for council's services and facilities. As stated within the policy it "underpins council's current commitment and guides council's future direction in ensuring an accessible Mackay and an inclusive community".

As well as the policy council has established the Mobility and Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) made up of representatives from the disability sector as well as individuals and carers experiencing disability in some way. The MAAC has been operating for over 10 years, was active in the review of the previous DDA Action Plan and has continued to provide council with input on matters affecting accessibility in the community.

Both the Access & Equity Policy and the MAAC will be reviewed as part of the development of the new DDA Action Plan (copies of the Policy and MAAC Terms of Reference are included in the appendices).

Methodology:

Introduction:

The project methodology incorporated six (6) stages:

1. Management consultation – Executive Management Team, Project team and Mobility & Access Advisory Committee;
2. DDA presentation and workshop – key council staff;
3. Review of existing plans
4. Public and internal consultation
5. Needs review, best practice responses and draft report
6. Final report presented to council for adoption

Stages 1:

In Stage 1 awareness raising presentation and discussion was arranged in 2 forums: the first with the Executive Management Team on 27 March 2008 and secondly with a combined group of the Project Team members and representatives from the then dormant Mobility & Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) on the same day.

A power point presentation was used for the purpose of:

- Providing an overview of the project
- Legislative context to disability discrimination and the value of developing a DDA Action Plan
- Detail of what a DDA Action Plan can do
- Discussing the importance of commitment for the project throughout the organisation
- Clarifying the decision making processes and expectations on reporting the progress to senior management and council.

At the time of these briefings the council had just concluded the local government elections and the new entity of the Mackay Regional Council were established. Despite the council being in transition there was an attempt to involve relevant staff from the former Mirani and Sarina councils in these briefings.

Similarly the MAAC was not active and awaiting formal ratification from the new council however members from the pre-existing MAAC were invited to be part of the briefing in anticipation of the formality being resolved.

Stage 2:

The DDA presentation and workshop for key council staff on 14 April 2008 focused on local government responsibilities under the DDA (1992). The presentation and subsequent discussions centred on how to meet the requirements in current practices (the relationship between DDA (1992), the BCA and Australian Standards. The workshop content covered:

- Development/Building Applications
- Pedestrian Environment
- Pedestrian crossings
- Signs
- Public Transport Infrastructure
- On-street parking
- Parks

The DDA presentation and workshop was instrumental in raising awareness of the project with as many of the key Managers and relevant staff across council involved. The workshop also aimed to provide a technical and educative focus to understanding the application of the relevant Australian Standards in a local government context.

Summary notes from the workshop discussions are included in the appendices.

Stage 3:

The existing DDA Action Plans for both the previous Mackay City Council and Sarina Shire Council were reviewed in terms of their implementation. Input from key staff assisted in the review however there were some limitations on who had knowledge on progress of the Sarina Shire Council Action Plan.

A review of other DDA Action Plans that had been lodged with HREOC (Human Rights & Equal Opportunities Commission) was also completed to provide some comparisons for this project.

During this stage a review of the current policies relating to disability matters and the MAAC Committee were undertaken.

Stage 4:

This stage in the project was predominantly about engaging with both internal and external stakeholders on the current provision of services and facilities that may benefit people with disabilities, the identified issues and what may be some current access issues.

The engagement activities focused on:

- A survey made available to the general public and circulated to community groups
- Community workshops were held in Mackay, Sarina and Mirani on 16 and 17 October 2008
- Focus groups with key agency representatives on 10 March 2009
- Internal stakeholder interviews held between 12 March and 20 April 2009

The survey and workshops focused on a common set of questions that were developed by the Community Development staff at council as set out below:

1. Name access issues, concerns & outcomes you would like to see
2. How well is the council servicing the needs of people with a disability in the region?
3. What is the council doing well?
4. List some of the things you would like to see as priorities for future council budgets

5. Name one thing you would like to see addressed immediately
6. How do you usually contact council?
7. If you have a disability and the usual ways pose difficulties for you, could you please explain why and suggest how it could be improved
8. Who do you contact in council if you have a council-related problem? Did you get the result you were expecting? If not, why not?
9. How do you find out about what council is doing?
10. What else could council be doing?

Interviews with most of the Managers and key staff were completed using a structured interview schedule. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the nature of the services and programs delivered for each of the functional areas and assess how they impacted people with disabilities. Questions were also asked on relevant standards and policies that underpin their practice and whether the staff saw that there were some services or facilities that could be improved or made more appropriate for people with disabilities.

Finally the discussions also focused on implementation of the DDA Action Plan and what factors might assist in the successful integration of the actions into core functional activities.

Responses to these processes were collated and used in the next stage as the basis of workshop discussion on responding to the identified needs. A summary of the collated responses is included in the appendices.

Stage 5 & 6:

In these final stages a number of workshops were held to present the outcomes from the data gathered so far in the project and then to develop key strategies for inclusion in the final Action Plan.

The workshops were undertaken in separate sessions for internal and external stakeholders and in two rounds, the first to develop suggested directions and the second to provide feedback on key themes and suggested actions. A review of best practice approaches was used to guide the development of suggested actions in response to the identified issues and needs.

The draft Action Plan is to be presented to Mackay Regional Council for consideration and approval to circulate for community feedback. Once the feedback has been collated and considered for the Final Action Plan it will be presented to council for final endorsement.

Constraints of the methodology:

The project was initiated in March 2008 and has endured a protracted period of implementation due to the interrupted engagement of consultant firms. These interruptions may have affected the momentum of the project during this period.

Outcomes of the methodology:

The following section provides a detailed account of the outcomes from the plan and policy review and consultation activities. The raw data are included in the appendices for further reference. The next section provides the analysis from these outcomes and sets out the key themes and rationale for the detail of the proposed Action Plan in the final section.

Review of existing DDA Action Plans:

The existing DDA Action Plans were reviewed as best as possible with the information available from the staff interviewed during the time of the project. The outcomes of the review have been documented within the frame of the previous plans and included in the appendices of this report.

A reasonable proportion of the Disability Action Plans was completed with a strong emphasis on some of the infrastructure projects given the dedicated budget allocation to implement the schedule items. Where possible and where relevant incomplete actions have been considered for the new Disability Action Plan.

Review of Mackay Regional Council's Access & Equity Policy:

The Access & Equity Policy (Policy No CD08) was adopted by the Mackay City Council on 21 May 2003⁵ and currently sits with the Community Development section of council. The Policy sets out a mission, definitions, principles, objectives and references to a number of documents including the Mackay City Council's Corporate Plan from 2001. The scope of the policy is for all of the residents and visitors to the Mackay region.

The overall intent of the policy is appropriate and consistent with current best practice approaches. However the content of the policy could be reviewed to include some contemporary definitions and concepts as some of the references are now outdated. For instance the reference to the new entity of Mackay Regional Council and the recently developed Corporate Plan could be included.

Disability Services Queensland's Strategic Framework provides the basis for planning, policy, and service development across all Queensland Government departments to meet the needs of people with a disability and their families. Their vision for the Queensland Government is:

"A society that values people with a disability upholds their rights and supports their equitable participation in everyday life."⁶

This simple vision encapsulates an intent that is reflected in many government entities and is consistent with the expectations of HREOC (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission).

Some definitions that could be useful for inclusion are:

The ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers defined disability as any person with a limitation, restriction or impairment which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.⁷

⁵ Mackay City Council Reference Folio 29659, May 2003.

⁶ <http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/about/strategic-directions.html>

⁷ Source: ABS (1999)

And,

It is difficult to easily define what is meant by a 'disability', but in general terms it can be considered as a condition that in some way hampers or hinders a person in terms of their ability to carry out day to day activities. The extent to which a condition hinders a person will vary from individual to individual and the general range of disabilities varies from conditions that are mild (for example, the need to wear reading glasses) to severe (for example, some forms of brain injury).⁸

The Preamble section of the policy includes a number of statements that are not referenced thoroughly and without their position in time it is difficult to determine their current relevance. What may be more useful is to succinctly outline the process that was used to develop the policy and that any references are included at the end of the policy.

The Principles section is still relevant and well written although Principle 7 could be re-worded to “All organisations and business in the Mackay region should be encouraged to maximize the accessibility of their facilities, programs and services”. The references to the new entity of Mackay Regional Council needs to be updated.

The Objectives section contains statements that are all appropriate however they could be refined to reflect the key outcomes to be achieved through the proposed Action Plan in this report.

The Conclusion section needs to be updated to reflect the current Corporate Plan however by doing so immediately dates the policy so perhaps it is best to rely on the overall Mission or Vision statement so that it is more sustainable.

Council’s Human Resources section introduced a new policy entitled “Equal Employment Opportunity Principle” on 10 March 2009. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all decisions affecting staff are made on the basis of merit and equity and the scope of the policy applies to all employees of council.

The policy is reasonably thorough but could include the following points in the Implementation section:

- Recruitment and selection processes allow for the diverse needs of applicants and are free from discrimination;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made if a staff member has a temporary or permanent disability.

Both policies reviewed do not specify any accountability and review requirements. It may be useful to include a description of the position/s within council that are responsible for the implementation and review of the policy and to specify the time period for when the policy will be reviewed.

Mobility & Access Advisory Committee (MAAC):

The MAAC has been established for over 10 years and has played a significant role in raising matters of poor accessibility within the community. The MAAC provided a major contribution to the previous DDA Action Plan and have partnered with the Project Implementation Team to

⁸ Parliament of Australia, Parliamentary Library – Disability Support & Services, 16 October 2002.

monitor some of the actions from the Plan as well as provide input to significant projects such as Bluewater Lagoons and the recently completed Convention Centre.

There has been a lull in the operations of the MAAC brought on by the local government reforms however since the new council has been elected the MAAC was re-instated and the Terms of reference were renewed. The members of MACC were invited to participate in the consultation activities as well as the workshops designed to develop the key aims and objectives of this Action Plan.

The current list of members reflects a combination of individuals who experience some aspects of disability (18 people), representatives from disability services (9 agencies), staff members (Community Development Officer and Director Community Services) and Councillor George Christiansen who is chairman of the MAAC.

The MAAC meets every 8 weeks with reports on the activities of the MAAC being reported to council every 2 months.

Based on feedback from the consultation activities the MAAC has a good profile in the sector and has provided valuable input to council's significant construction projects. They have also provided useful advice on how the yearly allocation for accessibility upgrades should be spent. However one of the concerns regarding the operations of the MAAC is that the agenda is predominantly about the incidental accessibility issues raised by the members. There is a preference that these incidental matters be referred to the council's Customer Service request system and that the MAAC continue to focus on more strategic matters or key projects emanating from the Action Plan.

The Terms of Reference outline the role, membership, responsibilities and operations of the MAAC including the connection between the MAAC and the operations of council. In order to achieve a more strategic approach of the MAAC a number of options could be considered:

1. Reduce the frequency of the meetings of the MAAC. If the primary function is to be advisory on major projects or strategy within council then perhaps quarterly or half yearly forums may be more effective;
2. Alter the membership of the MAAC to reflect a higher proportion of representatives from the disability sector to those that are community members. Consider the inclusion of other representatives from council such as Engineering Services, Recreation Services and Library Services to the MAAC;
3. Alter the recruitment and selection of community members to include specific criteria related to the functions of the MAAC and not just their form of disability;
4. Consider renaming the committee to the Access & Equity Committee to reflect a broader scope than physical access and to strengthen the alignment with the current Access & Equity Policy.

Resetting the Benchmark - Survey & Workshop Results:

In October 2008 the Community Development section of council undertook a survey to determine the community's views on the current issues regarding access, current needs and issues in the disability sector, how the public view council's performance in responding to disability matters and what priority actions that the public thought the council should consider for its upcoming budgets.

The surveys were distributed to the disability service providers and promoted in the public. There were 31 returns of the survey.

The Community Development Section also conducted three (3) workshops in Mackay, Sarina and Mirani during October 2008. A total of 23 people attended the workshops (Mirani 9, Mackay 11 and Sarina 3). The program for the workshops included an overview of the project and then the discussion around the same questions as posed in the survey. All responses have been collated with the returns from the survey to provide a Summary which is included in the appendices. Outlined below are the results from each of the questions posed in the survey and workshops.

1. Name access issues, concerns and outcomes you would like to see:

Respondents were asked to give advice on access concerns relating to goods, services, premises and facilities that are provided by Mackay Regional Council. Respondents were asked to describe their concern and to indicate the outcomes that they would like to see.

Responses were grouped in key themes such as transport, parking & access, public amenities, street signage and footpaths. Miscellaneous comments that do not relate to scope of this project have been kept in the Summary but are not referenced here.

Some of the key points raised in relation to transport, parking and access included:

- Bluewater lagoons would benefit from an all terrain wheelchair;
- Mirani Community Hall has poor quality parking areas (gravel) but importantly there is a need for a concreted disability parking bay;
- Bus stops need to be compliant with DDA;
- Parking in the vicinity of the Entertainment Centre and Library has been problematic and concerns have been expressed that this will get worse with the opening of the Convention Centre;
- Parking in the CBD area is compromised by misuse of disability parking areas and poor enforcement;
- Safe crossing of the main road systems is problematic in some areas, such as:
 - Mackay CBD areas where there is insufficient time to cross the 4 lanes of traffic in the time allowed at the lights;
 - Sarina business area has limited points for crossing the national highway and the crossovers in these areas are poor (Main Roads are re-designing this location);
 - Mirani businesses are on both sides of the Mirani/Eungella Road however the crossovers are incomplete to the road surface causing problems during the wetter conditions;
- Privately owned developments (some are recent) have some aspects of poor accessibility, such as:
 - City Cinemas lacks railings on front steps and the lift is difficult to locate
 - Woolworths at Sarina lacks contrast colouring on the top of the concrete edge leading to the drop of the car park bays (the contrast is on the facing side but not the top);

- IGA at Sarina is noted for good accessibility from the disability car park bays into the main shopping areas however the concrete edges lack colour contrasting to delineate the drop of the pathways to the car park bays away from the ramped area.

Photographs highlighting some of the issues identified above are included in the next section.

Some comments and suggestions for public amenities and signage included the following:

- Improving the availability of seating in high usage public areas such as the CBD and Bluewater Lagoon;
- Making more water bubblers available in CBD area;
- Improving the accessibility to public toilets including at least a ramp and where possible pathways from the car park areas;
- There is confusion around who is to use the disability toilets in public spaces with a suggestion made to improve the signage for disability toilets;
- Similarly signage for the location of the ramp and lift for the Old Town Hall.

Footpaths were another topic raised and discussed by respondents during the consultations including comments about their condition, location and widths. Below are some of the key points raised:

- The footpaths in some areas are blocked due to them being littered, overgrown with bushes and overhanging branches;
- The footpaths in some areas are considered dangerous due to broken concrete, steep cambers and being littered with broken glass and bottles;
- Suggestions for additional footpaths in business areas such as the George Street shops;
- Suggestion to ensure that pedestrians are separated from vehicles on the Forgan Smith Bridge by having a concrete barrier and not just a painted line (Copenhagen style).

2. How well is council serving the needs of people with a disability in the region?

Comments from respondents reflected an appreciation for the efforts of the Mackay Regional Council. For instance the new council is being described as being proactive and achievements such as the disability toilets in Edward Lloyd Park are appreciated within the sector.

Council has also been seen to be responsive to requests in the Mirani area.

3. What is council doing well?

The comments from respondents reflects that the public are noticing the improvements that have been put in place by council and particularly the upgrade of facilities in response to requests made over a long period of time.

Specific mention has been made of:

- Improved access with street ramps, flat kerbs and improved access in parks;
- Bus and taxi ramps;
- Road improvements – gutter to gutter;
- Good communication processes have been established including the newsletter;
- Excellent library service, Entertainment Centre, Bluewater lagoons and the street beautification projects
- Consultations are appreciated and a view that council is listening;

However there were also comments that efforts in areas such as Sarina have not been as forthcoming and that council needs ensure some equity of service over the new council area.

4. List some of the things you would like to see as priorities for future council budgets.

- More sealed footpaths, particularly in the new housing areas for young mothers with prams and strollers and wheelchairs;
- Quadriplegic crossings where traffic lights are installed;
- Additional disabled parking and toilets in targeted areas;
- Walkways from Woolworths to Leagues club in Broad Street;
- More parking at Senior Citizens venue in Mackay;
- Access into water at lagoons;
- Better bus service and transport infrastructure;
- Improved accessibility in to council buildings;
- Improved signage for amenities.

5. Name one thing you would like to see addressed immediately

- Bringing HACC transport back for recreational activities such as BBQ at Entertainment Centre;
- Keeping gutters and footpaths in safer conditions and clear of blockages;
- Parking for seniors particularly near eh civic centre (Artspace, Seniors Hall, Entertainment Centre & library);
- Move the disability parking to curb side and away from the centre parking areas;
- Safe and accessible pedestrian crossings;

6. How do you usually contact council?

Respondents were asked what their preferred method in contacting council was. A tally of their responses was:

Nil	Email
1	In writing
9	By phone
8	In person
Nil	Council's Website
9	Combination of website, telephone and in person
3	Other – no contact or through other means such as Progress Association at Armstrong Beach.

Of significance is the preference for contact over the phone or in person at the Customer Service Centre.

7. If you have a disability and the usual ways pose difficulties for you, could you please explain why and suggest how it could be improved.

Some of the suggestions made included better bus routes, large print options particularly for phone numbers and faster responses on phone calls as calls can sometimes be on hold for 12 minutes and then get cut off.

8. Who do you contact in council if you have a council-related problem? Did you get the result you were expecting? If not, why not?

Respondents were asked to tick the relevant contact with the following results:

16	The Customer Services Centres
1	The Mayor
1	The CEO
4	Staff you know
5	A councillor you know

Again the significant point about these outcomes is the preference towards using the Customer Service Centres for council-related matters. When asked if they obtained the results they were expecting respondents provided a mixed response. Other than those that advised they had got the results they were expecting, others commented on service being slow or non-responsive.

9. How do you find out about what council is doing?

Mackay Regional Council uses a number of methods to inform the community about what is happening such as events, new programs and services, road closures and information on future plans. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the options mentioned would work best for them. The results are as follows:

- 3 Personal letter/Email
- 7 Letterbox drop
- 10 Local newspaper
- 4 Radio
- 12 TV
- 3 Council's website
- 2 From a friend
- 7 Through a local community group

Other methods that were suggested by respondents included by phone (1), the In Focus newsletter (3), and word of mouth (2), public notice boards (1) and information stalls such as at shopping centres (1).

10. What else could council be doing?

Respondents provided a number of comments for this general question with many of them out of the scope of this project. Those that related to improvements to access and equity included:

1. Transport matters – increased bus stops, additional wheelchair taxis and improved bus scheduling to allow more flexibility of routes and times;
2. Footpaths – suggestions for improved maintenance of footpaths, striving towards achieving a standard 1.5m wide footpath where they exist in the City;
3. Access to Lagoons – suggestions for having all terrain wheelchairs at the Bluewater Lagoons to enable access to the water for those who use a wheelchair or are frail.

Focus Group Discussions with Targeted Community Agencies:

It was decided to hold a focus group with key community agencies who had not yet been able to contribute to the consultations for the DDA review and Action Planning project and who were identified as significant to provide input for the project. Participants involved in the focus group discussions held on 10 March 2009 included representatives from:

- Commonwealth Respite Carelink;
- Mackay & District Respite care;
- HACC;
- Pioneer Employment;
- Disability Services Queensland (DSQ);

A full outline of the responses provided by this group is included in the appendices however some of the key points include:

- Education and/or orientation for Customer Service Centre staff to better respond to customers with a disability particularly those that may have a mental illness;

- Improved coordination of information about community and government services would make a significant difference in accessing services in the region. Currently this information is captured on council's website but it is outdated and there are difficulties in finding the form to update the information. The sector views the council's website as hard to navigate and has no confidence in accessing or using the information because it is not reliable;
- Some of the recreational facilities could be made more accessible – for instance the Liberty Swing in Ram Chandler Park is currently locked to prevent vandalism but the process to obtain a key to access it is cumbersome. A simpler system for access would be beneficial for families and groups who wish to use it. A suggestion was also made to integrate the Liberty Swing into a park that has a higher usage by families – such as Lagoon Street Park.
- Improved/increased access to facilities for customers in a number of areas. Improving the process to access parks and garden areas for community groups and their events would be beneficial. Currently there is a complex set of processes to go through in order to obtain permits and licenses.
- Promotion of council's facilities and services could be improved. There are many opportunities with the network groups who create their own newsletters that go directly to the disability sector. Council could choose to use these options to promote new developments or existing opportunities for their services and facilities.

Interviews with Mackay Regional Council Staff:

The internal consultations began with a structured interview focusing on the descriptions of functional areas across council and their practices, policies and impacts for people with a disability. There were a total of 17 interviews with Managers and other key staff conducted with follow up discussions with 3 Directors. A copy of the interview schedule used for these interviews is included in the appendices.

Outlined below are the summary responses provided by interviewees with the exception of the first question relating to a description of their service areas. These responses can be accessed by reviewing the original recordings.

1. Does the department have a written policy relating to access and equity issues?

Mackay Regional Council has the generic Access & Equity Policy however none of the departments interviewed had a separate policy with the exception of the Human Resources section who had just introduced the Equal Employment Principle.

2. Are there relevant standards?

A number of sections referenced a number of standards including the Australian Standards. These related to:

- MUTCD and DMR's Road Planning Manual;
- Development and maintenance of websites;

- Access to buildings;
- State Library standards.

Some of the Managers referred to the technical workshop that had been implemented as part of the earlier stages of the project advising that it had influenced some of their decisions and adjustments in practice.

3. Are records kept about the numbers of people with disabilities who use their service?

Most sections of council advised that they did not collate specific data on users of their service who may have had a disability except in the instances of the library area. With the borrowing of assisted technology and audio navigators it is possible to retrieve data on the level of usage for these tools. In the area of the Entertainment Centre and Convention Centre it is possible to track usage of wheelchair seats and currently arrangements with groups such as the Pioneer Employment Services to collate data on numbers of people with a disability who have been referred through those groups.

4. Do you provide specific services and products for people with a disability?

There were a number of sections in council that identified they provided specific services and products for people with a disability:

- Park & Recreation have a Liberty Swing for children using a wheelchair however it is locked unless you arrange to borrow the key;
- Convention Precincts Events have provision for wheelchair seats and an audio loop for the new Convention Centre. Council is also a participant with the Access Card program;
- Customer Services Centre has a lower and accessible counter however it is not actively used and is often used for storage;
- Community Development section coordinates the MAAC and has arranged for the Accessibility Map for visitors and tourists to the City;
- Corporate Communications will on request provide some publications in alternative formats– this advice is on the front page of the In Focus newsletter that goes out to residents;
- Property Services advised they are able to retro-fit social housing accommodation to ensure that is considered adaptable housing;
- Technical Services have an annual budget allocation to improve accessibility by retrofitting footpaths and ramps to identified areas;
- Information Services section advised that they provide alternative access capacities through the website. They also have ergonomic mice and keyboards for staff and where necessary operating systems can be modified to suit individual needs;
- Library Services provide the greatest range of services and programs such as large print books, talking books, adaptive technologies, dedicated touch screen computer, magnifiers, vision impairment software, audio navigators, and electronic lift for Mobile Library, rollators and adjustable desks.

5. Is there a mechanism for people with disabilities to alert you to ways the service might improve?

For most sections their advice in response to this question was that council's Customer Service Request System, accessible through the website or the Customer Services Team was the most common mechanism used. In the Library Services area customers are also able to provide suggestions for improvement through the general customer surveys that occur periodically and the MACC was identified as another mechanism for alerting improvements to council services and facilities.

6. Does the eligibility criteria or processes to access these services prevent or hinder people with disabilities?

Across all sections interviewed the response to this question was generally 'no'. However in some areas it was recognised that way-finding was problematic, for instance in the main Branch Library. There was also acknowledgement that the recent building works at the Convention Centre had caused some problems due to reduced car parking and drop off areas.

7. Is information about the service available in alternative formats, eg Braille on disk, on a website, in plain language?

Mackay Regional Council provides information in alternative formats on a request basis. The council's website and regular newsletter "In Focus" provides members of the public with the option for members of the public to request information in other languages or other formats:

"Council is committed to providing communications suitable to the needs of all residents. If you wish to receive information in an alternative format or if you require an interpreter for any council related business contact..."

As a result of the technical workshop completed in early 2008 council's website was enhanced to ensure that it now complies with Australian Standards offering re-sizable text etc.

Hard copy information is generally available in English only with the intent that on a case by case basis the information could be produced in other languages.

8. Has staff working in this area had training in understanding disability issues, communicating with people with disabilities and their obligations under the anti-discrimination laws?

Most sections made reference to the council run Induction Training which has a small component focusing on working with people with disabilities and anti-discrimination practices. Previously the Community Development section had provided more specific awareness training on communicating with people who have a disability that included a video presentation.

In the Property and Maintenance area there has been some other in-house training provided for specific needs and in the Infrastructure area staff have attended specific courses provided by

Department of Main Roads such as Bicycle Lane training.

In the Festival & Events area a partnership has developed with Pioneer Employment Services where awareness training by the employment service staff has been exchanged for staff assisting with joint functions.

Other than the centralised induction training all other training is arranged and sourced through the service departments.

9. Do you think that staff would benefit from training/ more training in disability issues, customer service and obligations under the anti-discrimination laws?

Most sections advised that they believed staff would benefit from additional training in a number of ways:

- Regular training on communication strategies for liaising with members of the public who have a disability. This is necessary for the purpose of being more aware of the nature of disabilities as well as providing a more effective service. Sections that have a high level of contact with the public such as the Library, Customer Service, Regulatory Services etc would benefit greatly;
- Training in relation to mobility and access issues and the optimal built form;
- Awareness of standards for web editors;
- Regular refresher training on awareness of matters impacting on people who have a disability;
- Technical training in relation to the interpretation of Australian Standards and specific design guidelines.

Most sections who commented here related the additional training back to the specifics of their service area and the need for effective customer service.

10. Do you perceive there to be any other barriers to people with a disability accessing your service or product?

The interviews with service Managers highlighted a number of factors that could be seen as barriers for people with disabilities accessing services of council. They included the following suggestions:

- Marketing of council's services may not be done in a way that captures a diverse community – it is focused predominantly on mainstream;
- Web accessibility could be improved further;
- Access to information about other services and facilities in the region is problematic;
- Some buildings in the outlying areas do not have lifts;
- Social housing provided by council may not be properly equipped – an audit is being prepared;
- Entertainment areas do not have content within their program that reflects a diverse community, eg signed performances.

11. How could your service or product be adapted to accommodate the needs for people with a disability and what would be the implications of these changes?

This final question was to identify areas for improvement within each of the service areas for people with a disability and to consider what might be the implications of the proposed changes. A number of suggestions were made that have been further discussed at the internal stakeholder's workshops and incorporated into the Disability Action Plan.

- Moving away from a largely reactive approach to a more proactive approach in matters affecting the disability sector;
- Improving web accessibility;
- Further clarification of the technical standards to ensure that council is doing the right thing with its design and construction of infrastructure;
- Introducing a more prioritised approach to retrospective works rather than the current ad hoc approach;
- The existing Bike Pathway Plan for the City needs to be extended to the other townships;
- The availability of Access Consultants to provide technical advice and services on council projects is extremely limited – there are a small number of them with high demands for their services;
- Improving community engagement practices to ensure that council is targeting people with a disability and the frail aged in their strategies;
- Complete an audit of infrastructure upgrades needed for Council facilities;
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys could be enhanced to include questions relevant to the disability sector;
- Better use of the lower counter within the Customer Service Centre as currently it is used for storage purposes;
- Better promotion of council's approach in providing services and facilities for people with a disability;
- Perhaps quarterly newsletters to the disability sector.

Workshops for Action Plan Development – Internal and External

Once the information gathered from the different consultative activities was collated and analysed, a series of workshops were scheduled to begin the development phase of the Disability Action Plan. Internal and external stakeholders who had been participating in the project were invited (to attend separate workshops in 2 stages:)

Stage 1: Developing the Plan

- A presentation of a summary of what had been learnt from the consultations and research;

- A presentation of the key areas of focus emanating from the analysis:
 - Customer Service & Access to Information
 - Infrastructure & facilities
 - Future development
 - Policy and Programs
 - Staff recruitment & training
 - Advocacy & representation
 - Implementation and review
- Workshop discussions on the following questions were then recorded:
 - What specific actions need to be considered (for each of the themes)?
 - Who are the critical stakeholders relating to those actions?
 - What resources might be needed to implement them?
 - What level of importance (scale of 1-5) and priority (scale of 1-5) would you apply to each of the actions – 1 being least and 5 being most important or greatest priority?

Stage 2: Proposed draft DDA Action Plan

- Presentation of the key goals and objectives of the proposed Action Plan
- Feedback sought through Comment response forms and discussion.

The workshops were very well attended by both the internal and external stakeholders and the outcomes have been used to develop the final DDA Action Plan.

Photographic Profile:

Photographs were taken of some of the areas identified by survey and forum participants. The photographs were used as discussion points by both the internal and external stakeholders during the plan development phase.

Sarina private shopping centre – face of kerb in parking areas colour marked but not the top of kerb.



Sarina – private shopping centre – pedestrian links to the centre are limited – better links are located on opposite side of major road.



Sarina – crossing of double lane highway difficult between 2 major commercial sectors.



Sarina – private commercial centre – no colour differentiation to define raised walkway.



Mirani – Medium strip Reserve showing crossovers from commercial shops on side of the highway to the library and council administration on other side of highway. Ramps go into dirt roadside that is affected significantly in the wet.



Findings – Needs Review:

The development of a Disability Action Plan in a local government context should reflect the views of people with a disability, their carers and families, the government and community based agencies that provide responses, but are couched in the parameters and accountable areas of local government. This section summarises the key results from the research undertaken throughout the process as well as the workshop discussions on needs and possible actions held with council and community stakeholders. It provides the rationale for the recommended actions posed in the Action Plan.

The specific areas of focus which we believe should be the key goals for the Disability Action Plan include:

1. Customer Service, Access to Information and Communication
2. Infrastructure Facilities & Future Development
3. Policy, Program & Events
4. Employment and Staff Development
5. Community Strengthening and Advocacy
6. Implementation, Review and Evaluation

1. Customer Service, Access to Information and Communication

There are a number of factors emanating from the research that have prompted this as an area for action:

- a. The Customer Service area within council is a significant point of contact for residents who are seeking services and information from council. The physical space of the customer service centre includes a lower counter however it is currently used for storage of materials rather than its intended use. Consequently those customers using a wheelchair or frail aged do not have the benefit of this facility. A review of the operational practices may be needed in order to make more practical use of the lower counter for the benefit of the community.
- b. Feedback from the community sector has highlighted the frustrations of not being able to access reliable and up to date information about other community and government services in the region. Community services agency staff have highlighted the benefits of being able to provide effective information and referral services, networking with other similar groups and to keep current on the new and changing profile of services in the region.

The current information on council's website is dependent on the good will of those agencies that opt to provide their information and to keep it up to date and so the

- community services directory is only as good as the participation involved. Recent developments to promote this service by council are encouraging however expectations from the community sector are that this service be comprehensive and reliable.
- c. Community feedback has highlighted that some publications are difficult to read due to the colour contrasting and small font size used. For publications that provide information for emergency purposes such as “Storm Tide Events” and “Preparing for Cyclones” this issue can be more crucial. Discussions at the MAAC forum highlighted some of the difficulties that people with vision impairments are experiencing in reading the small font material and in particular important telephone numbers.
 - d. Suggestions from both the community and council stakeholders were that more could be done to effectively promote council’s facilities, services and programs and to ensure that people with a disability had ready access to that information. Suggestions ranged from a dedicated newsletter or section of the website for disability matters to council contributing to community networks and their newsletters within the disability sector. There is a good opportunity for council to partner with the community sector in the disbursement of council information and updates where it relates to the disability sector.

2. Infrastructure, Facilities & Future Development

Physical access to council’s facilities is a significant area of focus for the DDA Action Plan. A lot has been achieved since the previous DDA Action Plan was first implemented and there is an increased awareness on ensuring that effective accessibility is achieved in council’s new projects. However some of the constraints and issues relate to keeping abreast of the intent of new Australian Standards, being able to access technical expertise and encouraging the private sector to incorporate smart design that is accessible.

- a. While council has a budget allocation each year to address retrospective works and improve accessibility (generally footpaths and ramps) it is an ad hoc approach to determine what ‘job’ has precedence over another. The relevant staff has expressed a preference for a more strategic approach to the decision making.
- b. The council has not undertaken an accessibility audit of the City’s or regional facilities in the last ten years (possibly longer) and so the only gauge on the accessibility of the region is based on anecdotal information provided by concerned residents and groups and usually through the MAAC. There would be some benefit in undertaking an accessibility audit of targeted areas within council’s ownership and management.
- c. Technical expertise from Access Consultants is important to ensure that council’s projects are conforming to the Australian Standards in both the design and

construction phases. However the availability of Access Consultants is compromised by there being only one in the local region and so few of them within Queensland. The high cost and poor timeliness of availability to Access Consultants is a significant constraint for council's Engineering Services. Strategies to up-skill existing design, construction and maintenance staff on the interpretation of Australian Standards would be an advantage in the short term.

- d. When the community sector raises issues about poor accessibility in the community they are not differentiating between public and private spaces – they are just noticing poor accessibility. Further the council can't enforce situations in the private sector that may satisfy the Standards but are still a challenge in being accessible or simply poor design. This creates a great challenge for council that may require greater awareness campaigns for the developer and construction industry.
- e. Throughout the consultations transport matters have been raised consistently in relation to both services and infrastructure. The upgrades to bus stops and shelters is on track with targets however next phases will be challenging given limited funding. Residents are also seeking a review of bus services in relation to routes and schedules. Additional maxi-taxis have also been suggested.
- f. Recreational facilities specifically for people with disabilities such as the Liberty Swing and the All Terrain Wheelchairs were raised in the consultations. There is a suggestion to improve access to the Liberty Swing through relocation and shared key arrangements. An All Terrain Wheelchair at the Bluewater Lagoons has also been suggested to enhance the recreational experiences for people with a disability.
- g. Council has to contend with the legacy of poor development resulting in increased costs with retrospective works, e.g. poorly located ramps and footpaths. This has prompted the preference to raise awareness and encourage the developer industry to consider smarter development through Planning Scheme policy and showcasing of best practice examples.

3. Policy, Program and Events

Mackay Regional Council has a long standing Access & Equity Policy that is well known across the organisation as well as a rich program of opportunities for people with disabilities to learn and attend council events. However there were a few areas where the policy, programs and events could be better aligned, promoted and planned.

- a. The Access & Equity Policy is strong in its intent but could be refined as some of the references within the document are now outdated. It has also been illustrated through the course of this project that the impact of the policy sits with most sections of council and not just the Community and Customer Services section. There may be an argument to position the policy more centrally within council such as the newly established Governance section, due to the strategic nature of the policy.

- b. Part of the new Governance section's role will be to create a consistent approach to the structure and format of council's policies. Where possible an audit of existing policies could be useful to review alignment of the relevant policies and to identify areas where programs and services aimed at improving access could be developed. Some examples of this could be in the area of the Planning Scheme as mentioned above as well as the prioritisation schedule for the provision of bike/pathway systems.
- c. The consultations highlighted an opportunity for people with disabilities to be more involved in the planning for festivals and events. Currently there is a lot developing in practice where for example, mobility and drop off zones at events, access and dedicated viewing areas are improving for people with disabilities. These and similar issues can be captured in an Events Strategy being developed within the next few years.
- d. The council's library services and programs are readily used by people with a disability. This includes partnerships with community organisations that may run their programs for people with disabilities by using the space and resources at the library. Internal consultations have identified the opportunity to broaden the programs of the Artspace and Entertainment Centre to include diversity concepts and increase the participation of people with disabilities in the programming.

4. Employment and Staff Development

The recruitment, selection, induction and further development of staff is a joint responsibility between Human Resource Services and line management. A recently introduced policy entitled "Equal Employment Opportunity Principle" is a significant step to ensuring that all staff are managed in an equitable way from the point of recruitment through to appointment. However the consultations identified some areas within the learning and development functions that could be considered for the future.

- a. The generic induction program for council includes a component of disability awareness and information relating to anti-discriminatory practice. However this content is very limited as compared to a few years ago when Community Development services provided more detailed input and showed a video. The earlier program provided information about the different types of disability, their impacts and the things to be aware of when communicating with people who have a disability. There is a suggestion that the induction program may not be providing sufficient orientation on disability matters particularly for those staff that have a lot of contact with the public, e.g. local laws officers, library staff, customer service staff etc.
- b. Consultations with the Managers and relevant staff from different sections in council highlighted that different functions require different knowledge sets and skill in liaising with people with disabilities or managing access related projects. Staff within the design team require detailed knowledge of the relevant Australian Standards and

Building Code of Australia for access matters, staff within the library services area need information about the different aides and equipment suitable for people with disabilities accessing a learning environment and staff within the customer service area need to have a greater awareness of the communication strategies for people with disabilities.

In other words there are some job specific training requirements that could be addressed through a strategic learning program developed for those identified positions and functional areas.

- c. Community based organisations in the disability sector have specific skills, knowledge and expertise in working with people with disabilities that have been the core to some in-formal partnership arrangements with council. An example has been in the events area where a service has provided some specific awareness training for staff in exchange for assistance in the set up for mutual events. These services have offered to assist in the induction and specific learning requirements for relevant council staff under a protocol agreement where there may be avenues for further mutual benefit.

5. Community Strengthening & Advocacy

Mackay Regional Council has a good reputation for creating opportunities for advocacy from the disability sector through the long standing Mobility & Access Advisory Committee (MAAC). The MAAC group is chaired by a Councillor and provides specific input on council projects and policy as well as raising incidental matters of poor access in the community. They have a strong profile in the community and with council officers however there are some aspects of their membership and operations that could be enhanced.

- a. Membership of the MAAC is predominantly individuals and carers of those people with a disability and a number of agency representatives. For a number of reasons agency personnel are not as frequent attendees and so sector input from a service perspective is not strong as what it could be for community development outcomes. Stronger membership from the community and government sector in the MAAC group would be advantageous to create more capacity building approaches by council.
- b. The operations of the MAAC group are largely driven by who may be attending on the day of the meeting and what business items that they bring to the agenda. It has been expressed that the direction of the MAAC is more ad hoc than it is strategic and there would be some benefit in identifying some key projects (possibly from the Disability Action Plan) to set the direction for the MAAC group. Agenda setting, strong leadership and facilitation and action oriented minutes will be vital in creating these changes for the operations of the MAAC.

- c. The community strengthening and advocacy role of council in disability matters relies on a strong partnership between key council staff and the sector. This is evident with the Community Development and Library sections of council however given the breadth of the scope of the Disability Action Plan there would be value in enhancing the awareness and partnership between other council roles and the disability sector. A suggestion from the internal consultations was for council to facilitate a Disability Symposium to foster greater connections between council and the disability sector.
- d. Council's Community Grants program provides opportunities for building capacity within the disability sector either through capital projects or specific programs. The current guidelines encourage projects to benefit a number of sectors within the community however the criteria offers no special weighting for special needs areas such as the disability sector. While it was not widely discussed the consultations did suggest that grants programs could be better utilised to enhance the capacity of the disability sector.

6. Implementation, Review & Evaluation

The success of the Disability Action Plan will be dependent on the council's commitment of adequate resources and the vigor of key staff to drive the delivery of the actions. Factors such as the line of accountability for implementation of the Plan, mechanisms for monitoring and review of the actions as well as formal evaluation strategies are all important to success.

- a. With the previous Disability Action Plan, council established a Project Action Team to oversee the implementation of the actions and the reporting responsibility was within the Community and Customer Services Section. The Project Action Team was made up of key Managers and staff from across council reflecting the diversity of the actions however the Team did not have anyone from a Director level.

While internal consultations credited the Project Action Team with good achievements it also highlighted the gaps of not having a position with greater strategic and decision making power to address resource issues or complex problems. Staff who were previously involved in the Project Action Team have suggested that the future Plan be implemented by a cross-council team but be made up with a mix of operational Managers and senior management.

A consideration for the Disability Action Plan and similarly for other strategic plans that have a broad reach across council, is to have them being monitored by a 'Strategic Implementation Team'. The Mackay Regional Council has introduced a Governance Section within council that may take on a number of functions to ensure corporate consistency. A suggestion would be that the 'Strategic Implementation Team' be coordinated through the Governance Section where monitoring of key projects and strategy with broad scope are best aligned.

- b. Since the last Disability Action Plan, council has allocated a set amount in the Technical Services budget for improving accessibility such as fixing kerb ramps and footpaths as identified by the MAAC or other sources. Aside from this allocation there has not been any dedicated funding for Disability Action Plan actions and this has been raised as an issue through the internal consultations. In order for the Disability Action Plan to have status and appropriate resources all sections within council may need to identify the actions for their area of function and ensure that there is the alignment within the other strategy plans for council, such as Corporate and Operational Plans, Capital Works Program, 10 year Financial Plan and the annual budget.
- c. Monitoring and review of the progress of the DDA Action Plan can include external stakeholders at key milestones such as an annual or bi-annual review. Subject to the direction being taken by the MAAC, a minimum approach may be to involve the MAAC in the regular review process so that they may assist with the feedback from the disability sector.

Other opportunities may exist when council is canvassing input from the public through customer satisfaction surveys or similar strategies. Inquiring about whether the respondent has a disability (type and level of impairment may be included) when the public's view is being sought about council's facilities, programs and services would be easily achieved without introducing another layer of surveying. This practice could be standardised for other identified sectors such as indigenous and cultural groups.

- d. Finally, at the time of preparing the draft DDA Action Plan it was noted that the Mackay Regional Council was undergoing significant change with the implementation of the amalgamating council areas, restructuring processes and budget constraints. With these pressures it was resolved to approach the timing of implementation of each of the actions in respect of Year 1, Year 2 and then the rest in Year 3-5. The view was that the Plan would be reviewed after Year 2 and remaining actions would be assigned a more defined timeframe.

Action Plan:

Mackay DDA Action Plan

Proposed timeframes: At this stage it is proposed to indicate a timeframe of within Year 1 or Year 2 and the others would be within 3-5 years with the view that the Action Plan would be reviewed and remaining actions would be assigned more specific time frames.

Theme Area 1: Customer Service, Access to Information & Communication					
	Action	Findings Reference	Proposed timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Secondary partners
1.1	Review Corporate Style Guide and existing publications to ensure that guidelines and their application are consistent with relevant standards.	1c	Year 1	Corporate Communications	Community Development
1.2	Review and develop improvements to the access to counter tops within all public access areas of council e.g. Customer Service, pools & entertainment venues.	1a	Year 3-5	Community Services & Customer Services	
1.3	Actively promote Council's Community Services Directory to the community sector to achieve maximum participation and usage by community groups.	1b	Year 1	Corporate Communications	Community Development
1.4	Develop strategies to improve the promotion of council's facilities, services and programs and highlight features that benefit people with a disability.	1d	Year 2	Corporate Communications	Community Development

Theme Area 2: Infrastructure, Facilities & Future Development					
	Action	Findings reference	Proposed timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Secondary partners
2.1	Undertake access audits of targeted areas based on demographics, high usage areas and significant places of interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Council facilities & parks <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial, Recreation, Education precincts <input type="checkbox"/> Transport hubs 	2b	Year 2 council facilities Year 3-5 Other facilities	Engineering Services	Community Development
2.2	Develop a prioritised schedule of upgrades and projects for inclusion in the 10yr Capital Works Plan and future budgets.	2a	Year 2 council facilities Year 3-5 Other facilities	Engineering Services	Community Development
2.3	Initiate action to improve the use and acquisition of access consultant services including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prioritise need for access consultants by identifying key projects b. Arrange in-house training for key personnel c. Liaise with LGAQ regarding addressing issues in this area and determine preferred suppliers through Local Buy 	2c	Year 1	Engineering Services (Coordination Role)	Relevant departments
2.4	Investigate and develop strategies to encourage the private developers to adopt good practice in creating and maintaining accessible premises	2d	Year 3-5	Development Services	
2.5	Transport Advisory Committee to give consideration to the review of transport services and related infrastructure to improve accessibility for identified locales	2e	Year 2	Community Services	Engineering Services
2.6	Continue to review upgrades of Bus Stops & Bus shelters in accordance with new legislation and	2e	Year 1	Engineering Services	

	further discussion with Qld Transport on funding and priority options.				
2.7	Review location and access arrangements for Liberty Swing (e.g. Mulherin Park, Botanical Gardens - Lagoon Street).	2f	Year 1	Engineering Services	Community Development
2.8	Consider the purchase of All Terrain Wheelchairs for use at Bluewater Lagoon.	2f	Year 1	Recreation Services	Community Development
2.9	Develop specific desired standards of service for improved accessibility (Good access is good access for all) to accompany the Planning Scheme/s.	2g	Year 3-5	Development Services	
2.10	Develop and showcase examples of preferred development demonstrating effective accessibility.	2g	Year 3-5	Development Services	Community Development

Theme Area 3: Policy, Program & Events

	Action	Findings Reference	Proposed timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Secondary partners
3.1	The Access & Equity Policy be re-drafted and positioned more centrally in the Governance area of council.	3a	Year 1	Community Services	Governance
3.2	All departments to review their relevant policies to ensure that there is alignment with the Access & Equity Policy.	3b	Year 3-5	All departments	
3.3	Review & develop policies where identified gaps exist using proposed template (Governance), eg planning scheme, bike/pathway development, infrastructure upgrade policy.	3b	Year 3-5	All departments	
3.4	In the future Events Strategy include requirements for improved planning, access and viewing locations for people with a disability.	3c	Year 2	Convention, Precincts & Events	
3.5	Incorporate into the current Event Management procedures the provision of mobility drop off zones and time out spaces at community event sites. Develop checklist of requirements for events that encompasses a number of disability types.	3c	Year 1	Convention, Precincts & Events	
3.6	Review the cultural programs associated with Artspace, libraries and entertainment areas to ensure diversity in content and participation.	3d	Year 2	Convention, Precincts & Events/Libraries	

Theme Area 4: Employment & Staff Development

	Action	Findings Reference	Proposed timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Secondary partners
4.1	Review relevant content of generic induction and orientation programs for new staff in relation to disability awareness.	4a	Year 1	Human Resources	Community Development
4.2	Develop a specific learning program for identified positions within council where staff are in regular contact with the public and targeted technical roles (eg design & maintenance teams).	4b	Year 2	Human Resources	Relevant sections
4.3	Identify opportunities for partnerships with employment agencies to enhance recruitment, selection and learning opportunities for people with a disability.	4c	Year 2	Human Resources	
4.4	Develop partnerships with key service agency to assist in learning development programs for targeted personnel (guest speakers, site visits).	4c	Year 2	Human Resources	

Theme 5: Community Strengthening & Advocacy

	Action	Findings Reference	Proposed timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Secondary partners
5.1	Review and make changes to the membership of the MAAC to include targeted representation from relevant community and government agencies as well as individuals with a disability.	5a	Year 1	Community Development	
5.2	Review and make changes to the operations of the MAAC to ensure clear mechanisms that guide council's policy, programs and services that benefit people with a disability.	5b	Year 1	Community Development	
5.3	Plan and conduct a Disability Symposium to share information and explore pathways for effective	5c	Year 2	Community Development	MAAC

	partnerships.				
5.4	Consider the introduction of targeted criteria for council's Grants program that benefit the disability sector.	5d	Year 2	Community Development	

Theme 6: Implementation, Review & Evaluation

	Action	Findings Reference	Proposed timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Secondary partners
6.1	Develop and implement functions, membership and reporting regime for a cross Council 'Strategy Implementation Team' to be coordinated through the Governance area of council (Corporate Consistency)	6a	Year 1	Senior Leadership Team	
	Action	Findings Reference	Proposed timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Secondary partners
6.2	Align the actions within the DDA Action Plan with council's broader Corporate and Operational Plans, Capital Works Program, 10 year Financial Plan and budget processes.	6b	Year 1-2	All departments	
6.3	Create a joint review program of the DDA Action Plan involving the Strategy Implementation Team and council's Mobility & Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) twice per year with one of them being just prior to budget development period (e.g. September and February).	6c	Year 1-2	Senior Leadership Team/ Community Development	
6.4	Continue to undertake relevant community engagement activities to evaluate the impacts of the DDA Plan in the community.	6c	Year 2 & Year 5	Community Development	

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Access & Equity Policy
- Appendix 2 Summary Notes - Technical Workshop
- Appendix 3 Survey Tool
- Appendix 4 Review of previous DDA Plans
- Appendix 5 Equal Employment Opportunity Principle
- Appendix 6 Terms of Reference – Mobility & Access Advisory Committee (MAAC)
- Appendix 7 Membership list – Mobility & Access Advisory Committee
- Appendix 8 Summary Results of Survey and Workshop Discussions
- Appendix 9 Summary Notes Focus Group Discussions
- Appendix 10 Internal Stakeholder Survey Tool

PROGRAM: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

POLICY NO.

TITLE: ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY

SUB-TITLE:

ADOPTED: FOLIO

AMENDED:

REVOKES:

Policy Title: Access and Equity Policy

Mission Statement: Mackay City Council, to its best endeavours practically and financially, will show leadership and demonstrate best practice by adopting and implementing policies and practices which will reinforce the right of people with a disability to full and equal participation in the life of the Mackay community.

Definitions: Disability
Disability is a loss or reduction of functional ability that results in impairment. Disabilities may be physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, learning based or disease causing organisms.

Access
Regardless of individual disabilities, all members of the community will have equitable opportunity to access and utilize information, services, facilities and places.

Equity
Individual disabilities will be taken into account to ensure that information, services, facilities and places are free from discriminatory practices and are provided to all members of the community on a fair and equitable basis.

Discrimination
Is the practice or act of treating a person unfavourably because of an impairment or disability.

Preamble: This Access and Equity Policy has been developed to comply with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992), the Queensland Disability Services Act 1992 and the Queensland Anti Discrimination Act (1991) and acknowledges that all people, whether with or without a disability, have the same fundamental human rights

to access Council buildings, facilities, products and services and to be valued as members of the community. The policy:

- expresses the commitment articulated in Mackay City Council's Corporate Plan objectives
- Recognizes Council's legal responsibilities in the areas of access to public buildings, provision of information, goods, services and facilities, employment, accommodation, buying and disposing of land, and administration of Commonwealth laws and programs
- Takes into consideration the release by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of the 'Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes on Access to Premises' which have brought some certainty and clarity for professionals and consumers based in law
- Takes into consideration the agreement by all State and Territory governments and the Federal Cabinet to support the introduction of the National Accessible Transport Standard as legislation
- Takes into consideration the research findings on missed markets in tourism due to inaccessibility (Simon Darcy, University of Technology, Sydney)
- Takes into consideration the release by the Australian Local Government Association of 'Accessible Workplaces'
- Takes into consideration the legal precedents set in HREOC and Anti Discrimination Commission Queensland reviews, conciliations and Tribunal outcomes
- gives practical recognition to the principle that people with a disability have the same fundamental rights as all other citizens and
- minimizes Council's exposure to complaints and possible litigation under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

Principles:

The following seven principles are founded on the objectives and requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and were adopted by Mackay City Council in November 1996. The principles will underpin all objectives and strategies developed to ensure access for all members of the community.

1. People with disabilities, whatever the nature, origin, type or degree of disability, have the same basic human rights as other members of society and should be enabled to exercise those basic human rights.

2. Programs, facilities and services provided within the Mackay City Council area should complement an individual's own family and community supports and should be flexible.
3. People with a disability have the same rights as others to services and programs within the Mackay City Council area in a manner which results in the least restriction of their rights and opportunities to fulfil their individual potential.
4. Every effort will be made to develop an integrated community to ensure that no person who lives, works in or visits the Mackay City Council area will be denied access to any Council facility or services on the grounds of personal disability.
5. Programs and services provided by Mackay City Council should have operating guidelines which optimize their availability to persons experiencing disability, and those guidelines should be provided in a variety of formats.
6. People within the Mackay City Council area should have the same opportunity as other residents to participate in Council elections, office bearing, staff appointments, public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision making processes.
7. All non-Council bodies in the Mackay City Council area should be encouraged to maximize the accessibility of their facilities, programs and services.

Objectives:

Council will provide leadership and demonstrate best practice in developing an accessible Mackay.

Council will develop a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Action Plan which adheres to the guiding principles and ensures legal responsibilities are met.

Council will ensure the DDA Action Plan includes monitoring and evaluation processes to facilitate the plan remaining a dynamic working tool for Council to meet its ongoing DDA requirements.

Council will develop and maintain structures and networks (both external and internal) as required to facilitate effective implementation of its DDA Action Plan and to remain aware of the community's access and equity issues relating to people with a disability.

Council will allocate resources necessary to implement the DDA Action Plan.

Council will implement its DDA Action Plan

Council will strive, where it has influence, to eliminate communication and behavioural barriers as well as physical access barriers to equal participation in the Mackay community.

Conclusion:

This policy is based on legislation and awareness of other relevant legislation and recent access and equity developments on both a national and state level. It underpins Council's current commitment and guides Council's future direction in ensuring an accessible Mackay and an inclusive community. The policy also compliments the Corporate Plan 2001 - 2005 Corporate Objective 1:

To plan for and offer a diverse range of lifestyle choices and community services aimed at enhancing quality of life throughout Mackay.

Strategy 1.9

'Plan, promote, provide and facilitate equitable access to facilities, services, information and opportunities for all community sectors'.



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Access Consultants – DDA Certifications

Mackay Regional Council – DDA Action Plan Project

Summary Notes from Stage 1 – DDA Presentation & Workshop held Monday 14th April 2008.

Presentation Topic	Questions and discussion
<p>DDA Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is disability discrimination • Important Sections • Complaint Process • Defences • Complaint Examples • Commonwealth & State Funding Implications • DDA Driven Council Services 	<p><i>Beach access – signage? Specialised area may not involved direct access – eg provision of all terrain wheelchair.</i></p> <p><i>By making beach access available through fenced areas (desirable for wheelchair, double prams etc) it automatically creates access for motorbikes (undesirable) on to beach areas.</i></p> <p><i>Footpath Trading Policy exists at the moment – this would compromise Council’s position in relation to the Act. Current policy allows for 1.8m.</i></p>

<p>DDA Access Standards & Australian Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Standard for Accessible Public Transport • Disability Standard on Access to Premises • Australian Standards AS1428 • Australian Standard AS3745 	<p><i>Retrospective element in relation to Standards?</i></p>
<p>Development and Building Application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Planning Act • DA Conditions and Advice • Building Code of Australia • Heritage Buildings • Best Practice Examples • Risk 	<p><i>What about workplaces where you need able bodied people to work in the area – do they need to be compliant? Who makes this decision? BCA requirements can be dealt with by Access Consultant assessing and providing written statement for certifier. A number of disabilities need to be considered when assessing access in terms of normal activity and emergency situations eg Braille to indicate exit paths.</i></p> <p><i>Why the requirement for ramp access near the set of stairs at boulevard in Mackay (as per photographs)?</i></p> <p><i>DDA requirements mean that it is adding an extra impost to developers or Council to ensure compliance – yes this is what is happening. It is not a large cost in the scheme of the other things that developers are required to provide. Would it be sufficient to have advice statements? Not all projects have DDA assessments however a common one is assessment of compliance of provisions under AS1428.</i></p> <p><i>Having a disability should not be reason not to employ someone because the work carried out in a small building where access issues may be a problem.</i></p>
<p>Pedestrian Environments</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfaces • Grades and Crossfalls • Accessways and Pathways • Parks & Gardens • Retail Trading Policies 	
<p>Pedestrian Crossings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerbs and Kerb Ramps • Tactile Ground Surface Indicators • Pedestrian Crossings • Audio Tactile Devices 	<p><i>Discussions with Main Roads on kerb design – what is being addressed? Discussion about the need to read the text of the Standards and not be reliant about the drawing associated with the Standard – there has been a problem in how the drawings have limited the interpretation of the Standard.</i></p>
<p>Wayfinding & Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding – what is it? • Accessible Wayfinding • Sensory Wayfinding Design • Signage <p>Public Transport Infrastructure</p> <p>On-Street Parking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS2890.6 – review and implications 	<p><i>New Standards are being introduced and will have implications for Councils in designing car park space. Parallel parking will cause the most difficulty.</i></p> <p><i>Off street car parking is safer for persons with a disability given the space needed to get in and out of cars and avoiding other traffic.</i></p> <p><i>Issues around possible compromises for drainage systems. Need to assess the whole environment, consider risk implications and creative solutions.</i></p>
<p>Council Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information • Disability Awareness Training • DDA Action Plan • Integration with External Organisations 	<p><i>Printed material – is large print options available?</i></p> <p><i>Web based information – very useful for persons with a disability</i></p> <p><i>Accessibility issues – need to consider how we let people know – there is a right way and wrong way to do this.</i></p> <p><i>Languages – is material available in other languages? Yes - Library brochures recently translated into Chinese, Spanish</i></p>

& Thai – very expensive process.

Disability Awareness training – Council takes a very limited approach now – reduced to values, discriminating, acceptance and covers a number of disadvantaged groups (now provision of 20 minutes in Induction training).

Consider use of service providers – spinal injuries Association (John Mayo,) Lifetec, Guide Dogs, vision Australia, Hearing Australia. Training needs to “peel” down to what is required and why for people who are working in the field (eg construction & maintenance).

DDA Action Plan to be promoted in a positive manner, value for community, benefits to tourism industry as examples. Council will need to take a leadership role within the community.

Reference group to own the DDA Action Plan – celebrate the successes.

Peer review is important to the process – DDA Action Plan needs to undertake a peer review at least every 2 years.

Council needs to take a lead role in integrating with external organisations eg construction and developer sectors. Organisations that provide services need to be engaged as part of the DDA Action Plan.

A lot of value can be drawn into the community by having accessible tourism and the arts.

Allied Health and their services need to be integrated into the DDA Action Plan – eg coming to the area for holiday or conference it would be good for visitors to know what health services could be accessed in the City.

	<p><i>DDA Action Plan needs to identify what role the Aged care sector will have in the actions. Education services/sector need to be considered.</i></p>
<p>Questions</p>	<p><i>Process – review existing facilities? What is reasonable or not? How much money to put towards it? Audit of council facilities was not included in the brief – need to look at this or provide a self-assessment tool and then have consultant assess more complex aspects. Council’s intentions to have a plan with a different purpose – focus on implementation, ownership, review and monitoring. Process of development of the Plan will involve keeping internal stakeholders informed about the process to promote this ownership.</i></p> <p><i>Having access to the expertise is important – need to have some further assistance on this. It may be important to know where Council is vulnerable and to complete an audit to gather this information. Audit could be done in a variety of ways.</i></p> <p><i>How detailed will the DDA Action Plan get? Will refer to standards and what may need to be done. Will include objectives with suggested timeframes eg. Toilets generally to meet standard and not a detailed list on each toilet block.</i></p> <p><i>Need to consider the scope of works and the cost of achieving this? Consultation will consider the major issues that come up from the community have a look at them and cost these – Plan still needs to be reasonable.</i></p> <p><i>Concern that if it is community driven then Plan could be too</i></p>

	<p><i>reactive. Consultants can be a fresh face for the community to genuinely understand what people are experiencing without providing commitments to resources and times etc.</i></p>
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Access and Equity Community Consultation



Resetting the benchmark

This survey is a major initiative of the Mackay Regional Council. The information collected will assist in ensuring that all services and facilities provided by Council for residents are fully accessible and reflect the changing needs of the community.

Confidentiality of Information

The information collected on this form will only be viewed by Council staff and the consultants engaged to complete this work. Provision of your name and contact details is optional. However, it will enable us to contact you if further information is required.

1. Your Details (optional)

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Would you like feedback on the results of this review? Yes No

Could you please indicate if you identify with one of the following groups:

Person with a disability

Carer

Service Provider

Aged resident

Builder/Developer

Business Owner/Manager

Interested person without a disability

Aged Care Facility

Other

2. Why is Council doing this review?

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) '92, makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful in a number of areas of public life including employment, education, the provision of goods and services and access to premises and facilities used by the public. As a service provider, Council is required to adhere to this legislation as far as possible.

Also as part of this review process, Council is interested in the views of senior members of the community. This input will be of assistance to Council with long term planning to meet the needs of the region's ageing population.

Mackay Regional Council's goods, services, premises and facilities include:-

- Roads, footpath networks, drains, parking, bus shelters, etc (under Council control)
- Public facilities owned by Council incl. libraries, community halls, pools, Entertainment Centre, etc
- Council's festivals and community events
- Parks incl. playgrounds, seating, barbecue areas, Botanic Gardens, beaches & foreshores, environmental reserves, etc
- Council communication with residents incl. brochures, newsletters, fact sheets, website, Customer Services Centres, etc
- Employment procedures, Development Approvals, etc

3. Your issues/concerns about access

We need to know your access concerns with regard to the goods, services, premises and facilities Council provides.

Could you please list items of concern to you and outcomes you would like to see?

(Please use BLOCK LETTERS and attached additional sheets of paper if required.)

Item:

.....
.....
.....

Outcome:

.....
.....
.....

4. How is Council doing?

Your view of Council's performance in servicing the access needs of people with mobility problems, vision impairment, hearing impairment, aged and frail, etc in the region would be helpful.

List some of the things you see Council doing well:

.....
.....
.....

List some of the things you would like to see as priorities for future Council budgets:

.....
.....
.....

Name one thing you would like to see addressed immediately. Please include suggestions on how you would address the issue.

.....
.....
.....

5. How do you usually contact Council?

There are many ways you can contact your Council. Could you please indicate your preference and the reason why:

- Email
- In Writing

- By phone
- In person

- Council's website

If you have a disability and any or all of the above ways pose difficulties for you, could you please explain why and suggest how this could be improved:

.....
.....

6. Who do you talk to in Council?

If you have a concern relating to Council's services and want Council to address it, who would you contact directly?

- The Customer Services Centres
- The Mayor

- The CEO
- Staff you know

- A councillor you know

Do you get the result you were expecting? Yes No

If 'no', why not?

.....
.....

7. How do you find out about what Council is doing?

Council’s activities in a year are diverse and extensive and can include simple items such as notice of road closures as well as vital information for safety, development of new programs and services for residents, opening of new facilities, information on what is planned for the future, etc.

How do you find out about what is happening? Could you please tick the option/s that best work for you:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal letter/Email | <input type="checkbox"/> TV |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letterbox drop | <input type="checkbox"/> Council’s website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> From a friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio | <input type="checkbox"/> Through a local community group |

If you have a disability and some of the ways (above) pose a difficulty because of your disability, could you please provide a reason and your thoughts on a solution?

.....
.....

Are there other ways you think would be more effective?

If so, please describe:
.....

8. Thank You

Thank you for participating in this project. Your input into this project is valuable and will be noted.

Are you interested in providing comment on the draft Action Plan when it has been developed?

- Yes No

For further information and assistance, please contact Jan Hansen directly on p. 4961 9536 or Email: jan.hansen@mackay.qld.gov.au

Completed Survey Forms can be submitted at Mackay, Sarina and Mirani libraries and Customer Service Centres, returned to Council in the self addressed envelope provided or completed and submitted on line: www.mackay.qld.gov.au

Closing date is Friday 28 November 2008.

ACTION GRID – DDA ACTION PLAN REVIEW

There were 23 Recommendations endorsed by the Mackay City Council in July 1997 as part of its DDA Action Plan. The review has concentrated on re-framing the original recommendations in the light of Council change of personnel, direction and organisational structure and the substantial progress already made. The objective is to integrate the Plan with the new Council mechanisms.

It is recommended that Council endorses this review and electronically lodges it with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to fulfil this Review stage of its DDA requirement for ongoing communication, evaluation and monitoring.

Progress to Date heading information is a combination of Review results and Council Officers' Reports.

No	Recommendation	Progress To Date	Further Work To Be Done	Responsibility
1	That Council commits funds to upgrade Council parks, gardens, buildings and facilities by the year 2010, in accordance with the DDA Action Plan	Substantial progress on many areas of buildings & facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MAAC to continue monitoring progress with these Review	Executive Manager of Infrastructure

	<p>Schedule of Works and including proposed changes to the Schedule of Works submitted by MAAC and approved by Council in March 2001</p> <p><i>The schedule of works did not necessarily result in best practice access. Parks section has completed most of what was included in the Schedule. A designer has prepared some plans for a fully accessible toilet. These have been used as the blueprint to build a new facility in the footprint of the old ones when demolished and as funds becomes available.</i></p> <p><i>Council's Mobility & Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) has stressed the importance of doing connecting pathways one park at a time & doing it well (less recurring complaints that way).</i></p>	<p>Policies are now established to ensure kerbing are appropriate designs for residential areas</p>	<p>recommendations & the 1997 Schedule of Works , with particular emphasis on Parks and Gardens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parks and Gardens need to re-frame priorities and seek funds 	<p>Services</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>That Council commits funds to upgrade safe access in the City Heart street infrastructure in accordance with the DDA Action Plan Schedule of Work.</p> <p><i>Items in the original Schedule of Works have been completed. In the past 5 years, there has been a great deal of street infrastructure work happening as part of the City Centre Revitalization Project. .</i></p>	<p>Schedule of Works predominately completed in City Heart</p>	<p>MAAC continue to monitor infrastructure needs in the City Heart and provide access advice when major development plan authorisation is sought from Council</p>	<p>Executive Manager of Infrastructure Services and Chairperson of MAAC</p>

3	<p>That Council ensures that the amendments and recommendations of the Document Review process are implemented as detailed in the Stage 1, 2 and 3 Report.</p> <p><i>The Stage 1, 2 and 3 Report is detailed in the original Action Plan; however these actions have not been implemented.</i></p>	<p>Have been completed or new policies have made old by-laws redundant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Council policies to reflect DDA-preferred 'people first' language, equity and diversity 	<p>CEO and Executive Manager of Planning and Environmental Services</p>
4	<p>That Council implements an ongoing program to ensure equitable access for all people when developing and communicating Council policies and programs.</p> <p><i>Council has adopted an approach where publications in alternative formats will be provided on request. A strong campaign to undertake internal awareness raising on equitable access has been done and an internal handbook on Access for Everyone – How do we do it? Information was developed and supplied by Access Audits Australia. There has been moderate use of the booklet within Council – except in the libraries.</i></p>	<p>Council information productions lack disability information on venues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures, website pages, etc provide relevant access information and include inclusive imagery. 	<p>CEO and Executive Management Team</p>
5	<p>That Council integrates all recommendations in this DDA Action Plan Schedule of Work into the Operational Plan.</p> <p><i>The DDA Action Team did get EMs to list items relating to access under a DDA heading and took the approach of promoting the actions within existing Council operations. Consequently there has been moderate implementation of the actions.</i></p> <p><i>The internal DDA Action Team had limited capacity to monitor this process – no Executive Manager on</i></p>	<p>Uncoordinated and lack of departmental monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement recommended new co-ordinating body to integrate initiatives, actions and monitoring 	<p>DDA Action Group</p>

	<i>the team.</i>			
6	<p>That Council ensures that the Executive Manager Planning & Environmental Services examine all future development approvals to ensure equitable access for all people and that the outcomes of appropriate disability requirements are monitored to ensure those provisions are carried out.</p> <p><i>This has not been implemented. There has been debate within Planning Services about how this can be achieved within a Planning Scheme context.</i></p>	Progress in this area has been hampered by changing personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure DDA issues are included and stressed in all planning and building approval documents to ensure future accessibility. • Introduce DDA Warning to Approval documents. 	Executive Manager of Planning & Environmental Services
7	<p>That Council instructs the Executive Manager Planning & Environmental Services to actively encourage builders of private dwellings to incorporate features of the Adaptable Housing Standard AS 4299 in their building plans.</p> <p><i>A brochure was developed about 6 years ago and distributed to the private sector. However it has not been revisited since then. Council did play a semi active role in the development of a 'Smart House' for Mackay (a Department of Housing initiative incorporating the value of building to universal design - 'housing for life'. The smart house in Mackay (in the form of one part of a duplex) is currently open to the public.</i></p>	Pamphlet about the benefits of building adaptable housing could be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Manager Planning & Environmental Services to encourage home and other building owners. 	Executive Manager Planning & Environmental Services
8	That Council approves and instructs the Executive Manager Financial & Information Services to implement a staff training program of at least 300 hours per year, which includes disability awareness,	No further specific Disability Awareness training since 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New coordinating body to review & instigate staff training needs 	DDA Action Group

	<p>communication and DDA responsibilities.</p> <p><i>HR section make DDA training available on a needs basis.</i></p>			
9	<p>That Council instructs the Executive Manager Financial & Information Services to ensure that all new staff are made aware of their obligations and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Equal Opportunity legislation during their staff induction process.</p> <p><i>This is now addressed as one part of the Council induction program for new employees (20 mins). It now takes the form of self awareness, eg values, misconceptions, stereotyping, acceptance of difference, etc and how these elements can impact on effective communication.</i></p>	<p>This is part of the current process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	<p>HR manager & DDA Action Group</p>
10	<p>That Council notes and where appropriate Departmental Executive Managers act on the consultant's Stage 2 and 3 Report on the Community Survey findings affecting their areas of responsibility.</p> <p><i>The MAAC has looked at this and made some recommendations that have been acted upon. The Stage 2 and 3 Reports are in the original DDA Action Plan (Attachments 2,3,& 4). The internal DDA Action Team did no work on this.</i></p>	<p>It is not sure if this happened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New coordinating body to review & instigate 	<p>DDA Action Group</p>
11	<p>That Council notes and where appropriate Departmental Executive Managers act in accordance with the SOA Stage 1 Report on the Community Consultation Public Meeting findings</p>	<p>It is not sure if this happened</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New coordinating body to review & instigate 	<p>DDA Action Group</p>

	<p>affecting their areas of responsibility.</p> <p><i>As above.</i></p>			
12	<p>That Council note and where appropriate Departmental Executive Managers act in accordance with the SOA Stage 2 and 3 Report Focus Group findings affecting their areas of responsibility.</p> <p><i>As above.</i></p>	It is not sure if this happened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New coordinating body to review & instigate 	DDA Action Group
13	<p>That Council's Mobility and Access Advisory Committee explore options and initiatives to improve, develop and coordinate facilities and services relating to transport, information, recreation and respite. In developing these options, MAAC should refer to findings of the CIP Community Survey, Community Consultation and Focus Groups.</p> <p><i>The MAAC has had some influence on this within Council.</i></p>	Many achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	MAAC
14	<p>That Council develops neighbourhood centres as suitable recreational and meeting places for parents and carers of those with intellectual and other disabilities.</p> <p><i>All of the community halls are community meeting places. There is a booking officer attached to each hall and it is noted that there is high demand for bookings – lots of permanent weekly bookings locked in.</i></p>	Needs more attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Manager Community & Customer Services to explore possibilities 	Executive Manager Community & Customer Services and Chairperson of MAAC
15	That Council approves the following Terms of	MAAC has	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That MAAC contribute 	Executive

	<p>Reference for the Mobility and Access Advisory Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make recommendations to the Mackay City Council through the Community & Customer Services Committee; • to report on issues relating to the implementation of the DDA Action Plan and other disability issues referred from the Council or the community; • to provide a forum for comment and advice on the implementation of the DDA Action Plan and disability issues relating to Council's buildings, facilities and services; and • to provide comment and advice on community integration issues and other disability matters as requested. <p><i>The MAAC has taken these terms of reference into their operations and has done some good work.</i></p>	<p>successfully integrated these recommendations in their mode of operating. The open forum has been a widely used feature of their meetings.</p>	<p>ideas to the new interdepartmental group to ensure that disability issues of concern are included in annual January pre-budget planning and funding considerations to ensure that disability issues and recommendations receive appropriate planning and financial funding within the annual planning process</p>	<p>Manager Community & Customer Services and Chairperson of MAAC</p>
16	<p>That Council approves a Mobility and Access Advisory Committee membership which clearly reflects the disability definitions contained in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.</p> <p><i>No work has been done on this. In the last few years, the committee focus has been on physical access issues (in a reactive way) and this has been difficult to turn around to a more proactive approach and perhaps is reflective of the membership.</i></p>	<p>Some progress in this area but the areas of intellectual and psychiatric disability are under-represented.</p> <p>Mental health issues from consultations could benefit from MAAC attention.</p>	<p>That the Community Development Officer recruits and supports additional MAAC members with personal experience of psychiatric/mental health to assist in their community development and to raise the profile of mental health issues.</p>	<p>Executive Manager Community & Customer Services</p>
17	<p>That Council creates a new position of Disability</p>	<p>Not approved as part</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Council re-consider 	<p>Councillors &</p>

	<p>Equity Officer (DEO) for an initial two-year appointment.</p> <p><i>This has not been considered by Council. It was a one recommendation that was not endorsed.</i></p>	<p>of the DDA Action Plan. A Community Development Officer carried on the roles suggested as a part of other roles.</p>	<p>the appointment of a Disability Equity Officer to raise disability awareness and strengthen action within the Council structures and community groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If unsuccessful, ensure current officer is adequately resourced with time and finance. 	<p>CEO</p>
18	<p>That Council provides the Library with additional funds to initiate a Disability Information Centre within the Library as part of the Community Information Service.</p> <p><i>A community directory is on Council's website which includes disability service.</i></p> <p><i>The need for a one stop shop for information was identified through the 1997 consultations and is still a focus at present.</i></p>	<p>No action on this recommendation.</p>	<p>That Council supports the Manager Library Services in designing and developing a disability information component of the Council website</p>	<p>Councillors & Manager Library Services</p>
19	<p>That Council supports the Library in publicising its services and facilities. In addition that Council supports the ongoing training of library staff and</p>	<p>Library and Mobile Library more accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Council reinforce the commitment of Library staff 	<p>Councillors & Manager Library</p>

	<p>volunteers in the use of specialist disability equipment and software.</p> <p><i>The Mackay City and Gordon White libraries have really embraced this. A dedicated worker is available to provide facilities, equipment, programs and support.</i></p>	Staff training of new equipment	to ongoing enhancement of services and facilities for people with disabilities.	Services
20	<p>That Council supports the provision of more equitable facilities for people with hearing impairments.</p> <p><i>The libraries do cater for people with hearing impairment and hearing loops are included in the new Convention centre.</i></p>	Some achievements & new technology has changed priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore new technology in consultation with deaf community to enhance opportunities for those with hearing impairments to access & use library services 	MAAC & Manager Library Services
21	<p>That the Mackay City Council Emergency Management Coordinator raises the need to address disability issues and requirements within future emergency plans.</p> <p><i>The State Government has developed guidelines for disaster management for people with disabilities– however it is not sure if it is current.</i></p> <p><i>In the past the Emergency Management Coordinator has tried to develop a list of people with disabilities or major health issues living in their own homes without family support so that he will know the locations of people who will need help first in the event of a disaster. He has worked through the health and support services for this.</i></p>	Excellent work has been achieved in promulgating self help information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing 	Emergency Management Coordinator

22	<p>That Council ensures that staff responsible for each Council building develops, promulgates and practices emergency evacuation procedures which include the safe egress of people with disabilities.</p> <p><i>A procedure for this action was developed a few years ago however it is not being auctioned at present.</i></p>	More work is needed in developing plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More work is needed in developing plans 	Executive Manager of Infrastructure Services & those responsible for Departmental buildings
23	<p>That Council widely promulgates and makes available its DDA Action Plan and instigates ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> <p><i>The Action Plan was available through Council's website for a period but has now been deleted.</i></p> <p><i>The DDA Action Team was established after the 2002 review but hasn't met since 2007..</i></p>	<p>Plan available in hard copy, on Council website and with HREOC.</p> <p>Formal meeting structure of departments did not occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Council establish an interdepartmental Disability Action Group to provide coordination and communication framework for departmental disability initiatives and programs. 	CEO and Executive Manager Community & Customer Services
	NEW INITIATIVES			
24	<p>That Council establishes an interdepartmental Disability Action Group</p> <p><i>Done</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Council establishes an interdepartmental Disability Action Group to provide coordination and communication framework for departmental disability initiatives and programs 	Council & CEO

25	<p>That Council capitalizes on its access provisions and promotes Mackay as a disability friendly tourist venue for people with disabilities.</p> <p><i>The Community Development section started this a few years ago through its Access Friendly Mackay Project. Information is available on the website but it needs continual work..</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the Economic Development Manager works with MAAC to promote Access Friendly Mackay as a tourist destination for people with disabilities, to capitalise on the disability opportunities being created through the Action Plan 	MAAC & Economic Development Manager
26	<p>That Council ensures all new Council buildings & facilities meet DDA requirements.</p> <p><i>This happened with recent projects such as the Convention Centre. However, there is a difficulty in recruiting an accredited access consultant for further work due to limited capacity and costs.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of an access consultant (as part of the tender document process) to review plans of all new and upgraded Council building and facilities would ensure that Council meets DDA requirements. <p>MAAC would also be a valuable resource in this area.</p>	<p>CEO Executive Manager Planning & Environmental Services</p> <p>Other Executive Managers</p>
27	<p><i>Mostly this is in place.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute Access Report Cards throughout Council Libraries, Community Centres etc. 	Executive Manager Community & Customer Services

28	<i>This has been constructed.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a new unisex accessible toilet is provided in the Library 	Executive Manager Community & Customer Services and Manager Library Services
29	<i>This has not occurred.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record, recognise and utilise particular staff member disability skills eg. Auslan signing. 	Executive Manager Community & Customer Services & Manager Human Resources
30	<i>Needs looking at again. Was originally located in an arcade (accessible from 2 different streets). The arcade has now been blocked off and the blocked off area has been bought by the Mercure Hotel located next door - not sure for what purpose)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate directional signage for the City Heart disability toilet as suggested. 	Executive Manager Infrastructure Services
31	<i>Not happened.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate builder warning on DDA requirements for planning approval documents as suggested. 	Executive Manager Planning & Environmental Services
32	<i>Not happened.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate evacuation plans which include provisions for people with disabilities for all Council buildings and facilities. 	Executive Managers

33	<i>The lift has been upgraded.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with MAAC on 1st floor toilet & lift upgrade suggestions 	Executive Manager Financial & Information Services
34	<p>Council endorse the suggested role for the Disability Action Group</p> <p><i>It was endorsed.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Disability Action Group monitor and supervise these recommendations. 	CEO



ADMINISTRATION POLICY – NUMBER 010

DEPARTMENT	CORPORATE SERVICES
PROGRAM	HUMAN RESOURCES
POLICY TITLE	EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PRINCIPLE
IMPLEMENTED FROM	10 March 2009

1. PURPOSE

To promote the achievement of employment equity in Mackay Regional Council by ensuring that merit and equity form the basis of all decisions that affect staff.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Mackay Regional Council Employees.

3. DEFINITIONS

Equal Employment Opportunity can be defined as all people being treated on their merits at every stage of the employment relationship regardless of sex, race, religious or political convictions, impairments or age.

4. REQUIREMENTS

To be effective, EEO requires the active participation of both staff and Management. All staff have the responsibility to:

- Work to their full capacity;
- Recognise the skills and talents of other staff members;
- Respect cultural and social diversity among colleagues and customers; and
- Refuse to be involved in, or condone any behaviour that may harass a colleague.

Supervisors and Managers have the additional responsibility of ensuring that:

- The work environment is free from all forms of harassment;
- Staff are provided with information so that they are aware of the standards of behaviour required of them;
- The principles of diversity and equity are promoted; and
- All complaints are dealt with seriously and confidentially.



ADMINISTRATION POLICY – NUMBER 010

5. IMPLEMENTATION

It is Mackay Regional Council's objective to ensure the absence of discrimination in its recruitment and selection, promotions, staff development and training, wages and all terms and conditions of employment. These decisions will be made based on merit. This means selection of the most proficient person having regard to the abilities, qualifications, relevant experience and personal qualities that are necessary for the performance of the position.

All staff members have an equal opportunity to:

- Increase skills to meet work demands;
- Attend training courses;
- Act in higher duties; and
- Apply for available jobs.

This policy aims to ensure:

- Fair practices in the workplace;
- Management decisions are made without bias;
- Recognition and respect for the social and cultural backgrounds of all staff and customers;
- Our workforce reflects the diversity of the Mackay Regional population it serves; and
- Improved productivity by guaranteeing that:
 - The best person is recruited and/or promoted;
 - Skilled staff are retained;
 - Training and development are linked to employee needs and customer needs; and
 - The workplace is efficient and free of harassment and discrimination.

When employees believe they may have been discriminated against on any of the above grounds, they are encouraged to raise the matter with Human Resources and to refer to the Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

Please Note: The Chief Executive Officer can vary all administrative policies at any given time.

6. AUTHORISATION

Approved by:

Executive Team

Date

Chief Executive Officer

Date

Terms of Reference

Committee Role

To monitor and report on the implementation of the Mackay Regional Council's DDA Action Plan

To provide a process for input and feedback regarding the planning and provision of services, facilities and programs for people with a disability

To liaise with the internal DDA Action Team

To serve as an information link between community members/groups and Mackay Regional Council

To encourage community inclusion of people with a disability

To advocate for people with a disability and their needs at local, State and Commonwealth levels

To promote disability awareness within the local community.

Committee Membership

Individuals active within networks of communities of interest who have either personal or other experience, expertise or imputed expertise in the areas of:

- physical disability
- intellectual disability
- psychiatric disability including mental
- neurological disability (incl. acquired brain injury)
- those who are aged and frail
- carers of people with disability
- parents of people with intellectual disability
- sensory disability (visual and hearing)
- service providers to people with disability
- one Councillor (Chair), Director Community Services and one Community Development Officer.

Commercial sector representatives are to be invited to MAAC meetings as relevant.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

- represent the needs of people with a disability in at least one key area of need
- represent the scope of issues and needs addressed by their member organization with regards to people with a disability

- participate in activities to resolve issues and/or develop projects pertaining to disability,
- inclusion and access if possible
- Attend meetings regularly

The Chairperson shall provide continuity and direction for the MAAC with regard to the Committee's Terms of reference.

Term of Membership

The term of membership is 2 years.

Members may reapply for membership at the end of the term.

Frequency and Details of Meetings

The MAAC will meet on an eight week cycle wherever practicable. In the event of the committee being unable to meet at the delegated time, the meeting will be rescheduled at a date as close as possible to the original date.

A suitable day and time will be decided by members at the first meeting for the term.

One MAAC meeting in Sarina and one MAAC meeting in Mirani will be scheduled annually.

Quorum

The quorum must be half the number of members of the committee plus one.

Decision making of the committee will be by majority vote, with the Chairperson having a casting vote.

Open Forums

Open forums will be held in the first half hour prior to the commencement of the MAAC meeting to allow community members to raise community integration or other disability issues with the committee.

Open Forum participants will be required to leave prior to the commencement of the MAAC meeting.

Issues raised during the Open Forum will be referred to the meeting agenda under General Business for discussion by MAAC members at that time.

Open Forum participants will be advised by the Community Development Officer without delay of the MAAC's decision on how to progress the issues raised, if possible, within the parameters of the Committee's Terms of Reference.

Reporting Requirements & Resourcing

The committee will report to Council through the Community Services Department on a bi-monthly basis.

Attendance by relevant staff from other departments and sections of Council may be requested by the committee Chairperson through appropriate internal channels.

Related Policies

Mackay Regional Council's Access & Equity Policy.

NAME	AGENCY	ADDRESS	STATE	GREETING
Mr Cliff Andersen	Amputees and Families Support Group Inc	12 Willetts Road	NORTH MACKAY QLD 4740	Mr Andersen
Mrs Shirley Kelly	(Person with a disability)	Unit 2 6 Apollo Drive Andergrove	MACKAY QLD 4740	Mrs Kelly
Mr Peter Berardi	DSQ	PO Box 532	MACKAY QLD 4740	Mr Berardi
Mr Alan Elliot	Qld Spinal Injuries Assoc. Inc.	3 Kemp Street	BUCASIA QLD 4740	Mr Elliot
Mr Graham Patterson	(Carer of a person with a disability)	32 (b) Donaldson Street	WEST MACKAY 4740	Mr Patterson
Ms Jan Hansen	Mackay Regional Council	PO Box 41	MACKAY QLD 4740	Ms Hansen
Director Community Services	Mackay Regional Council	PO Box 41	MACKAY QLD 4740	Mr Carlyon
Mrs Joanne Davies/Kathy Maher	Prescare	132 Wood Street	MACKAY QLD 4740	Mrs Davies/Maher
Mrs Margaret Franklin	(Aged pensioner - Sarina)	6 Mc Canna Street	SALONIKA BEACH	Mrs Franklin
Mrs Aileen Franklin	(Aged pensioner - Sarina)	PO Box 6955	MACKAY MAIL CENTRE 4741	Mrs Franklin
Ms Sue Tyshing	Pioneer Employment Service	PO Box 471	MACKAY QLD 4740	Ms Tyshing
Ms Kathy Winterburn	Centrelink	PO Box 323	MACKAY QLD 4740	Ms Winterburn
Ms Ann Jennings	Community Health Services	12 – 14 Nelson Street	MACKAY QLD 4740	Ms Jennings
Mrs Connie Young		PO Box 14	MACKAY QLD 4740	Mrs Young
Cr George Christensen	Mackay Regional Council (MAAC Chairperson)	PO Box 41	MACKAY QLD 4740	Cr Christensen
Mr Damien Brown	(Person with a disability – Sarina)	PO Box 514	SARINA QLD 4737	Mr Brown
Mrs Barbara Best	(Carer of a person with a disability)	110 Scott Street	MACKAY QLD 4740	Mrs Best
Mr John Smith	(Person with a disability)	1 Pound Street	WALKERSTON QLD 4751	Mr Smith
Dr Thomas Block & Karen Langtree	MADEC	PO Box 3065	NORTH MACKAY QLD 4740	Dr Block
Mr Luke Simons	(Person with a disability)	391 Bridge Road	MACKAY	Mr Simons
Mrs Michelle Nichols	(Carer of a person with a disability)	7 Gentle Ave	BUCASIA	Mrs Nichols
Ms Suzanne La Fontaine	Carers Qld (Mackay)	PO Box 3066	NORTH MACKAY 4740	Ms La Fontaine

Mackay DDA Plan
Survey and Forum Responses

1.0 Name access issues, concerns and outcomes you would like to see

1.1 Transport, Parking and Access

- HACC has had funding cuts so transport is a huge demand.
- No disability access at the lagoon. Suggestion – waterproof wheelchair that stay at lagoon, floatation things.
- River to Reef too far away difficult to access.
- Taxi availability for wheelchair access taxis often a problem (new driver's not aware).
- Safety issues for securing wheelchairs on taxis.
- Cars don't stop when you are on the middle traffic islands. The green flashing light isn't on long enough to get across the road safely.
- Access at airport, harbour/port authority
- Roads – Zebra crossings. Hoey Street, East to West. People from aged care facility and Wongabeena crossing to other side.
- Footpaths – East Street Northern side none.
- Roads crossings from IGA/Tandara Hotel to shade seating under trees – Woolworths etc. Zebra crossings?
- Vehicle parking area at Western end of Netherdale Park. Area marked by treated pine posts concreted into ground.
- Council could supply treated pine posts, concrete and Netherdale Community would supply labour to do the work.
- Mirani community hall. Unsuitable parking, dirt surface, concrete disability bay required. Access to pedestrian footpath in Park is not good.
- Police Station. None have wheel chair ramps.
- Mature population. Will increase; with greater population in the Valley requires better bus service and bus service and bus access, (steps too high) and bus stop facilities with shelter; (designated sites).
- Parking at Senior Citizens hall. Open up the back area for seniors for parking. The small sign in front area are just ignored by workers.
- Need bigger signs out in the open and more parking.
- No parking in City Heart for older people, that is in walking distance of City Heart.
- Do as Perth did. Open up large area for parking end of River St, Victoria St, Run two small shuttle bus every ten minutes. This will work on same basis for workers with larger buses.

- Build Bikeway through Railway Corridor
- Bus stops. DDA compliance schedules being adhered to.
- Bus stop service doesn't provide access to drop off points often enough (schedules do not suit). Some people actually use two buses to get to where they wish to be.
- More parking at the Entertainment Centre
- Access to older buildings in Mackay.
- Not enough parking in CBD for disabled access, it is hard for me to cross busy roads, impossible to cross four lanes in the time provided at lights.
- At least one or two for each block, that way I can walk around block instead of having to cross road/s.
- People (who are not disabled) parking in bays for permit holders only.
- At least double the fine and have someone police the area – on a regular basis. I could not tell you the amount of times the bays have been incorrectly used, forcing me to park blocks away. This is a huge issue at nighttime as well.
- Senior Citizens club at McAlister Street and the library have no parking owing to all that.
- Building and workers' vehicles are in the way. Old people cannot walk too far.
- A free parking area close to City heart for disabled people (only).
- This could be financed by our \$50 per house on our rates, which we pay.
- Mirani Eungella road in vicinity of shops. (Used by all ages, has centre parking which restricts view to heavy traffic). This area connects to disability path across the park. Business area in Mirani is on both sides of street.
- Mirani Alberta Street and Mary Street corner requires stop sign.
- Mirani pedestrian crossing in front of Post office.
- Finch Hatton, hotel vicinity pedestrian crossing.
- Transport
- The bus service need to be more frequent to eliminate long waits for connections. A large portion of the disabled sector cannot cope with this. A competitor in taxi service would be a good incentive to keep up good services to the disabled community.
- More parking for PWD, larger parking spaces for the larger vehicles with wheelchairs, foot paths upgraded, board walks ensuring the decking is running in the correct direction for wheelchair users, accessibility into all shops, sporting fields etc, more disabled toilets, all new building approvals to meet.
- Eimeo Beach car park, buffers in front of cars have caused several falls, people get out of cars, don't realize they are there and fall over them.
- Remove buffers, there is a barrier for cars and the buffers are not needed.
- Not enough parking at Botanic Gardens.
- Increase parking sensitively so attractiveness is maintained.
- Accept that City cinema is not Council property so complaint to them may be needed; no rail on front steps and lift hard to find.

- Rails and Signs.
- City Cinema disability access not visible – no sign at front of building, no handrails on front steps.
- Who polices handicapped parking to ensure permits are displayed?
- Inform public about this.
- More bus services and bus shelters.
- In all Areas.
- Southern part of Sarina – lights at NAB – no way of crossing the road safely. Example Tandara Motel and Leagues Club – can't cross the road. Main roads are realigning the road.
- Brewers road – needs concrete footpath near aged peoples homes and other aged/ disability services. Aged have scooters – Woolworths. Lots of trucks there – cement works. Move the cement works out of town.
- Woolworths – need an orange/yellow line on where there is a difference in depth of concrete not visible for P with V impairment on Western side, walking from town – can't tell where you can access. – need yellow line. Bit of a washout Council footpath on Western side a access to Woolworths. Woolworth's only opened in March 08.
- IGA complex – chemist and doctors' surgery (an add on) – nothing to denote a 6" drop in the concrete.
- General buildings. Doors are too narrow for wheelchairs through much of the Valley, too heavy and impossible for wheelchairs users to open, or anyone who is frail, aged or young, often open wrong way.
- Example: Mirani Library and Council Building, Mirani Post Office, step aside Mirani Library has no warning tape.

1.2 Public Amenities

- I'm unsure if this is Council jurisdiction. I would like to point out that your public toilets are very small (cubicles) I am a big girl, size 16 not 26 and I find the small space allowed just to enter the cubicle is very poor. I find I almost have to back in and stand over the toilet just to shut the door. It always makes me feel sorry for people larger than myself, and also for people with disabilities; as not all people with disabilities use a wheelchair, I often use a disabled toilet just for the extra room but I feel guilty when I get nasty looks from people.
I think this is a big problem but most people are too embarrassed to complain. Your public toilets at the local beaches are a good size.
- Seating in City Heart area for older persons to rest.
- Water fountain. In town area.
- Need toilet facility at boat ramp.

- Access to disability toilets. Example who uses them? Able-bodied people using toilets, people with disability, having to wait. Clarification on who should use these toilets? Not enough signage in toilets, indicating which cubicle has disability mobility access.
- Public toilets in CBD.
- Schaeffer Street Park – No Bins, No toilets.
- There should be a water bubbler in town. The water bubbler on the boardwalk is a good one – with the lever. Should be more like that one in town.
- Showground – need two little bins – need larger bins.
- One unisex toilet facility.
- Council to supply and Netherdale community to supply labour to install facility.
- Kinchant Dam, No wheel chair access to toilets uphill.
- Mirani pool. Better access for aged and physically disabled. Portable aluminum stairs would assist. Plastic chairs available has no sides and does not feel safe. People are not invalid and need to be treated with dignity. Those recovering from surgery also require assistance. Toilets not accessible, no signage for ramp that is there but not obvious.
- Public toilets. Access from car to actual building is dirt surface. Some have steps. Need for more disability toilets only available in Marian in Edward Lloyd Park and behind Mirani Library.

1.3 Street Signage

- Street signs bigger, fluro for night, and every street signed. Numbers on curb and channeling for house number.
- Old Town Hall, lift and ramp from park hard to find, not signposted.

1.4 Footpaths

- Footpath along River Street between Macalister Street and Caneland shopping Centre is in disrepair most times. It is almost impossible to carry shopping between Macalister Street and Nelson Street is always full of rubbish and overgrown hedge, bottles etc.
- People sleeping on the seats on the promenade make it unsafe for people to walk in the morning.
- I would like to see the boardwalk kept clean.
- Around the Whitsunday Hotel is often dirty and dangerous – lots of broken glasses and bottles.
- A concrete path from parking area to shelter at Netherdale Park for the aged, those in wheel chairs and babies in prams. This will enable people to better view historic lift and steam engine.
- Council to plan pathway, supply concrete and Netherdale community to supply labour to construct path.
- Footpaths in disrepair.

- Footpaths are not level, causing a manual wheelchair to veer toward the gutter and making it difficult to push. There is also a danger of a chair tipping into the gutter.
- George Street around shops and neighbourhood centre no sealed footpath and grass footpaths are uneven and holes not visible.
- More sealed footpaths.
- Every street could have cement footpath.
- I hope the new Forgan Smith Bridge will have a section for pedestrians with a barricade between vehicles and pedestrians as exists at present. It is not enough to have a white line separating pedestrians and vehicles.
- Footpaths is my concern. Apart from not enough, they need to be wide to allow passing a wheelchair and other vehicles of transport for the disabled.
- Wider paths and lots more of them.
- The promenade is wonderful but it needs to be kept clean.
- Footpaths. Repair – camber (unsafe at present). The provision of footpaths, footpaths on at least one side of the road.
- Footpaths are really bumpy. Need concrete and wider footpaths and curb cut outs to steep can't stop.
- Broken River, upgrade of existing paths.

1.5 Miscellaneous

- Council building, too many large unnecessary things.
- Should be more housing for poorer people.
- Please look into drainage in East Mackay as haven't had maintenance done to them for several years.
- Use some money from the flood relief instead of spending it before you get it.
- A tourist centre promoting Mackay attractions and show grounds to be available to caravans to allow easy access to City.
- Develop a rest area, Mackay Showgrounds with maximum stay allow people to explore Mackay area.
- Hole in Glenpark Street on north side approaching overpass, contains cables etc. Concerned person rang council, told not their problem, rang Telstra, said would act, hole still there.
- Why can't Council pass on concerns and monitor situation.
- A map of tourist areas to include Sarina, coal mines, Emerald and Canarvon George.
- A map printed to show places of interest to visit, with information on back.
- Employment opportunities
- We have the Endeavour foundation, but from my understanding, their services have diminished. A farming opportunity for the disabled sector of the community would be a wonderful addition to the town.
- Housing affordability – lack of Council pressure on Government departments to address shortage of affordable accommodation. Example selling of caravan parks.

- Council needs to take responsibility for mixed zoning to allow cheaper housing (to avoid ghettos).
- Impacts on health family relationships, violence and crime increase. Creates vicious cycle as also impacts on NGO.
- Atone for sins of past. Responsibility for past decisions and approvals by Council now deemed inappropriate.
- Shops in city heart – display racism on footpath.
- Sometimes MRC reading material is not good for people with communication difficulties. Long sentences, etc suggest consultation with speechie or OT.
- Computer skills in Walkerston library as I live in Eton area and have to travel to Mackay to do courses offered and my carer has to drive me in.
- People in outlying areas would have more access to services in their areas.
- Computer training for seniors, available in Mirani and mobile phone texting training IT in general. Available in Mackay not in Mirani.
- Drainage. Mirani is the worst. Suffers severe local flooding in heavy rain. (Foot path issues).

2.0 How well is Council serving the needs of people with a disability in the region?

2.1 Community responses

- Stop Manager of Mackay tourism speaking on behalf of people of Mackay and Sunday trading. This is the Mayor's job.
- New council appears to be more proactive. Need more consideration for more bus shelters. Connectivity between services – making sure new facilities are accessible.
- OK – like the level of open conciliation like people being experts in one field – get a more comprehensive service.
- In Mirani area Council have in the past responded to requests.
- Example: disability toilets in Edward Lloyd Park.

3.0 What is Council doing well?

3.1 Community survey responses

- I think you have great access points for disabled people at Canelands and you also have plenty of parking spaces available.
- Since the floods Council is trying to please the people, Jobs have been done that were promised for years to be seen to.
- Entrance ramps and street/road ramps are a very good improvement. One bus and one taxi with ramp access are good for one person per hour, but more are needed.

- Trying to improve road works.
- Nothing, only spending our money.
- No work done around area.
- More tourist signs on brown background to indicate places of interest.
- I think the present Council is doing great work – road works, parks etc.
- Gutter to gutter roads in some of the older North Mackay streets. Beautification of the town.
- Parks and gardens, some rates reduced, Malcomson Street. Better, good newsletter, excellent library service, police on streets, excellent entertainment centre.
- Crossings for pedestrians, Blue water Lagoon is excellent, beautifying Victoria and Gordon Street.
- Council seems to be taking a genuine interest in the Mobility and Access Advisory Committee.
- Improved access, e.g. parks, flat pathways, kerbs etc. Much better venues for events, e.g. food and wine day, really helpful staff and volunteer's e.g. library, entertainment centre. Good toilets with lots of room and good access.
- Consultations – excellent incentive. Being proactive – consultations. Disabled parking in Canelands – new \$150 fine great move. People have been fined. Now parks are available. George Christianson is enthusiastic and energetic – wants to get things done in the disability area.
- Pleased to see consultation happening. Lots of good programs and projects happening. Services for young and old. They are all doing well.
- Very well, improved access on to footpaths pram ramps. A good listening Council. Council has responded well to issues raised. Council has been good communicators offering great feedback on issues raised. Processes are good. MAAC Committee important.
- I have not seen any progress in Sarina over past 5 years. Been involved a few years back – no outcomes achieved. I declined to attend any further meetings.
- Not real good but I can see that things may start to improve with the new Council.
- Good lawn maintenance, poor gutter sweeping. Better maintenance on needs of roads e.g. mowing quick response to pot holes – Dalrymple Bay.
- Avenues of communications have been set up and good acknowledgement of local concerns and issues. Example: Australia Day. Willingness to consult.

4.0 List some of the things you would like to see as priorities for future Council budgets.

4.1 Community Survey responses

- Roads. I came here to live from the Interstate and I found that the roads are appalling. For such a rich area, I was shocked to see the state of the roads.

- A Zoo/wildlife park near the Botanical Gardens; Control of noisy dogs, bigger tax on dogs and cats; another community garden site, South-West Mackay Neighborhood and Park grounds with fully caged fruit trees.
- Better roads everywhere in the council areas.
- Low cost housing and free parking near doctors.
- Level footpath at bus stop also a bus shelter.
- More seating along River and walk and parks. More BBQ's in North Mackay Park. Footbridge over Goose ponds near Bowls Club. Toilets near Caltex service station in North Mackay.
- Permanent parking for senior citizens Club.
- Quadraplegic crossing particularly where traffic lights are installed. (These people cannot operate present pedestrian buttons).
- Interstate bus stop disgrace for visitors to City, unsafe, dirty, drunks urinating up alleys, fear for people arriving in early hours of morning.
- Cyclone pickup renewed twice a year.
- Fix Norris road, repaired part good, rest is terrible.
- More sealed footpaths, particularly in new housing areas for young mothers with prams and strollers and wheelchairs.
- Koumala transfer station has no recycling bins.
- Remove vegetation from around pedestrian crossings.
- Benches and taps at barbeque areas at goose ponds.
- Trim excessively high shrubs in roundabouts.
- Several bus stops are dirty and littered.
- More streetlights and out Paget way. Smoother footpaths.
- The yellow painted part of the promenade is extremely slippery after a shower of rain.
- Extra money to increase the number of paved footpaths and fix those that need it.
- Footpaths, Bus shelters, Supply bus to transport people to the annual disability expo.
- Disabled parking and toilets.
- Brewer's road footpath. Walkways from Woolworths – Leagues Club from inside of Broad Street to the other – north of monument.
- Vehicle parking area at Western end of Netherdale Park. Area marked by treated pine posts concreted into ground. Council could supply treated Pine posts, concrete and Netherdale Community would supply labour to do the work.
- A concrete path from parking area to shelter at Netherdale Park for the aged, those in wheel chairs and babies in prams. This will enable people to better view historic lift and steam engine. Council to plan pathway, supply concrete and Netherdale community to supply labour to construct path.
- One unisex toilet facility. Council to supply and Netherdale community to supply labour to install facility.
- More parking at Seniors Citizens venue in Mackay.

- Swimming pool accessibility; safe pedestrian crossings; better bus service; public toilet – accessibility for disabled; Door accessibility at Council buildings; signage for amenities.

5.0 Name one thing you would like to see addressed immediately

5.1 Community Survey Responses

- I find it interesting that Mackay and its surrounding areas where all its 'hard working people' (mines) are overlooked. When they are the ones making all the money for this state and our country. I think our roads and Sarina area should be priority.
- A Zoo/wildlife park near the Botanical Gardens; Control of noisy dogs, bigger tax on dogs and cats; another community garden site, South-West Mackay Neighborhood and Park grounds with fully caged fruit trees.
- Bring HACC transport back for things like – BBQ at entertainment centre (seniors), more services for the aged.
- Keep gutters clean and footpaths tidy. Gutters in South Mackay are full of rubbish. Good for floods.
- As owing to disability would like to see it done immediately.
- Tourist signs to places like largest Coal port Hay Point. Ring road, Hay Point. Grass tree beach, Sarina Beach, Sarina, Mackay.
- I am concerned about the parking for seniors. My suggestions are, make a parking space behind the seniors building next to the artspace. At any time this space is required temporary for any other purpose like all other spaces (a sign could be erected "No parking" for that period. This is the only piece of ground left around the Seniors Hall close enough for the seniors to walk to their cars especially in the dark.
- Parking. We are losing elderly members who cannot walk a block away if they cannot find a handicap park. The seniors club should be allowed to park beside the old hall, facing the fountain until sufficient close parking can be found.
- Move disability parking from centre parking areas to curb side. (Disability parking permits are given to disabled drivers who cannot negotiate traffic crossing).
- Sewerage smell at goose ponds from small white building between bridge and bowls club.
- Footpaths – clean and safe.
- Repair the current footpaths to make them more user friendly for people in wheelchairs. It would also help everyone else.
- The repair of existing footpaths – audit process – prioritise; resurfacing and leveling; repaving. Access to shops in the City heart.
- State emergency service to be established.

- Brewer's road footpath. Walkways from Woolworths – Leagues Club from inside of Broad Street to the other – north of monument.
- Parking within reasonable distance of Senior citizen hall. We take a couple (94 and 90) to functions there, and there are not enough handicapped places. (He has a wheel chair and she has a walking stick) so we have to drop them off, then go park, often in Nelson Street, and walk back.
- Safe accessible pedestrian crossings.

6.0 How do you usually contact Council?

6.1 Community Survey Responses

- In writing, by phone and in person.
- In writing – Photo copy
- By phone – Ref No
- In person - too see which staff lies.
- Writing is challenging, with using big and sophisticated words to get the right message across to Admin to CEO's to Councilors, etc.
- By phone.
- By phone – no follow up contact from Council
- In person – not enough parking area
- Too many buildings not enough parking area. Council, Entertainment centre, seniors, artspace, Convention centre. Where are the parking spaces?
- Phone and in person.
- In person.
- By Phone – Most Environmentally friendly.
- In person – Most Environmentally friendly.
- In person.
- By phone and in person.
- In person and by phone.
- By phone and In person – in a wheelchair.
- In person.
- By phone and in person.
- By phone – Easy, quick, instant response.
- Website, Telephone contact councilors, face to face.
- Telephone, email, website, letter/post.
- By phone
- At Armstrong Beach, progress Association meetings.

- By phone.
- Phone.
- By phone – Living 80kms from Mackay, Phone is easiest.
- In person – If in Mackay and have a concern, go to Council In person.
- In person
- Phone or visit Mirani customer service centre.

7.0 If you have a disability and the usual ways pose difficulties for you, could you please explain why and suggest how it could be improved.

7.1 Community Survey Responses

- Local News is excellent in passing important information. If I cannot watch it, I tape it and watch it the next day.
- Better connecting bus routes so better community groups.
- Needs cement footpaths.
- If work in my area is being done the councilor, who it represents could consult with the resident's one on one as no minutes of councils meetings are published unless you have a computer.
- Not particularly unreasonable request or a difficult solution.
- Website, If large print format is not available – alternative assistance/formats should be available.
- Always need large print option particularly the phone number.
- Phone calls can be on hold for 12 minutes and cut off. Need more customer service officers or a call back service (some Valley calls are STD).
- Door accessibility improvement for better customer access. Enhanced staff training.

8.0 Who do you contact in Council if you have a Council-related problem. Do you get the result you were expecting? If not, why not?

8.1 Community Survey Responses

- The Customer Service Centres. Yes, I get the results.
- The Customer service centres.
- The Customer Service centres, The Mayor, The CEO, Staff you know and a councilor you know. No, often long time Admin staff first try their best to be unhelpful if they think they can get away with it.
- The customer services centres. Yes.

- The Customer service centres. No, too slow to answer.
- The Customer Service Centres. No, no answer to my enquiries.
- The Customer Service Centres. Yes, councilor Perkins does not responded to my correspondences as directed by Mayor.
- The Customer Service Centres.
- The Customer Service centre. No, cannot remove trees on the curbside at my residence, because they are nice trees (these trees are very messy and impede rubbish collection by collection trucks).
- A councilor you know. No, they don't follow through and get the job done – they don't listen.
- Customer Service Centre and Staff you know. Sometimes.
- Customer Service Centres. Yes.
- Reception. Sometimes.
- Front customer service team for work. Phone Call centre. All council members. Sometimes.
- The customer service desk, library, community development.
- Customer Service Centre. Sometimes.
- Anyone who will listen.
- The customer service centres and Staff you know. Most times we do/ or within reasonable time. Distance from Mackay Regional Council office is our worst problem.
- A councilor you know.
- Staff and members. Sometimes, amalgamation some paths not clear.

9.0 How do you find out about what Council is doing?

9.1 Community Survey Responses

- TV and Local Newspaper.
- TV and Through a local community group
- Letterbox drop, local newspaper and through a local community group.
- By phone
- TV
- TV, Letterbox drop, Local newspaper, from a friend, radio, through a local community group.
- TV and radio
- TV, Letterbox drop and Local newspaper
- TV, Letterbox drop, from a friend, Radio and through a local community group.
- TV, Letter drop Box and Local newspaper.
- Local newspaper.
- Email or personal letter, through a local community group.
- Letterbox drop and from a friend.

- In focus – newsletter; website; email us; MRCSD website.
- Word of mouth, TV, paper, radio, email, website, in focus bulletin, external networks and interagency meetings, public notice boards.
- Too secretive, selective reporting. Need to report to the public (voters/funders) financial accountability under their DDA Plan Example percentage of total spend across all council services.
- Genuine community access to customer service centres. Located in Community, example shopping centres.
- Through a local community group.
- Letterbox drop and Local newspaper.
- Local news – ABC
- TV and Local newspaper
- TV
- Local newspaper.
- Word of mouth and newsletter.

10.0 What else could Council be doing?

10.1 Community Survey Responses

- Need more bus stops. None close here.
- The Blue water Lagoon is beautiful but it is disgusting to see so much litter around it every afternoon. The board outside, lists “no running” yet there are many children (10 – 16 yrs old) running – is there no one who can see that the rules are obeyed?
- Move ahead with fixing the footpaths.
- 1.5m wide footpath all through the city.
- At least six water bubblers throughout the city.
- Have better access to footpaths and walking tracks in the suburbs.
- Transport for disability at night time. Wait for hours.
- More wheel chair taxis.
- Put buses on at night time to get people home.
- Access to the lagoon – something to be floated on.
- Transport around hospital not enough.
- Access a speechie to assist with reading materials.
- Council is benefiting directly from mining boom by increase in ratable properties and rates. Council needs to support NGO’s with increase in rents, requirements for increased services (fair share).
- Provision of accommodation and premises at same level that the rest of the community expects (not a shed down back).

- Become involved and vocal to all areas and issues around public transport. i.e. services should run in business hours. Look at Hamilton (Victoria) community bus.
- Free rubbish pick-up. Pre-cyclone season. Free dumps to suit individual house holds by way of voucher system.
- Let the seniors use the community halls for free? Need a friendlier space with the hall over business hours – open the front doors to the hall. Nothing for seniors on lawn – a senior centre?
- Can't use swimming pool at school except after school hours (PCYC was going to have a multi purpose centre).
- Mackay and surrounding towns have free 'Midweek' and 'Pioneer news'. Publish in them but out here (Netherdale), we do not receive free papers, so we rely on TV and 'The Daily Mercury'.
- Pedestrian crossings.

11.0 Other input received

Response in relation to question one:

- Local Native Wildlife breeding program for all people that have challenging conditions, e.g. Zoo.
- Individual interest in shared life activities with others and animals on an hourly basis. Volunteers. Major Eco Tourist attraction close to Botanical Gardens.
- Up to nine chooks in Residential yards, bigger than 9x9 meters. Eight chooks in an 8x9 meter yard. Seven chooks in a 7x9 meter yard. Food scraps.
- Great pets – real eggs - waste re-use/recycles. They eat lawn grubs, moths, snails, slugs and spiders.
- Iodize or salt water swimming enclosure/water polo pool, near town beach/Queens Park, South-West neighborhood centre and Park and playground.
- Better, skin Health, eye health, body health and hair health. Physical activity shared community interaction. Water polo sport and Arena.
- The consultation process. Needs to be in other formats, example a low vision young families and older people. Times held/allocated – target groups unable to attend. Maybe weekends or after hours. Advertising – how wide spread? How do we get the word out? On a regular basis, example every two years. Feedback sessions on a regular basis – keeping every up to date. Over consulted – see no change. The promotion of what is already out there.
- Bus stops need to be smoke free zones. Council to liase with Queensland Cancer fund to use their signage at bus stops.
- Education on mental health illness for business sector staff.
- Headphones for information rather than getting same information from a person face to face is preferable for some people with mental illness – a phone in a bank would also work.

- Council to sponsor an information session for commercial sector on awareness raising of breakdown of their consumers.
- Poultry – change to Council bylaws allowing poultry as pets.
- Need in Mackay for a salt Lagoon.
- Community Services Directory? Is there one?
- When Main roads doing the work can local people give input into how to do it well. (E.g. disability, aged, etc). Until then – slowing traffic coming into Sarina need a crossing half way up the street.

Focus Group Discussions – 10 March 2009 - Outcomes

Access Issues:

- Education/orientation for staff to respond effectively with people with mental illness
- Possible to achieve through agreements with service providers who can assist with support and understanding - contact information to be provided.
- Protocols can be developed with service providers to guide staff on how to manage situations
- Accessing information – community directory – website information still outdated – can't find form to update details.
- Customer service staff to be able to access information to meet customer's needs – eg. Carelink – perhaps promotes this (eg through doctors (mouse pad))
- Bluewater lagoons – access to the water – all terrain wheelchairs or hoist – partner with DSQ?
- Liberty Swing in Ram Chandler Park – in a cage? – Could it be incorporated in park at Lagoon street (part of Botanical Gardens) – integrated.
- Conditions of pathways and roads – bus stops.
- Transport generally:
 - reading bus timetable – too small
 - options are very limited
- Blue River Walk – problems with use with wheelchairs
- Social isolation for aged eg transition from hospital to home needs for aged and frail.

Connections with Council:

- Improved/increased access to facilities for clients/customers
 - Mental Health Week – access to the gardens needed permits & licenses – no funding
 - Needs improvement in information up front and systems to support it
 - Find out what facilities could be used and what you need to access/book them
- Policy alignment relative to working with people with disabilities
- Competitive access to community centres or free space – regular bookings dominate the diary (eg yoga) - ? review policy to improve equitable use
- Promotion of facilities/services could be improved

- Information generally
- Input to park development eg Queen's Park
- Professional input for design staff on accessibility
- Festivals and events by Council could engage PWD more in the planning & delivery, eg River to Reef, River to Rock Festival

How to Improve Informing the Community re Council Services etc:

- Information sheets around key services **but** information changes rapidly
- Council website is hard to navigate or not well maintained
- Radio can be useful for key messages
- Free newspaper is good mode for info
- Use agency newsletters as a medium
- Consider use of Ning/Facebook/Blogs
- Shared calendar would be useful

Mackay Regional Council – DDA Action Plan

Internal Stakeholders Interview Schedule

Name & Title:

Date:

1. Describe your core activities?	
2. Does this service/dept have a written policy on access and equity for people with disabilities (PWD)?	
3. Are there relevant standards for the service?	
4. Are records kept about the numbers of people with disabilities who use this service?	
5. Do you provide specific services for people with a disability?	
6. Do you have specific products for PWD?	
7. Is there a mechanism for people with disabilities to alert you to ways the service might improve?	
8. Does the eligibility criteria of the processes needed to be completed for access to this service prevent or hinder people with disabilities from using it?	
9. Is information about the service available in	

alternative formats eg Braille, on disk, on a website, in plain language?	
10. Has staff working in this area had training in understanding disability issues, communicating with people with disabilities and their obligations under the anti-discrimination laws?	
11. Do you think staff would benefit from training/more training in disability issues, customer service and obligations under the anti-discrimination laws?	
12. Do you perceive there to be any other barriers to PWD accessing your service or product?	
13. How could your service or product be adapted to accommodate the needs of PWD?	
14. What are the implications of this change?	
15. Comments.	