



ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN

Mackay Regional Council

Key actions for the next five years to create an accessible and inclusive community for the Mackay region
2017 – 2021

Introduction

Mackay Regional Council is committed to inclusion and equity to build a connected and accessible community for all. Mackay Regional Council has a strong history in planning, servicing and advocating for people with disabilities in our community.

Council has had an Equitable Access Policy since the late 1990s and Mackay was one of the first Councils in Queensland to have a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Action Plan. Building on the success of the previous plans, Mackay Regional Council has undertaken a community engagement project to develop its new Accessible Communities Action Plan (ACAP) 2017 - 2021.

The plan has a focus on 'accessibility' for the whole community which broadens the scope of the plan to encompass not only people with permanent or temporary disabilities but also people with mobility and accessibility concerns such as older persons and parents with prams. Taking on this wider view of accessibility will ensure that Council plan for the whole community however the specific needs of people with disabilities will remain a core focus of the new plan.

The ACAP comprises of two parts:

1. Part A – ACAP in Summary
2. Part B – Final ACAP

The Future Directions in Summary

The aim of the ACAP is to set a series of actions for the next five years that help to develop an accessible and inclusive community.

The first key direction is aimed at a strategic 'whole of council' level so that the principles supporting an accessible community are integrated into Council's core business and service delivery.

The remaining five key directions for the future include the following:

- Improving infrastructure and future development
- Enhancing internal capacity building
- Community strengthening and advocacy
- Customer service and access to information
- Policy and program development

Strategic Direction 1: Leadership and Governance

WE WILL:

- Display strong leadership and be an exemplar role model as an organisation that is inclusive in its practice, and that develops and promotes an accessible community
- Effectively engage with customers, staff and the community to identify opportunities to improve accessibility and inclusion for the Mackay region
- Ensure appropriate governance and accountability arrangements are in place to encourage effective implementation of the ACAP
- Prepare a monitoring and reporting strategy that aligns with Council systems and practices

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY:

- Mackay Regional Council is a leader and role model for disability inclusion practices

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe					Budget Estimate (Low, Medium, High)
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
1.1	Leadership – provide public statements of Mackay Regional Council’s commitment to accessibility and inclusion among the region’s communities, other authorities and council staff.	Office of Mayor & CEO	●	●	●	●	●	Low
1.2	Engagement – engaging people with disabilities to guide and inform council’s infrastructure, service and program development across all functional areas.	Organisational Services	●	●	●	●	●	Low
1.3	Governance – the delivery, monitoring and reporting of the ACAP is coordinated as a ‘whole of council’ responsibility with the coordination to be managed by the Community and Client Services Department	Community & Client Services	●	●	●	●	●	Low
1.4	Governance – implement a monitoring and reporting regime that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review and amendment of the ACAP on a quarterly basis 	Community & Client Services	●	Review	Review	Review	Review	Low

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a report to Council on a half-yearly basis• a report of achievements to the relevant committees, staff and community groups on a half-yearly basis							
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Strategic Direction 2: Improving Infrastructure and Future Development

WE WILL:

- Continue to improve physical accessibility to priority areas of Council's facilities, pathways and open space areas
- Upgrade public transport infrastructure
- Advocate for improved public transport services in the Mackay region
- Develop a prioritisation schedule for the future roll out of pathway and bikeway links throughout Mackay region

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY:

- Provide safe, flat walking paths/footpaths
- Advocate for improving physical accessibility to shops, businesses, sporting and recreational facilities
- Improve public transport

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe					Budget Estimate (Low, Medium, High)
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
2.1	Identification and prioritisation of required linkages and wayfinding to footpaths, bikeways and buildings in high priority areas across the Mackay region	Engineering & Commercial Infrastructure	●	●				Low
2.2	Assist with better access to and within public open spaces including beach access	Development Services		●	●	●		Medium
2.3	Continuation of an access improvement program based on previous access audits (DDA Upgrades)	Engineering & Commercial Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	●	High
2.4	Continuation of the bus stop upgrade program in partnership with the State Government's Transport Accessible Infrastructure Program (PTAIP)	Engineering & Commercial Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	●	High
2.5	Improve change/parent room facilities at high profile public facilities to enable suitable change table facilities for older children and adults	Organisational Services			●	●		Medium

Strategic Direction 3: Enhancing Internal Capacity Building

WE WILL:

- Understand and celebrate diversity in our workforce
- Make diversity and inclusion a key consideration for strategic workforce planning
- Provide Access and Inclusion Awareness training as an integrated program within Council

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY:

- Council is a role model for effective employment and management of employees who may have a disability

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe					Budget Estimate (Low, Medium, High)
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
3.1	Understand and promote profiles of people with a disability in the workforce	Organisational Services	●	●	●	●	●	Low
3.2	Establish a 'reasonable adjustment' program to enhance the capacity to employ people with a disability	Organisational Services	●	●	Review	Review	Review	Low
3.3	Develop and incorporate Access and Inclusion Awareness training as part of Council's integrated Learning and Development program for all staff	Organisational Services		●	●			Medium
3.4	Develop specific training for front line and service delivery staff to demonstrate competency in inclusive practice and service provision	Organisational Services		●	●			Medium

Strategic Direction 4: Community Strengthening and Advocacy

WE WILL:

- Continue to have high quality engagement with the community relating to matters of access and inclusion
- Strengthen the capacity of the community sector to share information and collaborate on matters of access and inclusion
- Advocate for better coordination of disability services in the Mackay region

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY:

- Better coordination of services for people with a disability
- Accessibility and inclusion for all people no matter where they are

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe					Budget Estimate (Low, Medium, High)
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
4.1	Combine the Equitable Access Advisory Committee (EAAC) and Healthy Ageing Reference Group (HARG) to form one Access and Inclusion Committee that reports to Council	Community & Client Services	●					Low
4.2	Incorporate into Council's marketing program suitable campaigns that promotes and reflects the strength and diversity of the Mackay region (using testimonials and ambassadors)	Community & Client Services		●	●			Low
4.3	Build the capacity of the disability sector by convening a disability interagency forum on a regular basis (at least annually)	Community & Client Services	●	●	●	●	●	Low
4.4	Facilitate an annual 'engagement through the arts' (e.g. PhotoVoice) project that engages people with disability and helps to raise awareness for principles of access and inclusion	Community & Client Services	●	●	●	●	●	Medium

Strategic Direction 5: Customer Service and Access to Information

WE WILL:

- Promote Mackay region as an 'Access Friendly' city and region
- Provide better coordinated information about council's services and programs in a variety of formats
- Upskill all staff to properly direct public and customer enquiries

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY:

- Improved awareness of available services and programs

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe					Budget Estimate (Low, Medium, High)
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
5.1	Access and Inclusion Map - Develop an 'access friendly guide' to promote key elements of accessibility in high profile locations (digital version)	Community & Client Services		●	Review	Review	Review	Medium
5.2	Develop a program, relevant materials and schedule proactive community education sessions about council services	Community & Client Services		●	●	●	●	Low
5.3	Develop relevant programs for the upskilling of council staff to properly direct public and customer enquiries	Organisational Services		●	●			Low
5.4	Incorporate into any Information Technology Strategy the opportunity for the website to be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (Australian Standards) and facilitate customisation to improve accessibility	Community & Client Services			●	●		Low
5.5	Expand Council's corporate communication protocols to include the use of live captioning and interpreters at identified events and civic addresses	Community & Client Services		●	●	●	●	Medium

5.6	Incorporate into any Information Technology Strategy the opportunity to incorporate Video Remote Interpreting (free 'app') where appropriate	Community & Client Services		●	●			Low
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Strategic Direction 6: Policy and Program Development

WE WILL:

- Better align council's policy with the aim of broader access and inclusion
- Ensure council's programs can deliver to diverse audience needs to enable more inclusive practices

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY:

- Development of a richer cultural program reflecting diversity in the community

Item No.	Actions	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe					Budget Estimate (Low, Medium, High)
			2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	
6.1	Complete a detailed review of Council's existing Equitable Access Policy, Cultural Diversity Policy and Age-Friendly Communities Policy to combine them to form an Access and Inclusion Policy	Community & Client Services	●		Review		Review	Low
6.2	Complete a review of other council policies to ensure appropriate alignment with principles of access and inclusion	Organisational Services		●		Review		Low
6.3	Encourage programs that enable digital literacy for identified target groups	Community & Client Services		●	●	●		Low
6.4	Ensure council's annual cultural program for the Arts includes content that reflects cultural diversity and inclusion	Community & Client Services	●	●	●	●	●	Low
6.5	Review council's delivery of programs for the diverse needs of some audiences, e.g. some Story Time sessions to be delivered with sign language	Community & Client Services		●	●			Low