

10.11. New Members of the Access and Inclusion Committee

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ATTACHMENTS	Access and Inclusion Committee Terms of Reference
CSP LINK	4. Our Social Vitality 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe 5. Our Civic Leadership 5.1 Lead North Sydney's strategic direction 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the recruitment of four new members for Council's Access and Inclusion Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Council's Access and Inclusion Committee (AIC) is an advisory group, comprised of local residents with lived experience with disability, that provides guidance and expertise on how to enhance accessibility and promote inclusion within Council's infrastructure, facilities, events, services, systems, and processes for people with disability.
- Following the departure of two committee members from the AIC, there are only six current members of the AIC.
- The AIC Terms of Reference state that the quorum for meetings will be six members, with a maximum of 10.
- To ensure the AIC has enough members so that meeting quorums are met, Council has recently undertaken a recruitment process to seek new candidates for the AIC.
- Through the recruitment process, for candidates were selected for inclusion in the committee.
- New members of the AIC will be inducted ahead of the next meeting of the AIC on 26 August 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. THAT** Council note the contents of this report.
- 2. THAT** Council note the appointment of four new members of the Access and Inclusion Committee.
- 3. THAT** Councillors be invited to attend the upcoming meeting of the Access and Inclusion Committee on 26 August 2025 to meet and welcome the newly appointed members.

Background

Council's Access and Inclusion Committee (AIC) was formed in February 2024, in line with item 4.41 of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 (DIAP) - "Establish a disability inclusion advisory group to provide strategic advice to Council". The aims of the AIC as outlined in its Terms of Reference (ToR) are as follows:

- Provide expertise and advice on how to enhance accessibility and promote inclusion within Council's infrastructure, facilities, events, services, systems, and processes for people with disability.
- Provide advice and guidance on the development and implementation of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and other strategies and policies that impact on access and inclusion
- Provide advice on how to raise awareness and promote attitudinal change within the community to promote inclusion and access for all.
- Provide guidance on embedding the social model of disability across the organisation.

Despite its short lifespan, the AIC has seen significant success in achieving these aims. The AIC has provided crucial input and guidance on a range of Council initiatives, including the 10 Year Strategic Plans, website accessibility enhancements, accessibility of sporting facilities, review of the Public Dining and Goods on Footpath Policy, supported the ongoing implementation of the DIAP, formed part of Council's response to the NSW Government Transport Oriented Development proposal, and providing valuable feedback on some of Council's public domain design projects.

In addition to the work conducted during meetings of the AIC, members of the AIC have also been integral to promoting cultural and attitudinal change across Council, the community, and the broader local government sector. AIC members participated in a video promoting the structure, function, and accomplishments of the AIC which was presented to staff at the Council International Day for People with Disability event in December 2024. A member of the AIC also acted as a panellist at the 'Disability and Local Government' panel discussion hosted by the University of Technology Sydney to discuss the work of the committee.

For this remarkable body of work, the AIC was recognised as a finalist in the Community Development category at the annual Local Government Awards in June.

The Need for Recruitment

Eight committee members were appointed to the AIC at its inception, comprising local residents with lived experience with disability. Committee members were selected according to the eligibility criteria outlined in the ToR, which are as follows:

- a person with disability or carer who is living in or connected to North Sydney;
- demonstrated experience delivering outcomes to improve access and promote inclusion within communities and/or across organisations; and
- willingness to participate and engage locally to promote inclusion through education and advocacy.

Since its inception, two of the original committee members have left the AIC, leaving six remaining members. The ToR states that a minimum of six members need to attend any given meeting in order to meet the required quorum. Should Council choose to maintain the current number of members, there is a significant risk that the quorum would not be met in future meetings, resulting in the postponement of the meeting.

Additionally, when membership of the AIC is reduced, so too is its capacity to meaningfully represent the diverse and unique needs of people with disability. Recruiting additional members promotes the efficacy of the committee in achieving its stated aims. This is particularly relevant as preparations begin for the development of the next iteration of the DIAP, in which the AIC will be a primary stakeholder.

For these reasons, Council has recently undertaken a recruitment process to assess and select four new candidates for the AIC. This report briefly summarises the recruitment process, as well as provide an overview of the successful candidates.

Recruitment Process

The following steps were taken in the recruitment process:

1. creating an AIC expression of interest form which was then shared through a variety of communications including Council's website and social media channels, and shared directly with relevant community networks, organisations, and individuals;
2. assessing the eligibility of all applicants based on the criteria in the committee Terms of Reference;
3. assessing the suitability and best fit of eligible applicants through a series of phone screens; and
4. the preparation of a shortlist of candidates which was reviewed and approved by Council's CEO, consistent with the Terms of Reference.

To ensure the recruitment process was inclusive and accessible to all applicants, information about the application process was provided in multiple formats, with options for reasonable adjustments clearly stated in all materials. Additionally, special consideration was given to younger applicants and applicants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, as these represent demographic groups not currently represented in AIC members.

Successful Candidates

The recruitment process yielded 17 expressions of interest for the committee. Four candidates were then selected based on their eligibility, lived experience, professional experience, and diversity in lived experience, either as a person with a disability or a carer of a person with disability. The following candidates have been selected to be members of the North Sydney Council Access and Inclusion Committee:

1. Amanda Reston
2. Laura Osweiler
3. Lynette Dowd
4. Paul Miskin

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

Financial/Resource Implications

The cost to facilitate participation for members of the North Sydney Disability Inclusion Committee is estimated to be in the order of \$3,000-\$4,000 per annum. Such costs will be funded through existing budget lines.

Legislation

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 requires that people with disability must be treated equitably and be included in our community.

TERMS OF REFERENCE



Access and Inclusion Committee

1. NAME

1.1 The Community Consultation Group will be known as the “Access and Inclusion Committee”.

2. STATUS

The establishment of the Access and Inclusion Committee was a recommended action in Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2022-2026) endorsed by Council in October 2022.

3. ESTABLISHED

Established by Council: August 2023

4. AIMS

The Access and Inclusion Committee will be an advisory body tasked with assisting Council in achieving improved access and inclusion of services and infrastructure in North Sydney. The Committee will;

- 4.1.1 Provide expertise and advice on how to enhance accessibility and promote inclusion within Council’s infrastructure, facilities, events, services, systems, and processes for people with disability.
- 4.1.2 Provide advice and guidance on the development and implementation of Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP 2022-2026) and other strategies and policies that impact on access and inclusion.
- 4.1.3 Provide advice on how to raise awareness and promote attitudinal change within the community to promote inclusion and access for all.
- 4.1.4 Provide guidance on embedding the social model of disability across the organisation.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1. The Committee will comprise a maximum of ten community representatives appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 5.2. The Mayor, or an appointed Councillor, will be invited to participate as a representative of Council. This is additional to the community representatives.

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- 5.3. A member of Council's Community Development Team will attend in a support role and will not have voting rights.
- 5.4. Expressions of interest will be invited by the Chief Executive Officer to appoint community representatives. The following criteria will be considered in the selection process;
 - 5.4.1 A person with disability or carer who is living in or connected to North Sydney.
 - 5.4.2 Demonstrated experience delivering outcomes to improve access and promote inclusion within communities and/or across organisations.
 - 5.4.3 Willingness to participate and engage locally to promote inclusion through education and advocacy.
- 5.5 Reasonable measures will be taken by Council to facilitate the participation of individuals on the Committee including reimbursement of reasonable costs associated with overcoming any barriers to participation. These will be subject to approval.
- 5.6 An eligibility list of suitably qualified Committee members will be maintained and drawn upon to replace any vacant positions.

6. CHAIRPERSON

- 6.1 The designated Councillor as elected by the Council will chair the Access and Inclusion Committee.
- 6.2 In the absence of the Chair, meetings will be chaired by a member of Council's Community Development Team.

7. QUORUM

- 7.1 The quorum for meetings will be six members (excluding Council staff).
- 7.2 If the quorum is not met, the meeting will be postponed to another date set by the Chairperson

8. POWERS OF COMMITTEE (DETERMINATION/DELEGATIONS)

- 8.1 The Access and Inclusion Committee is not a decision-making body. The Committee is an advisory body to Council. Council may adopt or reject the Committee's advice.
- 8.2 The Committee has no delegated powers from Council.

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9. TIMETABLE FOR MEETINGS

- 9.1 Meetings will be held four times a year at a time determined by the majority of the Committee at the first meeting.
- 9.2 Meetings will be limited to a maximum of two hours unless the Committee decides otherwise.
- 9.3 At least 10 days written notice will be provided prior to meetings. Such notice will be provided by email.
- 9.4 An agenda will be provided at least five business days prior to the meeting and will be prepared by Council staff in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.
- 9.5 If there are insufficient agenda items (as determined by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate) a scheduled meeting may be deferred or cancelled. All Committee members will be notified of the cancellation.

10. MEETING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

- 10.1 Council staff will make room bookings, send invitations, and prepare and distribute the agenda and minutes. Minutes will be made publicly available. Matters of a confidential nature will not be included in the minutes.
- 10.2 Meetings will be conducted at a Council-owned facility or via video conferencing.
- 10.3 All reasonable adjustments will be made to facilitate participation by Committee members in meetings.
- 10.4 Apart from the appointed Councillor, other Councillors are welcome to attend the Group meetings as observers.
- 10.5 Standards of conduct apply to a meeting held by audio-visual link in the same way it would if the meeting was held in person.

11. CONDUCT PROTOCOLS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- 11.1 All Committee members are required to observe the provisions of the Council's *Code of Conduct - Volunteers and Community Representatives*.
- 11.2 All Committee members, as well as other participants including observers, are expected to observe the following protocols:
- 11.3 General Responsibilities:
 - a) be courteous to other participants, Council staff, and Councillors;
 - b) help to create an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination; and
 - c) protect the health, safety and welfare of yourself and others at meetings and related activities.

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- 11.4 Should general responsibilities of participants not be observed, the Chair has the authority to ask participants to leave the meeting.

12. TENURE

- 12.1 The maximum tenure of members of the Committee will be for two terms of Council.
- 12.2 Members who wish to resign from the Committee must do so in writing.
- 12.3 If a Committee member is absent for three consecutive meetings without leave, their position will be declared vacant.

13. ACCESS TO COUNCIL CODES, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- 13.1 Related Council Codes, Policies and Guidelines, including the [Code of Meeting Practice](#), [Code of Conduct - Councillors and Staff](#), [Code of Conduct - Volunteers and Community Representatives](#) and [Lobbying Policy](#) may be viewed on [Council's website](#) and/or hard copies may be obtained upon request.

14. AMENDMENTS TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 14.1 The Terms of Reference shall only be amended by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 14.2 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed after the first year and thereafter every four year prior to the local government elections.