

## 9.2. Access and Inclusion Committee Minutes - 25 November 2025

<b>AUTHOR</b>	Peita Rose, Governance Officer
<b>ENDORSED BY</b>	Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Planning and Environment
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	1. Access and Inclusion Committee Minutes 25 November 2025 [9.2.1 - 10 pages]
<b>CSP LINK</b>	<p>2. Our Built Infrastructure</p> <p>2.1 Infrastructure and assets meet diverse community needs</p> <p><b>Outcome 2 – A connected and socially inclusive community where everyone is valued</b></p> <p>S3. Nurture a shared sense of belonging where everyone’s voice is heard and people feel they are valued</p> <p><b>Outcome 3 – An active community with space for everyone to exercise and enjoy the outdoors</b></p> <p>O3. Provide new and upgraded facilities within existing public spaces to increase amenity, accessibility and diversity</p> <p><b>Outcome 8 – An effective, accountable and sustainable Council that serves the community</b></p> <p>G2. Put community needs at the core of everything we do and deliver excellent customer service</p>

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to outline the proceedings of the Access and Inclusion Committee meeting of 25 November 2025, and for Council to consider any recommendations from the Committee.

The Terms of Reference of the Access and Inclusion Committee state:

- 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.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- This report presents the discussions and recommendations of the last meeting of the Access and Inclusion Committee, held 25 November 2025.
- The Minutes are attached for the information of Council.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**1. THAT** the Minutes of the Access and Inclusion Committee meeting dated 25 November 2025 be received and noted by Council.

## **Background / Report**

The Terms of Reference of the Access and Inclusion Committee state:

*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.*

The Committee discussed and considered the following matters at its meeting of 25 November 2025:

- update on the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 engagement report;
- update on the Let's Talk Rates consultation and results; and
- workshopped the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan that is currently under preparation by Council staff.

No recommendations were made by the Access and Inclusion Committee that require adoption or consideration by Council. However, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the recently completed community engagement process and staff input, will inform the development of the Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan, which will be presented to the committee at its next meeting in March 2026. The draft plan will subsequently be presented to Council for endorsement.

A full copy of the meeting Minutes forms Attachment 1 to this report.



## MINUTES

The Minutes of the **Access and Inclusion Committee** meeting held in the Ros Crichton Pavilion, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney on Tuesday 25 November 2025.



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## 1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting opened at 5.35pm.

### In Attendance

Chair: Councillor Beregi

Councillors: Councillor Beregi

Committee Members: Jaci Armstrong, Community Member (remote)  
Amanda Reston, Community Member (remote)  
Judy Harwood, Community Member  
Alistair Lee, Community Member  
Lynnette Dowd, Community Member  
Laura Osweiler, Community Member  
Jillian Christie, Community Member  
Kate Hook, Community Member

Council staff: Therese Cole, Chief Executive Officer (remote)  
Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Planning & Environment  
Gary Parsons, Director Open Space & Infrastructure  
Gabrielle Rennard, Service Unit Manager Community Resilience and Sustainability  
George Carrick, Access and Inclusion Coordinator  
Peita Rose, Minutes Secretary

## 2. Apologies

Councillor Baker, Mayor  
Councillor Welch  
Kate Wilson, Community Member

## 3. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 August 2025, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

Moved by Judy Harwood and seconded by Jillian Christie.

## 4. Disclosures of Interest

Nil.

## 5. Reports

### 5.1. Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 Engagement Report

**AUTHOR** George Carrick, Access and Inclusion Coordinator

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is for the Access and Inclusion Committee to consider the outcomes of the community consultation on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 (DIAP).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- Council recently finalised community consultation on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 (DIAP) which ran from Monday 22 September to Sunday 2 November 2025.
- Community consultation resulted in 99 unique responses across all engagement channels. These responses resulted in 48 unique items of feedback that are consolidated and considered in this report.
- This report does not include feedback gathered from staff. A report on staff feedback will be provided to the AIC following the next meeting of the DIAP staff working group on Tuesday 18 November 2025.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**1. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee note the contents of the report and provide feedback on the engagement process.

**2. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee uses the results of this report to inform its feedback on which action items should be included in the DIAP.

Committee members provided the following feedback:

- The committee supported the consultation methodology, noting the comprehensive scope of the engagement within the timeframe.
- The committee praised North Sydney Council staff for the feedback provided during the consultation, noting the genuine commitment to improving outcomes for people with disability.
- The committee suggested that the DIAP 2026-2030 incorporate actions based on previous recommendations by local community centres that would support people with disability.
- The committee encouraged Council to engage with Greenway residents during future recruitment for the committee.
- The committee recommended that all major Council policies, plans, and documents contain photographic representation of people with disability.
- The committee recommended that Council develop an online accessibility hub to make it easier for site visitors to find materials, checklists, or other available accessibility resources.

The Motion was moved by Laura Osweiler and seconded by Alistair Lee.

The Motion was put and carried.

Resolved to Recommend:

**1. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee note the contents of the report and provide feedback on the engagement process.

**2. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee uses the results of this report to inform its feedback on which action items should be included in the DIAP.

## **5.2. Update from the Executive - Let's Talk Rates**

**AUTHOR** George Carrick, Access and Inclusion Coordinator

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Access and Inclusion Committee regarding Council's, 'Let's Talk Rates' community engagement process.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- Council is currently undertaking a 'Let's Talk Rates' community consultation process to seek input from the community on three proposed rate options largely to help repair and renew infrastructure and build a strong financial position.
- This community consultation process is the second phase of community consultation relating to service levels and infrastructure renewal. The AIC was engaged on the first phase: 'Let's Build a Stronger Future Together' at the 26 August 2025 AIC meeting.
- A member of Council's executive team will present to the AIC on the current community engagement process.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**1. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee note the contents of the presentation and provide input and feedback on the Let's Talk Rates community engagement.

Council's Chief Executive Officer, Therese Cole updated the Committee on the 'Let's Talk' Survey.

The Committee provided the following feedback:

- The surveys have been evidence-based. Including photos allows people to see what the Council has and does is a good step as it assists the community to understand and visualise the need for undertaking for the SRV. The 'calculate your rates' is a positive tool that allows people to put their own address in and provides an overview of current rates and proposed rates under the SRV proposal.

The Motion was moved by Jillian Christie and seconded by Kate Hooke.

The Motion was put and carried.

Resolved to Recommend:

**1. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee note the contents of the presentation and provide input and feedback on the Let's Talk Rates community engagement.

### **5.3. AIC Workshop - Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030**

**AUTHOR** George Carrick, Access and Inclusion Coordinator

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to prepare the Access and Inclusion Committee for a workshop on the development of the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 – 2030 that will take place during the committee meeting on 25 November 2025.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

- Council has recently concluded community consultation on the development of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030 (DIAP).
- Informed by the outcomes of the engagement process, Council is seeking input and guidance from the Access and Inclusion Committee on the development of the draft DIAP.
- Council's Access and Inclusion Coordinator will facilitate a workshop during the AIC meeting on 25 November to gather and document the committee's input on priority items for the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**1. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee provide guidance and input to Council on the priority actions for inclusion in the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 - 2030.

Each committee member was invited to provide feedback and input on the priority actions for inclusion in the draft DIAP 2026 – 2030. The feedback is listed below, in no particular order – some feedback is relevant to the draft DIAP 2026 – 2030 and some is for the consideration by the Council and/or the CEO:

- That the DIAP include actions to improve wayfinding and accessibility into buildings and council offices.
- That the DIAP should include actions to support easier navigation and wayfinding throughout the LGA, including improved consideration of accessible detours around construction sites.

- Many footpaths in the LGA currently do not meet the requirements for an electric wheelchair and that Council should consider this in the upcoming DIAP.
- The DIAP consider the needs of people with sensory/respiratory sensitivities and investigate methods to improve access to Council buildings and events. Suggestions included changing procurement requirements for cleaning materials to ensure that they are free of chemical irritants.
- The DIAP seek to amend and enforce improved Outdoor Dining and Goods on Footpath Guidelines to ensure continuous paths of travel across the LGA by removing barriers such as A-Frame signage, e-bikes and temporary construction.
- Improve the entrance to Council Chambers on Miller Street as it is currently not accessible for many people with mobility impairments.
- It was noted that the Northside Markets are not accessible for people with mobility impairments.
- There are no adult changing facilities within the North Sydney LGA. Strongly recommended that Council seek funding through the Accessible Australia grant funding program to support the installation of an adult changing facility.
- Council look to install tactile ground indicators (TGIs) at each set of lights, including TGIs with wayfinding information such as street names.
- Council improve the available information on its website to better communicate the accessibility features present or not present at its facilities, events and services.
- Praise for Stanton Library as a hub for accessible community events and services for people with disability. Encourage Council to continue to provide these events and services.
- Council review the recruitment process for the AIC and other Council committees to ensure they are accessible and inclusive. Recommendations included providing information on the recruitment process in a variety of formats and having a person with a disability on the recruitment panel for the committee.
- Consider implementing a disability mentorship program within Council, to connect staff with a disability together and ensure people with disability are well supported within Council.
- Investigate opportunities to create flexible roles within Council that would be more inclusive for people with disability. Examples included roles with flexible working arrangements (including flexible working days, hours, and hybrid in person/online working), adjusting roles to better suit people with disability (e.g. adjusting the position description and/or combining/splitting roles).
- Look to partner with local schools and educational institutions to create traineeship pathways and opportunities for local students with a disability.
- Provide Council staff with experiential learning opportunities lead by people with disability to support them to better consider accessibility and inclusion in their work.
- Provide Council staff with educative resources to help staff with a disability better understand their rights as employees and to connect them with resources that are available to support them in their roles (e.g. Council's workplace adjustment policy).
- Recommend that Council run more targeted and role specific training lead by people with disability.

- Visual representation of people with disability in Council documents should include those with non-visible disabilities (e.g. Images of people wearing sunflower lanyards in documentation for those with invisible disability)
- Look to include captioning and transcription features as standard practice in all online meetings.
- Make Council's website more inclusive and accessible - should feature photos of facilities and event spaces to support people with disability so they can effectively plan their visit to Council facilities or events.
- Provision of educative resources to the community to support better understanding of proper use and utilization of accessible parking spaces.
- Provision of educative resources to local schools and students to build understanding of how to best support people with disability to navigate in public spaces (e.g. keeping footpaths clear)
- Implement an accessible community/business award program to celebrate and recognize best practice in the community.
- Ensure transparency and clear communication regarding the DIAP consultation and implementation process. The committee noted in particular the importance of demonstrating accountability and transparency when completing actions and seeking opportunities for continued feedback and input along the way.
- Develop accessibility checklists and guidelines to support staff in day-to-day matters. Examples might include an accessibility checklist for document preparation, developing online resources, or conducting a recruitment process.
- Investigate opportunities to support people who are financially excluded from community participation as there is often a link between financial hardship and disability.
- Explore opportunities to embed access and inclusion principles into design guidelines for all major capital works projects.
- Ensure the community and the DIAP have a shared understanding that access and inclusion go beyond footpaths and built infrastructure and encompass all aspects of Council's work.

Any further feedback can be sent to George via email, phone call, or message within the next two weeks.

The Motion was moved by Jillian Christie and seconded by Judy Harwood.

The Motion was put and carried.

Resolved to Recommend:

**1. THAT** the Access and Inclusion Committee provide guidance and input to Council on the priority actions for inclusion in the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026 - 2030.

The following are the meeting dates for 2026:

- Tuesday 24 February - Ros Crichton Pavilion at 5:30pm
- Tuesday 26 May - Ros Crichton Pavilion at 5:30pm
- Tuesday 25 Aug - Ros Crichton Pavilion at 5:30pm
- Tuesday 17 November - Ros Crichton Pavilion at 5:30pm

Council currently has a Model Code of Meeting Practice on Exhibition. Under the Code, Councillors cannot join meetings remotely unless the request is due to ill health or another medical reason or unforeseen caring responsibilities.

The committee suggested that such a measure:

- could be seen as being discriminatory as it discourages those with a disability from running for election.
- will affect female participation and from those not represented in Local Government.
- fails to appreciate the nature of the role of councillor is part-time and needs to be considered in the context of other commitments
- is likely to result in Councillors unable to attend in person not being able to represent the community they were elected by.
- reduce community representation.

The committee agreed that a letter to the Hon Minister Ron Hoenig MP, Minister for Local Government be written on behalf of the AIC to convey their concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the Model Code of Meeting Practice as part of the NSW Government's Councillor Conduct Framework Reforms.

In particular, the committee wanted to oppose the following proposed change:

*Providing as a default that councillors are to attend meetings in person. Councillors will only be permitted to attend meetings by audio visual link where they are prevented from attending a meeting in person because of ill health or another medical reason or unforeseen caring responsibilities. Councillors will not be permitted to participate in meetings at which a mayoral election is being held by audio visual link. To facilitate this, the rules governing attendance at meetings by audio visual link will be mandated.*

## **6. General Business**

- The committee recommended that all future attachments to AIC agenda items are distributed by electronic means only.

The Motion was moved by Jillian Christie and seconded by Kate Hooke.

The Motion was put and carried.

- Resignation of AIC members Judy Harwood and Paul Miskin.

Judy Harwood announced that she is stepping down from the committee at the end of the year.

George stated that Judy has been an influential person in driving many of the changes in embedding access and inclusion for Council and with respect to AIC committee and it's been such a pleasure being able to work with her for the last 2 years.

Paul Miskin has chosen to stand down.

## **7. Closure**

The meeting closed at 7.22pm.