

Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee (DIAC)

Friday 10 October 2025 at 10:00am
Council – Glass Room

MEETING NOTES

MEETING COMMENCED: 10:17am

IN ATTENDANCE:

Kathy Arthur, Director CARS, Brad Rossiter OAM (via Zoom), Noal Annabel, Catherine Sykes (via Zoom), Frank Ross, Joel McCubben, and Melinda Rowell, Executive Assistant to Director of CARS (Minutes).

APOLOGIES:

Clr Amber Schutz (Chair)

1/2. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Kathy Arthur kindly welcomed the committee and provided Welcome to Country.

3. Introductions and apologies

General introductions around the table.

Kathy confirmed with the committee that the minutes from the previous meeting had been read and were accurate. There were no objections from the other committee members.

AGENDA ITEMS

4.1. Confidentiality agreements

Confidentiality agreements were discussed and signed off.

ACTION:

- 4a. Melinda to return signed confidentiality agreements to committee members.

4.2 Review of disability data/demographics for Eurobodalla

Jodie acknowledged the presence of people in the room living with disabilities and mental health conditions, recognising the importance and value of lived experiences.

She presented a draft infographic outlining the Consultation and Engagement Plan. She emphasised that this is a starting point, not a final product, and welcomed feedback from the group. She explained the co design approach, noting she came in with an idea and some guiding slides and questions. She reiterated that the plan is not in solid form and encouraged participants to share what would be most beneficial for the community.

Jodie briefly mentioned that there are legislative requirements underpinning the engagement process. She offered to go through these in detail at a later time and invited the committee to reach out if further information is required.

The inclusion plan she outlined focused on several key areas: raising community awareness around inclusion, improving the physical and social environment to support diverse needs, promoting

inclusive employment practices, developing better systems and processes to support inclusion, and ensuring equitable access to information for all community members.

The group engaged in general discussion about the difference between what the Shire needs and what it currently has in terms of disability services. It was noted that there are gaps in NDIS service provision, and that these differences are impacting community members.

Kathy noted that we will get more information from the survey results.

4.3 Disability industry landscape for Eurobodalla

Jodie clarified that the presentation is specifically prepared to inform the co-design of the next Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), with a focus on disability related data and landscape in Eurobodalla. While broader demographic insights, such as cultural diversity, First Nations peoples, and language needs have been mapped for the full DIAP, today's session concentrated on the disability specific context to support meaningful and inclusive planning.

The group engaged in a broad discussion around disability inclusion, community support, and the role of Council.

Brad highlighted the diversity of disabilities and the need for tailored support. He shared personal experience, such as requiring support to leave home and is unsure where to find help or who to contact within the Shire. He suggested the survey include practical examples, such as the lack of wheelchair accessible picnic tables.

Jodie emphasised the importance of carers, noting that many people with disabilities rely heavily on them. She expressed concern about the ageing population and the growing shortage of carers. She suggested that the survey include a self-identification section to better understand community demographics and needs. Noted that every Council faces similar challenges in this space.

Kathy acknowledged Brad's previous feedback regarding picnic tables. The Parks and Gardens team recently upgraded picnic tables at Malua Bay to improve accessibility, including features that accommodate wheelchair users. It was confirmed that as further upgrades are undertaken across the shire, accessibility improvements will continue to be incorporated into picnic table designs.

Kathy explained that Council's role included both planning and advocacy, particularly in pushing for support from other levels of government. She mentioned existing strategies and programs such as the Pathway Strategy, inclusive events, job shop initiatives, and services embedded in everyday operations (e.g. libraries offering hearing loops and autism-friendly spaces). Emphasised the importance of embedding accessibility and inclusion into all Council processes, including arts, tourism, website accessibility, and workplace health and safety (WHS). These are items that might come out of the survey.

4.4 Draft Consultation and engagement plan, proposed stakeholders for engagement, proposed timeline

Jodie stated that the DIAP follows a structured and inclusive development process. From early groundwork and co-design through to adoption and implementation, each phase builds on community insight and collaboration. The timeline outlined the key milestones that guide the journey, ensuring the plan is both meaningful and achievable, with lived experience at its core.

Jodie asked the group whether the proposed timeline feels reasonable? Noting that Brad has an expo coming up soon. Brad confirmed the Expo is scheduled for 22 November 2025 and mentioned that there are only 6 spots left.

There were general discussions on what other Councils have done in developing their Action Plans.

Jodie has reviewed several other Council websites to understand their approaches, noting that some Councils finalised their plans too early and missed key information.

Jodie emphasised the need to capture as many voices as possible, especially from people with diverse disabilities. The key focus areas include consultation formats, engagement methods and accessibility of information.

Jodie listed a range of interactive methods to support inclusive consultation: feedback consultations, briefings with organisations and networks, use of photos, story boards and other visual aids.

Kathy added that consultation would also include sporting and recreational groups, noting that this approach previously led to the identification of several disability programs and associations.

Jodie raised the idea of considering different survey formats: Some Councils conduct one general survey, other conduct two separate surveys.

Frank suggested that surveys could be delegated to carers or parents where appropriate.

Kathy noted that surveys can help identify trends in issues (e.g. access to local's parks, services), shared experiences across the community, and impact on individuals. She highlighted the importance of identifying ratings of vulnerability, using examples like the Three Bs playgroups, which are designed to support parents and children with issues related to hearing, sight, and dental health.

Jodie noted that some Councils are experiencing "death by consultation", with surveys containing too many questions. To avoid overwhelming participants and improve response rates, she suggested condensing the survey to approximately six key questions.

ACTION/S:

4.4a: Jodie to catch up with Brad at another time to discuss Brads questions.

4.4b: Jodie to get in contact with Brad to organise Councils involvement in the expo.
Done.

4.4c: Melinda to send a summary of the tools that Jodie read out. And if the committee could provide feedback and suggest other tools to add.

4.4d: Melinda to send out links to all identified disability programs and associations to help target relevant groups for consultation.

5. GENERAL BUSINESS

5.1 DIAC Survey Questions

Jodie provided sample questions to the group, sectioned into four DIAP outcomes areas to serve general discussions between the team.

Attitudes Inclusions:

- Committee members recommended using specific examples of lived experience and combining related themes (e.g. toilets and parks) for clarity.
- Questions should reflect respect, positive experiences, and practical barriers.
- Avoid generic wording; aim for specific lived experiences.

- Consider rating scales to gather more related feedback.

Employment and Participation:

- The importance of local employment opportunities for people with disabilities was highlighted.
- Transport access was discussed as a key factor influencing participation in employment.
- Committee members shared insights on what is working well and identified areas for improvement.

Systems and Process:

- The survey will be made available online, in person, and with support tools as screen readers.
- Brad noted that some screen readers may not allow editing.
- Jodie confirmed a question will be included early in the survey to identify if a carer or support person is completing it.
- A free text section at the bottom of the survey should be added to allow respondents to share their lived experience in their own words.
- Frank felt Question 2 wasn't effective, too broad or emotionally loaded.
- Kathy agreed, everyone has good and bad experiences, but the focus should be on actionable insights.
- Kathy emphasised being careful with wording to avoid bias or leading questions.

Jodie discussed the next steps; she will rewrite the questions and create a sandbox version of the survey.

Kathy reminded the committee to email Melinda with feedback for Jodie.

Considering adding a video to support accessibility and engagement.

The draft survey will be sent in a tight timeframe and a quick update will be discussed at the December meeting.

ACTION/S:

5.1a: Jodie to finalise draft survey and Melinda to send to the DIAC committee.

5.1b: Jodie to send a list of consultation process to follow to Melinda for distribution to the DIAC committee.

5.1c: Jodie to gain feedback from other groups in the Shire.

5.1 Resignation

Kathy noted that Loretta Parsley resigned from the DIAC committee and all other advisory committees at Council. Once the minutes are endorsed at the December meeting, they will be uploaded to the Councillor Hub for reference and published on the Council website.

NEXT MEETING: Glass Room on TBA from 10am to 11.30am

MEETING CLOSED: 12.00pm