



Physical Disability Council of NSW
Ordinary People Ordinary Lives

Submission for the City of Sydney
Review of the Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2017 -
2021

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Who is the Physical Disability Council of NSW?

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is the peak body representing people with physical disabilities across New South Wales. This includes people with a range of physical disability issues, from young children and their representatives to aged people, who are from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances and live in metropolitan, rural and regional areas of NSW.

Our core function is to influence and advocate for the achievement of systemic change to ensure the rights of all people with a physical disability are improved and upheld.

The objectives of PDCN are:

- To educate, inform and assist people with physical disabilities in NSW about the range of services, structure and programs available that enable their full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship.
- To develop the capacity of people with physical disability in NSW to identify their own goals, and the confidence to develop a pathway to achieving their goals (ie: self-advocate).
- To educate and inform stakeholders (ie: about the needs of people with a physical disability) so they are able to achieve and maintain full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship.

Introduction:

PDCN appreciates the opportunity to comment on the City of Sydney's (CofS) draft inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2017 – 2021. As our organisation also resides in premises within the City of Sydney we are encouraged by the City's actions to date in former action plans, and in the actions of the draft, overall, with many initiatives going a long way to increasing inclusion of people with disabilities and understanding of same, however will make comments specific to each relevant Directive Area /Action below.

Direction 1 - Positive Community Attitudes and Behaviours

Action 1 – Continue to implement a program of disability awareness and confidence training for CofS staff

PDCN agrees that this is appropriate however would suggest that an important **measure** for this action would be broader than that indicated by staff internally (with/without out disability) and should also measure the **% of community members with disability** whom agree that Cof S staff display appropriate disability awareness behaviours when interacting with them.

Direction 2 – Liveable Communities

Action 4 – Continue to improve the accessibility of the public domain for people with disability and older people, through renewal programs, upgrades and new capital projects, including identifying opportunities to provide designated quiet spaces for people with sensory disorders

A continuous path of travel for those with physical disabilities is essential in providing full access to the community, places of education and employment, and social activities.

The draft action plan identifies as a measure the % of accessible kerbside ramps, and signalised crossings, which are imperative.

However, in addition PDCN would advise the need to address the use of the footpath areas, to ensure there is adequate space for those whom may use a wheelchair, scooter, walking frame; be vision impaired (using a mobility device or assistance animal) or a parent pushing a pram can navigate the footpath without interference from signage, on street dining or other structures which may impair this path of travel or provide a barrier to movement, or the ability to pass each other at any point on their journey.

Actions 7, 8 and 9 – Mobility parking spaces in the City of Sydney and commercial parking facilities.

Conveniently placed accessible parking spaces are essential for maximising access to shopping, hospital/doctor's appointments, community and social opportunities for people with disabilities and limited mobility (such as many older Australians.)

To ensure the most effective use of accessible parking arrangements, PDCN would suggest wherever possible the provision of a range of accessible spaces, including wider spaces for wheelchair users, ambulant mobility spaces, and those for parents with prams are all provided.

In addition, clearly delineated signage for the differing uses mentioned above may assist in further ensuring appropriate parking is available for the particular groups described at the time of use.

Increased publication on the CofS website and other appropriate sites, of the location and types of accessible parking spaces throughout the city would also be of great benefit for those planning trips throughout the CofS.

Action 13 - Encourage delivery of housing in the local area that is universally accessible and meets the Gold Standard of the Liveable Housing Australia Design Guidelines.

PDCN welcome the CofS initiative to encourage new housing that is universally accessible and meet the GOLD standard of the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines, however would wish to see a mandated requirement for a minimum percentage of dwellings that were delivered to be of this standard.

Equally, in order to ensure that people with disability benefit from this action, PDCN would also request that the CofS consider ensuring a percentage of this housing is also

specifically designated for people with disability to access, otherwise dwellings of this nature (due to their benefit to parents with prams, the elderly and others whom like the level access and wider door widths) tend to be in high demand and missed by those that need them most.

Actions 14,15,18 and 19 Inclusive learning, sport and recreation, arts or other events and tourist attractions are accessible.

PDCN recommend that the CofS review any online booking processes for inclusive (or otherwise) events of any type, and ensure that wheelchair users in particular are not disadvantaged in the booking process.

Currently most online booking systems will not allow a person booking a wheelchair accessible seat to do this ONLINE, and require that they call and make the booking. This process is both non inclusive, lengthy, and often problematic (in particular in the length of time the person may wait before being answered, and the knowledge of the booking agent to manage a wheelchair booking)

Whilst PDCN understands that this enables agents to ensure spaces being booked are used appropriately, a clearly defined process in an online booking system could also achieve this, and give the wheelchair user, or person booking, the same inclusive process as all others.

With timing being a factor in securing seats at some activities/events, this may also mean that wheelchair users and their accompanying friends miss out on tickets whilst waiting to book via a phone system.

Directive 3 – Meaningful employment

Action 20, 21 and 24 Inclusive employment strategies

PDCN welcome the CofS initiatives in the area of employment for people with disabilities, across all areas of disability.

As an additional measure PDCN would suggest a long term measure of the % of staff (new employees, entry level employees or other) that REMAIN employed at the 6 month, 1 year and 2 year points.) The implementation of strategies that promote pathways to senior positions for people with disabilities would be a welcome inclusion to the CofS Inclusion Action Plan.

In line with the employment of people with disabilities, ensuring all CofS workplaces are fully accessible, or implement appropriate workplace adjustments for employees with a disability could be an identifiable action in the Inclusion (Disability Action Plan)