



**Feedback on The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability)
Action Plan 2014-17.**

**Prepared for City of Sydney by the Physical Disability
Council of NSW**

March 2014

Physical Disability Council of NSW
St Helens Community Centre
3/184 Glebe Point Road
Glebe NSW 2037

Freecall: 1800 688 831
Phone: 02 9552 1606
Fax: 02 9552 1606
Fax: 02 9552 4644

Web: <http://www.pdcn.nsw.org.au/>

Email: admin@pdcnsw.org.au

The Physical Disability Council of New South Wales (PDCN) is the peak organisation for people with physical disability across the state. PDCN welcomes the opportunity to comment on *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17*.

PDCN believes the articulated belief and understanding that practical solutions to create an inclusive and accessible city can benefit everyone needs to reinforce and inform any Inclusion policy at the Local Government level.¹ PDCN welcomes The City of Sydney's commitment to providing equitable opportunities for participation for people who live, work and visit the City of Sydney.²

The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17 has highlighted a number of key directions to achieve the vision of a livable, inclusive and accessible City. PDCN's comments will be made using these as a reference point.

Direction 1: GREEN – People of all abilities can get around in the City

City of Sydney highlights the importance of transport, noting quality transport will strengthen the sustainability and liveability of the city, improving health and wellbeing for all City residents, visitors and tourists with a disability.³ PDCN supports this as the goal of a sustainable, flexible and efficient transport network for a livable, inclusive and vibrant city.

PDCN also believes a flexible and adaptive transport policy for the changing needs of The City of Sydney is a crucial part of this. This also includes green space. *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17* mentions key aspirations in this area as ease of navigation and being accessible for pedestrians and public and community transport users, regardless of their ability.⁴

PDCN is concerned that people with physical disability who may be restricted to the use of private vehicles as transport may be disadvantaged. The City of Sydney Neighbourhood Parking Policy Draft for Discussion highlights that people with disability and mobility impairments are highly dependent on car travel to maintain

¹ The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17 p 3.

² *ibid.*, p 4.

³ *ibid.*, p 10.

⁴ *loc.cit.*

their mobility and independence.⁵ It also states that access to street parking should be made a priority for this group.⁶ PDCN believes the needs of this group should remain a crucial part of any balanced and inclusive transport policy.

PDCN suggests that these concerns may be partially addressed by extending the mentioned priority on street parking for mobility access in central Sydney beyond the implementation of the Sydney City Centre Access Strategy to include all of the City of Sydney.⁷ This would provide another means of ensuring flexible access where it is most needed.

Direction 2: GLOBAL – Visitors and tourists of all abilities are welcome

The City of Sydney highlights the importance of Sydney being accessible to visitors and tourists of all abilities.⁸ PDCN believes the importance of public toilets and urban furniture, taking into account the needs of people with disability also given here cannot be under estimated. These elements are essential to an inclusive and accessible environment.

PDCN contends the importance of urban furniture and accessible public facilities, particularly toilets, is a universal one. These elements allow all people to remain connected, engaged and able to access their community. PDCN suggests that these priorities naturally include the importance of public seating in the wider community. Public seating is one small way a community can be inclusive and accessible for all. Seating is one way to address the social isolation that comes with reduced mobility, allowing people to continue enjoying and contributing to their community, regardless of age.⁹

PDCN agrees that any policy in the area of making Sydney accessible to people of all abilities must include access to retail, restaurants and business services to be truly inclusive. PDCN welcomes the leadership goal of The City of Sydney in this

⁵ The City of Sydney Neighbourhood Parking Policy Draft for Discussion, p10.

⁶ loc.cit.

⁷ The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17, p9

⁸ ibid, p 10.

⁹ PDCN (2011) The Impact of Ageing on People with Physical Disability p6

area.¹⁰ The promotion of the importance of access and inclusion and the benefits to the whole community by The City of Sydney cannot be underestimated.

Direction 3: CONNECTED – People of all abilities live and work in the City

PDCN acknowledges the Equity and Diversity Strategy mentioned in *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17*.¹¹ It is an important part of any inclusive policy approach. PDCN would suggest that for people of all abilities to live and work in the City, the same inclusive approach needs to inform all the directions within *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17*. For people with physical disability living, working and visiting the City depends on access being at the centre of all policy areas.

Direction 4: CONNECTED – All people have access to City information

PDCN welcomes the importance placed on the importance of information as tool for participation and engagement of all people.¹² PDCN would suggest that any policy for City information needs to be part of an inclusive approach that underpins all of the directions mentioned. Without independent access to up to date and accessible information, people with disability who live, work and visit the City face an unacceptable and unnecessary obstacle to their participation in the community and society as a whole.

PDCN appreciates The City of Sydney highlighting the need to update the guidelines, *Communicating with People with Disability – Hints and Resources*. PDCN believes this is an essential part of The City of Sydney's leadership role in this area, as it includes the on-going promotion of inclusive and empowering communication practices in the wider community.

Direction 5: CONNECTED – People of all abilities have a say

PDCN applauds the importance of active participation to develop solutions.¹³ PDCN is hopeful any Community Engagement Strategy embraces access and inclusion as the foundation of inclusive solutions across all the directions of *The City of Sydney*

¹⁰ The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17, p10

¹¹ *ibid.*, p 11

¹² *ibid.*, p 12

¹³ *ibid.*, p 13

Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17, providing a transparent, equitable and accessible way for all members of The City of Sydney community to engage in opportunities to provide input.

PDCN believes an essential part of this process is regular updates on the progress of all the proposed directions and outcomes within *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17*, as consultation often highlights the importance of these outcomes to the community.

Direction 6: CONNECTED – People of all abilities are part of City life

PDCN welcomes the commitment to including people of all abilities in City life.¹⁴ To this end, PDCN believes The City of Sydney has a leadership role in this area. This role does not restrict it to inclusion and access to City of Sydney events. City of Sydney policies in this area can be a positive influence on others and play a vital role in promoting the importance of inclusion and access to events in the broader community.

Governance and monitoring

PDCN supports the need for independent monitoring and evaluation and implementation of *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17* and acknowledges the work of the Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel as an essential part of the process. PDCN would suggest that valuable input from stakeholders and monitoring not be confined to the strategies mentioned in *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17*.¹⁵ PDCN is hopeful that accessible, transparent and flexible monitoring and evaluation would include input from as many parts of the community as possible.

PDCN is concerned that *The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17* does not provide a clear timeline for the directions, actions, or the vision elaborated upon throughout. As The Plan covers such an important planning area, PDCN hopes relevant bodies and positions of authority are already aware of clear

¹⁴ The City of Sydney Draft Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-17, p 14.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p 15.

deadlines against which to monitor performance, otherwise the targets may become more aspirational and less tangible.

PDCN believes a clearer timeline to also be critical to the effectiveness of The City's Community Engagement Strategy, this timeline would enhance the collaboration, community participation and input as articulated in The Plan, allowing The City of Sydney to provide strong and transparent leadership through the community updates on the progress and success of The Plan.