



# Disability Access Plan 2020

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## **Introduction**

In April 2009 Singleton Council adopted a Disability Access Action Plan; and a review was undertaken in 2013. The development and subsequent review of Singleton Council's Access Plan is evidence of the commitment of Singleton Council to people with a disability in the Singleton community. Singleton Council also recognises that improvements to physical access not only assists people with a disability but also the broader community, particularly older people and young families.

The Singleton Disability Access Plan is designed to focus the efforts of Council, staff and the community towards achieving a truly inclusive environment for all, with the aim of contributing to the liveability of the community for all its residents and those who visit.

The review of the Disability Access Plan has allowed Council to look at the actions that have been completed and to re-evaluate and identify other areas that require action to ensure that Singleton Council meets not only the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 but also the expectations of the residents whom we represent.

## **A Snapshot of Singleton**

Singleton is the original dwelling place of the Wanaruah people. The Singleton Local Government Area covers 4,893km<sup>2</sup> and includes regional villages as well as the main township of Singleton.

On Census night 2011, the population of Singleton was 22,694. According to an Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey in 2003, the rate of disability in Australia is estimated at 1 in 5 people (20%), therefore an estimate of the number of people with some form of "activity restriction" in Singleton is 4,538. It is estimated that 86% of these people will experience limitations in core activities such as self-care, mobility and communication, or restricted education and employment opportunities.

ABS data from the 2011 Census indicates that there are 831 people (of all ages) with a profound or severe disability, requiring assistance with everyday living, in the Singleton LGA. There are 1,898 people who provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability. All these statistics have increased from the 2006 Census.

## **Policy Context and Framework**

Singleton Council's Disability Access Plan 2020 has been developed within the context of the following legislation and standards:

### **Federal Government legislation and standards**

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Access to Premises Standards (Buildings)
- Building Code of Australia
- Australian Standards for Access and Mobility 1428 Suite of Standards
- The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

### **State Government legislation and standards**

- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- NSW Disability Services Act 1993
- NSW Ageing Strategy

### **Local Government Context**

- Local Government Act 1993
- Singleton Council's Access Plan is linked to a range of Council Plans, Policies and Operational procedures, including the Singleton Community Strategic Plan, Operational Plan and Delivery Program.

### **How was this Plan developed**

The 2009/2010-2019/2020 Disability Access Action Plan was developed after consultation with the general public, the disability community and the Singleton District Disability Advisory Committee. The Committee is comprised of at least 50% of people with disabilities or carers or family members of people with disabilities. Consultations were also held with the Australian Quadriplegics Association, John Moxon & Associates and Access Always Consultancy.

A significant component of the development of the 2009 Action Plan was to carry out an access audit of Council facilities, which was completed in March 2005. Members of the Disability Advisory Committee re-visited all facilities in 2008, identifying any works completed, and priority items; and also prioritised the facilities according to public use, particularly by those with a disability, children, and older people. Northcroft Construction Consultants provided estimated costings for all individual items identified in the Access Audit in November 2008. The Disability Advisory Committee also identified “Access Priority Zones” around Singleton, to prioritise high use areas of accessible pedestrian travel. The first of these is the “CBD Safe Passage Triangle”, from George Street to John Street, and all were assessed for access issues, with necessary kerb ramps and footpaths identified.

A review of the 2009/2010 Plan was completed in 2013. The review includes:

- Reviewing all completed work from 2009/2010-2019/2020 plan.
- Review of new relevant literature
- Consultation with the Singleton and District Disability Access Committee.
- Consultation with relevant Council staff
- Undertaking a new access audit on all Council owned facilities to reassess access requirements under the new legislation (2011).

## **Understanding Access**

For people with disabilities, access can mean different things depending on the type of disability the person has and the activities that the person is seeking to undertake. To demonstrate:

For a person using a wheelchair, access is important in regard to physical access such as the absence of steps; gentle slopes; wide, self-opening doors; car parking with room to unload a wheelchair; and toilets that are large enough to accommodate them.

For a person with vision impairment, access is important in the area of lighting; signs that are large enough to be read; warnings of hazards; safe path of travel; and information provided in audio or large print.

A person may think of access in terms of information being available in a variety of formats (Braille, on disk, on tape, etc) as well as pathways that are free of hazards, like low tree branches.

A person who has an intellectual disability may think of access as the use of language that is easy to understand and the use of symbols on signs to minimise reliance on the written word.

A person with a psychiatric disability (or mental health disorder) may think of access in terms of people's attitudes and behaviour towards them; feeling included is very important.

A person who is deaf or has hearing impairment considers access in terms of communication, particularly having information in visual forms, the use of sign interpreters and telephone access via telephone typewriters (TTYs).

In each of the above examples a person with a disability thinks of access in terms of what is necessary so they can have the same level of access as the rest of the community.

### **Key Achievements from 2009/2012**

The 2009/2010 Disability Access Action Plan identified \$1,216,171 worth of works to Council facilities, with a further \$19,291.25 for the Gym & Swim; \$195,000 for kerb ramps; and \$515,710 for footpaths. Although several applications have been made to infrastructure funding opportunities, so far none of these have been successful. However, funding from the Community Services budget has enabled virtually all of the identified kerb ramps in Priority Zone 1 to be constructed. Council's Parks & Facilities completed extensive works on the Gym & Swim and the Ravensworth Voluntary Planning Agreement of 2011 allowed for access works in the Senior Citizens Centre, kerb ramps in the CBD and public toilets in the rural villages to be planned and commenced. There has also been significant work done in the Community Service Centre. In July 2011 Council resolved to allocate \$50,000 per year for three years for access improvement works and so far this has been dedicated to allow completion of the necessary work in the Senior Citizens Centre.

### **Review and Reporting**

Implementation of the Disability Access Plan will be reported on to Council annually. Council is also required to report annually to the Division of Local Government on achievements against measures specified in the Action Plan.

The Singleton District Disability Advisory Committee will be part of the reporting and review procedure, with Singleton Council's Community Development Team reporting on progress to each Committee meeting as a standing item.

The Disability Access Plan will be reviewed, with relevant consultation, every two years, to assess its viability and allow for appropriate timeframes for Capital works to be set after annual cost estimates have been made. Actions not addressed in the current plan will also be considered.

**Access Audit of Council Facilities:**

In 2012/2013 Access Audits were completed on all Council-owned facilities. From these audits a report was developed to show all works required to bring the facilities up to the current Australian Standard.

Through consultation and the information gathered from the audits, the following Council facilities were identified as the priority for works:

1. Singleton Senior Citizens building
2. Singleton Out of Hours School Care building
3. Singleton Council Administration building
4. Singleton Council Depot
5. Public Toilets

**Accessibility of Council Streets: Kerb and Footpath Work**

Addressing the street and environment access issues around town is a key focus for the Singleton and District Disability Advisory Committee. In 2008 five priority zones were selected to increase accessibility around the Singleton township. A key achievement from the 2009-2012 Plan is that the works in what was then priority one have been completed. The Disability Advisory Committee has now reviewed the zones and have set the Priority Zones as follows:

1. Singleton Heights - Blaxland Avenue – Wakehurst Street to Bridgman Road including shops and Dorsman Avenue.
2. Boundary Street, Queen Street, Combo Lane and Civic Avenue, Queen Street to Cambridge Avenue
3. John Street, Gowrie Street, Ryan Avenue including Gowrie Mall and Rose Point Park and Rose Point complex.
4. Kelso Street from New England Highway to Orchard Avenue to Edinburgh Avenue to King Street.
5. 'CBD Safe Passage Triangle (York, George and Hunter Streets, ending at John Street. The Showground, Singleton High School, Burdekin Park, Singleton Police Station and Singleton Primary School are immediately adjacent to this route).



**Actions:**

**Objective 1:** Promote positive communication that goes both ways between Council and the community to increase the level of knowledge of the strengths and needs of people with a disability in the Singleton community.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Outcome
1.1 Conduct ongoing consultation to allow people with a disability and their family and carers to contribute to the strategic direction of Singleton Council	Ensure community consultation is held in an accessible building using an accessible format that considers the needs of people with hearing or vision limitations.	All departments of Council.	On-going	Singleton Council's plans and strategies will have quality community input and will reflect the real needs and strengths of the Singleton Community.
	Develop a community engagement strategy that incorporates disability access principles.	Communications and Community Engagement Advisor	June 2014	
	Hold bi-monthly Disability Advisory Committee Meetings.	Community Development	On-going	
	Consult with the Disability Advisory Committee on relevant development applications	Community Development and Planning	On-going	
1.2 Provide information in multiple formats to meet the varying requirements of people in the community	Ensure Singleton Council's website is accessible for people with vision impairments	Website committee and Community Development	Complete	A well informed community that has information available in a format that they can easily use to stay up-to-date.

	Develop a Social media guide as an alternative communication source.	Communications and Community Engagement Advisor	Complete	
	Develop a mobility map of Singleton CBD	Community Development and GIS	Complete	
	Develop On-Line access map (subject to funding)	LAMS Coordinator	March 2014	
1.3 Enhance Staff understanding of Disability access.	Conduct staff training, attend team meetings and get involved in the development of plans across Council as appropriate	Community Development	On-going	Staff across all departments of Council will have a good understanding of disability access and will incorporate this knowledge into their day-to-day operations.
1.4 Provide accessible emergency evacuation plans in all Council facilities.	Develop accessible emergency evacuation plans in an accessible format to replace current word document plans in each of Council owned facilities.	Parks and Facilities. GIS	December 2014	Everyone entering Council owned facility will be able to read and understand the emergency evacuation plan and will be able to follow it in a safe manner.

**Objective 2:** Access and Participation - To Strengthen access and participation of people with a disability within the social, recreation, economic and built environment of Singleton.

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Outcome
2.1 Improve the accessibility of the built environment.	Conduct Access Audits of all Council premises, infrastructure and parks	Community Development	Every 5 years	An accessible community that provides equal dignified access to everyone in the Singleton community.
	Provide comment on Development Applications in regards to Access to Premises standards and DDA	Community Development	On-going	
	Implement Access Audit recommendations through annual budget expenditure	Works, Parks and Facilities	As funding becomes available	
	Complete yearly access spot checks on Council Community facilities	Community Development	On-going	
	Implement Priority One of kerb and footpath works	Works	2015	
	Implement Priority Two of kerb and footpath works	Works	2017	
	Complete access audits on Council owned sporting facilities.	Community Development	July 2014	
	Complete access audits on Council owned playgrounds	Community Development	September 2014	

	Undertake a review of the accessibility of bus stops in the Singleton LGA	Works	2014	
	Incorporate Disability Discrimination Act 1992 in the Singleton DCP review	Planning	2014	
	Provide accessible public toilets in rural locations across the Singleton LGA	Parks and Facilities	June 2014	
	Link actions and outcomes of Disability Access Plan to relevant Asset Management Plans.	Asset Managers, LAMS Coordinator	2014	
2.2 Enhance social and recreational opportunities for people with a disability	Support programs that encourage people with a disability to engage in arts and culture, leisure and skill development activities.	Community Development, Library, Youth and Children's Programs	On-going	A community that is well integrated and supports everyone to come together and participate in leisure and recreation
	Implement stage 8-10 of the Rose Point All Abilities Playground	Parks and Facilities	Park completed 2019	
	Implement Gym and Swim master plan	Parks and Facilities	2014	
	Development of Alroy Oval master plan to incorporate whole of community inclusion.	Parks and Facilities Community Development	June 2014	

	Development of Townhead Park master plan to incorporate whole of Community inclusion.	Parks and Facilities Community Development	June 2014	
	Ensure events organised by Council are accessible to all members of the community through the development on an accessible checklist established in Councils Event Management Guide	Community and Cultural Services, Economic Development, Parks and Facilities, Waste, Australia Day Committee, Events Committee	On-going	
	Develop a program or strategy to increase participation of people with a disability in the arts	Community and Cultural Services	June 2015	

2.3 Establish Singleton Council as a disability friendly employer.	<p>Adaptable work spaces and technology available</p> <p>Establish key recruitment strategies to encourage participation for under-represented groups including people with a disability.</p> <p>Ensure recruitment advertising is available in a variety of formats and does not include accidental barriers that prevent people applying for positions.</p>	<p>Information Services and Human Resources</p> <p>Human resources</p> <p>Human resources</p>		A Council that employs the right person for the right job no matter what access support is required.
2.4 Encourage people from all backgrounds and with all abilities to run for election as a Councillor.	Establish a strategy that encourages people from all backgrounds and abilities including people with a disability to run for election in the next election in 2016	Community Engagement and Community Development	June 2015	An election that sees people from various backgrounds and abilities running for Council.

**Objective 3:** Advocate for people with a disability on issues affecting access and participation in social and economic life

Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame	Outcome
3.1 Respond to issues impacting on access to choices affecting the lives of people with a disability.	Write submissions on behalf of the Singleton Council and the community in response to developing Federal and State police and plans.	Community Development	As required	A community that is listened to and supported and as such feels it is well represented by the local council.
	Hold bi-monthly Singleton and District Disability Advisory Committee meetings	Community Development	Bi-monthly	
	Attend regular, regional networks that support and impact on people with a disability and there carers	Community Development	On-going	
3.2 Promote public awareness of the abilities of all people in the community.	Support the Special Olympics being held in the Hunter	Community and Cultural Services, Economic Development	Completed	A community that has a full understanding and appreciation of the abilities and contributions people with a disability make to the Singleton and wider community.
	Support local International Day of People with a Disability initiatives	Community and Cultural Services	On-going, December every year.	