

*MAKING MY
COMMUNITY
INCLUSIVE*

2024 Local Government Election
Platform

Executive summary

QDN is seeking commitments from all candidates running in the 2024 Queensland local government elections on 16 March 2024 to:



100% of Councils to have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIPs).

Establish data and impact measurements for implementing DAIPs that includes engagement with people with disability.



Councils to deliver disability awareness training to employees across the diverse range of their business areas.

Increase accessibility and inclusion of Council communication across all channels including digital inclusion of people with disability.

Co-design and include people with disability from the beginning in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of services, products and policies.



Allocate funding to deliver accessibility upgrades to existing footpaths.

Have spoken announcements on buses.

Ensure regulations and enforcement of E-Scooter parking delivers safe environments for people with disability.



100% of Councils to have Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee and other ways for people with disability to be represented and included through working groups.



Review and report on implementation of Local Housing Action Plans with regards to delivery of inclusive, accessible and affordable housing.

Working with key stakeholders to increase accessible, affordable housing and regulations for innovating zoning to increase inclusion.



Set targets for employment of people with disability.

Establish or expand paid work experience programs within council workplaces.

Ensure Council workplaces and systems are accessible and inclusive.



Establish targets for Council budgets, programs and procurement allocations that are focused on disability inclusion and report on this.



Develop and implement disability inclusive procurement strategies for local Government services and infrastructure.



Conduct and publicly release a review into the number of on-street disability parking spots in each local government area.



Develop agreements with private shopping centres to allow council inspectors to monitor disability parking spaces.



Involve people with disability in all phases and decision-making processes relating to disaster planning, management and recovery.



Deliver inclusion and accessibility of council events that are co-designed with people with disability to deliver inclusion standards.

Deliver actions to be a premier accessible and inclusive tourist destination.

Introduction

Councils play a vital role in creating inclusive, accessible and welcoming communities.

In consultation with people with disability, councils are often best placed to identify barriers that prevent people with disability from fully participating in the community and develop practical solutions that best fit their local needs.

Councils are often a reflection of their community's unique character and have significant power to shift community attitudes. Creating an inclusive community for people with disability means acknowledging the social model of disability. This model recognises that societal attitudes, practices and structures, rather than an individual's impairment, restrict and prevent people with disability from economic participation, social inclusion and equality.

When barriers for people with disability are removed, the whole community benefits, including the local economy. Local businesses enjoy the benefits of not just people with disability as customers, but also their families, carers and friends.

Who is Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)?

QDN is an organisation of, for, and with people with disability with over 2000 members and supporters. QDN operates a state-wide network of members who provide information, feedback and views from the lived experience of people with disability to inform systemic policy feedback to Government and peak bodies.

QDN has developed this 2024 Local Government Election Platform in consultation with our members who are actively engaged in their local communities and understand that this election represents an important opportunity to build communities where people with disability are recognised and valued.

We are asking all mayoral candidates in all 77 councils across Queensland to respond to each of the below policy commitments to ensure Queenslanders with disability and their friends, family and supporters are more informed before casting their votes on Saturday, 16 March 2024.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Councils play an important role in creating environments that are inclusive of all people, particularly given their planning responsibilities and their ongoing delivery of a broad range of community activities and services.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 states that governments including local councils are committed to the development and implementation of policies, programs, services and systems which reflect the human rights of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD). Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-27 calls for all levels of government to design their plans, programs and services to incorporate the building blocks of co-design, measurement of outcomes and impact, serious consideration of human rights and long-term cultural and systems change.

QDN seeks a commitment that councils will co-design and include people with disability from the beginning in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of services, products and policies.

Additionally, QDN seeks a commitment that all councils will develop, enhance and deliver a robust Disability Access and Inclusion Plan that sets clear targets and strategies around how people with disability access and connect with their local communities. It is important that these plans deliver outcomes across all of Council's business and that all areas are responsible for and implement access and inclusion. Disability Access and Inclusion Plans should ensure:

- Council facilities (parks, libraries and council chambers) and services can be accessed in the same way by all members of the community, including those who have accessibility requirements
- Council information is available in formats that everyone can understand. This includes ensuring council websites are compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, enabling people using assistive technology to access information on websites. Alternate versions of documents should also be available and may include large print, Easy English, braille and Australian Sign Language (AUSLAN)
- Council staff at all levels are trained in disability awareness and to deliver inclusive policies, programs and services for people with disability
- Council employs a person with disability in a full-time Disability and Inclusion Advisory role
- Council public consultations are accessible to people with disability, including allowing people who find it difficult to leave home to participate in community town halls/meeting via online platforms.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plans should include data and impact measurements seeking the advice of people with disability to ensure improvements are made and to inform the development of future plans.

Accessible Infrastructure – Why It's Important

All Queenslanders have the right to access their community on an equal basis. It is essential that public infrastructure, particularly footpaths and public transport, is designed and delivered in a way that all people with disability can use. Being able to access public transport services can be a critical part of finding a job, accessing healthcare and achieving a good quality of life.

Road infrastructure includes many facilities that make pedestrian travel safer and more predictable. Council should consider including the following in road and traffic management guidelines:

- audio tactile push buttons for people with vision or hearing impairments
- microwave motion detectors to detect the presence of pedestrians at crossings trialled in Brisbane, Ipswich and Redlands to prevent the spread of COVID. These are reported to improve accessibility for people with disability who have challenges using conventional buttons
- kerb extensions to minimise crossing distance
- kerb ramps
- medians, and pedestrian refuges, to allow the crossing of roads in two stages

- tactile ground surface indicators.

Accessible communications about changes to infrastructure and public transport reduces challenges and barriers for people with disability in accessing their community and workplace. Communication improvements should also be made on public transport with spoken announcements for those unable to access the MyTransLink app trip announcer.

QDN seeks a detailed commitment, including allocated funding, to deliver accessibility upgrades on existing footpaths and public transport infrastructure.

Since 2021 Queenslanders with disability have raised concerns about the impact of e-scooters and the way they are used. Concerns relate mainly to the adverse impacts felt by pedestrians with disability, particularly those who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or have low vision or use a wheelchair or other mobility devices. **QDN seeks a commitment that councils will ensure regulations and enforcement of E-Scooter parking delivers safe environments for people with disability.**

Additionally, **QDN seeks a commitment that councils will establish an Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee and other ways for people with disability to be represented and included through working groups** to provide insight and assistance to councils when making decisions around accessibility. An Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee gives councils access to an ongoing source of feedback that is based on lived experience and real-life stories. It also empowers residents with disability to be involved in decision-making and to give them a voice within council.

Affordable and Accessible Housing Within Our Community

Housing is a fundamental need and human right and key to enabling people with disability to be included in community and family life, and to participate fully as citizens in society.

People with disability are disproportionately affected by the lack of accessible, affordable, secure and safe housing in Australia. Demand far outstrips supply. QDN encourages councils to introduce inclusionary planning provisions through local planning instruments.

QDN wants to see all councils complete their Local Housing Action Plan by March 2024 as part of Action 5 of Queensland Government's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025¹. **QDN seeks a commitment that councils will review and report on implementation of Local Housing Action Plans with regards to delivery of inclusive, accessible and affordable housing.**

Many people with disability on low incomes are forced to rent privately in a market where they face discrimination and a shortage of accessible properties. Affordable housing is often poorly located outside metropolitan areas, with limited accessible public transport, local services and employment opportunities.

QDN wants to see councils take a leadership role in ensuring a greater supply of accessible housing and hopes that this commitment will result in innovative policies that are designed to meet each community's local needs. For example, Universal Housing Design Incentives are one policy mechanism some councils are already implementing to encourage the

¹ <https://www.housing.qld.gov.au/initiatives/local-housing-action-plans>

development of new dwellings that are specifically designed to meet the accessibility needs of residents with disability.

QDN seeks a commitment that councils work with key stakeholders to increase accessible, affordable housing and regulations for innovating zoning to increase inclusion.

Economic Development – Leave No One Behind

The unemployment rate for people with disability is twice that of the general population². This is often due to misconceptions about hiring people with disability and unconscious biases ingrained in recruitment processes.

Employing people with disability isn't just beneficial for the individual and employers but has significant flow on effects for the broader community – with more customers for local businesses and less pressure on unemployment services and income support.

Councils across Australia employ 208,200³ people and attracting new staff with diverse skills and experience will help ensure they provide high quality services to all local residents. It is critical that council workforces at all levels reflect and represent the people that live in each local community, including people with disability.

QDN seeks a commitment that councils establish inclusive employment strategies, including targets to employ more people with disabilities. Inclusive employment strategies must ensure council workplaces and systems are accessible and inclusive.

This commitment should be backed up by transparent annual reporting to demonstrate council's efforts to meet the target.

Council should also commit to developing and implementing disability inclusive procurement strategies for local Government services and infrastructure. Specifically, the disability inclusive procurement strategy should aim to purchase products or services from Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE).

ADE are Commonwealth-funded and generally not-for-profit organisations operating in a commercial context, specifically to provide supportive employment opportunities to people with disability. Some ADE also operate as social enterprises. Under this policy, QDN encourages councils to engage with Queensland ADE that offer award-based pay rates for all staff.

QDN seeks a commitment that councils will establish targets for council budgets, programs and procurement allocations that are focused on disability inclusion and report on this.

Many people with disability report that despite having tertiary or TAFE qualifications, they struggle to secure employment due to a lack of workplace experience and professional referees.

² [People with disability in Australia, Unemployment - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/1000000/people-with-disability-in-australia/unemployment)

³ [Public sector employment and earnings, 2022-23 financial year | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/australian-bureau-of-statistics/publications/2022-23-financial-year)

QDN seeks a commitment that councils will establish or expand paid work experience programs to support people with disability develop their skills and expand their professional networks.

Disability Parking – Benefits Everyone Within the Community

The importance of accessible parking spaces for people with disability cannot be overstated. QDN members have repeatedly raised examples of when the lack of accessible parking spaces has prevented them from buying basic groceries or attending doctors' appointments. This has broader flow on effects for the entire community, including poorer health outcomes, less money being spent in local businesses and an increase in social isolation.

QDN seeks a commitment that councils will conduct and publicly release a review into the number of on-street disability parking spots in each local government area to ensure there are enough spaces to meet demand. This is particularly important given the Disability Parking Permit Scheme was expanded in 2020 to include people who are blind and people with vision impairment. It is crucial that councils review the current allocation of accessible parking spaces given the increase in the number of permit holders.

QDN seeks a commitment that council will develop a proactive approach to establish agreements with private shopping centres to allow council inspectors to monitor disability parking spaces and issue fines for cars parked in disability spots without a permit.

Disaster Preparedness Within Our Communities

Living in Queensland, we are no strangers to disaster. Councils play a key role in disaster risk reduction, preparedness and management activities and have a responsibility to include people with disability in the planning process to improve the safety of all residents during a disaster event.

QDN seeks a commitment that councils will:

- Involve people with disability in all phases and decision-making processes within council relating to disaster planning, management and recovery
- Include a person with disability as a representative on Local Disaster Management Groups
- Ensure all communications (e.g. early hazard warnings, website material, disaster planning material) regarding disaster planning, management and recovery are inclusive and accessible (e.g. screen reader accessible, Easy English and AUSLAN interpreted) and people with disability are included in any review or development of disaster-related communication materials or plans.

Accessible Tourism – Benefiting our Local Community

New data from Tourism Research Australia's (TRA's) National Visitor Survey shows that in 2021, travel groups including people with disability or a long-term health condition in Australia accounted for \$13.5 billion (17% of total) of domestic day and overnight trip spend and 46.1 million domestic trips (19% of total)⁴.

THRIVE 2030, Australia's national strategy for the long term sustainable growth of the visitor economy, sets out seven priority areas to grow the visitor economy sector to A\$230 billion by 2030. Priority 5 – to enhance visitor infrastructure – includes an action to develop assets, infrastructure and experiences that are accessible to all people, regardless of physical limitations, disability or age⁵.

QDN seeks a commitment that councils will:

- Deliver inclusion and accessibility of council events that are co-designed with people with disability to deliver inclusion standards
- Deliver actions to be a premier accessible and inclusive tourist destination.

Contact QDN to discuss and respond to the 2024 Local Government Election Platform and how we can work together to build communities where people with disability are recognised and valued.

Phone 07 3252 8566

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Visit www.qdn.org.au

⁴ [The accessible tourism opportunity | Austrade](#)

⁵ [THRIVE 2030 strategy growing Australia's visitor economy | Austrade](#)