



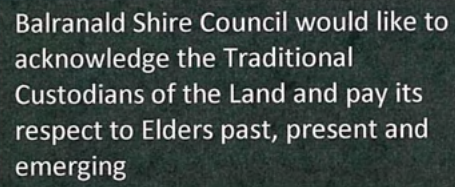
Balranald Shire Council

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2022 – 2026



This document was compiled by Balranald Shire Council



Balranald Shire Council would like to
acknowledge the Traditional
Custodians of the Land and pay its
respect to Elders past, present and
emerging

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Message from the General Manager



Balranald Shire Council embraces the inclusion of people with a disability in all aspects of community life. We are committed to creating a more inclusive and welcoming community for people with disabilities and it is with pleasure that I present the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The Plan demonstrates our commitment to improve the quality of our services, facilities, systems and programs over a three-year period. The Plan was developed through consultation with the community and outlines the actions we will take to provide more accessible and inclusive services.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed through consultation with our Strengthening Community Access Inclusion and Wellbeing Advisory Committee and community stakeholder groups and members of the Shire.

We look forward to hearing about the positive impact the Plan has for our residents and visitors.

Jeff Sowiak
General Manager, Balranald Shire Council

INTRODUCTION

About this Plan

We want to make sure that people with disability, their families and carers are included in Balranald Shire and that our community is more accessible. In writing our Disability Inclusion Action Plan we have asked the community about the barriers that people with disability face in the Shire and their ideas for improvement. The Plan explains the actions we will take to improve the lives of people with disability in our community. We have also heard about what we do well – so we can protect and expand or build on these.

Overview of Plan

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW) (DIA) (the Act) is the legislative foundation for Local Government disability inclusion and access planning. The Act supports the government's commitment and reaffirms NSW's direction on building an inclusive community. In 2014 the Act required all NSW Local Government Areas to develop a Disability Inclusion Action Plan in consultation with people with disability. This Plan outlines Balranald Shire Council's commitment to people with a disability to improve access to services, facilities and employment. It is also designed to change perceptions about people with disability and create a more inclusive community for everyone.

Why inclusion is important

Personal choice and control are only possible when communities are inclusive for all people with disability, including those with physical, intellectual, cognitive, sensory disabilities and those with mental health conditions. Real diversity cannot be realised unless people with disability are provided with the opportunities inherent in truly inclusive communities.

In addition to the human rights imperative, the case for an inclusive community is strong:

- Inclusion improves opportunities for participation in the local economy, with potential to increase economic activity within the Shire;
- Providing physical access to businesses benefit not only people with disability, but older people, parents with prams and business owners by expanding their business reach;
- Exclusion leads to disadvantage and discrimination, which have far reaching negative impacts across all aspects of life, including health, welfare, education and employment.

These impacts are felt beyond the individual, with families and the broader community being negatively impacted by a non-inclusive community.

Balranald Shire Council strives to make our region an accessible and inclusive community providing a place for everyone to be able to live, work and visit. *Some examples: Widened the Swing Bridge for accessibility of wheel chairs, gophers etc. We have utilised walking tracks to be more wheel chair friendly. Our Market Street Upgrade included ramps into our businesses.*

Council has a key role in promoting and supporting access and inclusion in all areas of Council business. This includes how Council develops the built environment, the provision of information and services, supporting employment opportunities and promoting positive community attitudes and behaviour towards people with disability.

The removal of barriers for people with disability supports the inclusion of members of the local community who may otherwise fall outside of identified definitions of disadvantage.

Balranald Shire Council is working towards creating a region that is accessible and inclusive of everyone and provides equal opportunity for people with disability to enjoy what our region has to offer. Almost 90% of the 4.4 million people with disabilities in Australia are living with an invisible disability. (University of Sydney)

Negative attitudes, physical barriers and difficulties accessing necessary supports still limit the opportunities of people with disability to find work, study, socialise and be included in community life.

To create liveable communities, we need to focus our attention and resources on the elements of community life that most people desire. To create liveable communities for people with disability, we must do more than modify the physical environment; we must advocate for such aspects as accessible housing, access to transport, community recreation, meaningful employment, volunteering, social engagement and universal design.

It is imperative that we respect people with disability in relation to their lived experience, empower them to influence their life direction, and encourage them to fully participate so we can identify barriers and propose solutions.

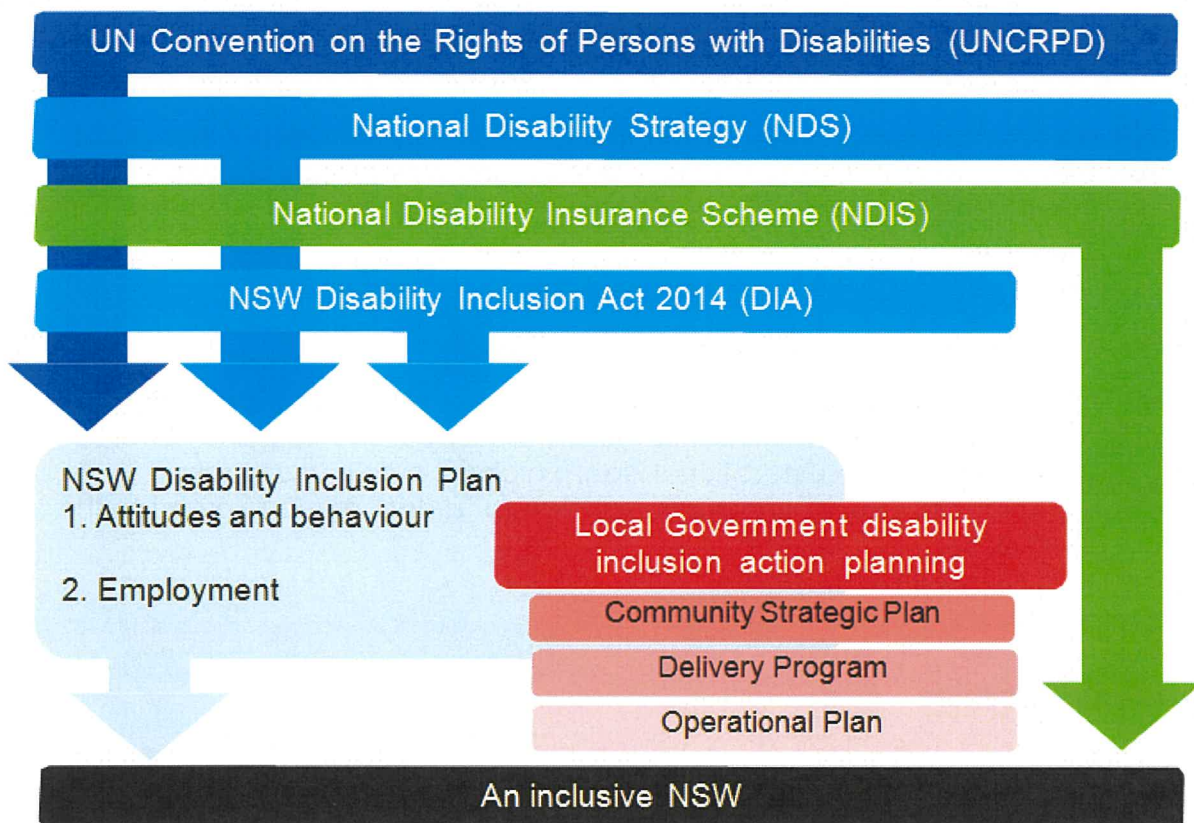
The Disability Inclusion Action Plan has been developed in recognition of Council's responsibility to remove barriers and ensure that people with disability are able to participate equally in their communities.

Council's vision is to create a better, more vibrant, more resilient and more engaged community, by capitalizing upon its human, cultural, environmental and business assets and encouraging a strong sense of civic participation and pride. Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan will aim to provide better access to Council information, services and facilities ensuring people with disabilities can fully participate in their community.



Balranald Swing Bridge has been upgraded and widened to allow wheel chair access

Legislation and Policy



Source: Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines Local Government



Balranald Library has a great selection of talking books and large prints available for customers to borrow.

State

Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)

The Disability Inclusion Act (2014) acknowledges human rights; promoting the independence and social and economic inclusion of people with disability.

The Act requires NSW government departments, local councils and some other public authorities to develop and implement a Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The plan must be consistent with the State Disability Inclusion Plan and include strategies to increase access and participation.

Local

Bairnald Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2032 was created by the community and provides a long-term vision for our Shire. The Community Strategic Plan informs Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, which set out Council's role in achieving the community's vision. Other Council plans and documents relevant to the Disability Inclusion Action Plan include:

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Community Priorities

Council is committed to focusing on the following future priorities;

- Ensuring Local Government Representation by striving to be "Fit for the Future"
- Increase pride in our towns and villages
- Attract and retain population and visitation numbers
- Maintain current services and improve access to services
- Create employment opportunities
- Foster a safe community
- Involve our children and youth in decisions and activities
- Build community respect and purpose within the community
- Improve our sporting and recreational infrastructure
- Encourage residents and ratepayers to have a say in decisions affecting the community
- Develop local leaders

Other legislation and standards informing Council's work

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Carers Recognition Act 2021
- Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

Disability Snapshot in Balranald Shire

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) defines disability as:

"The long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

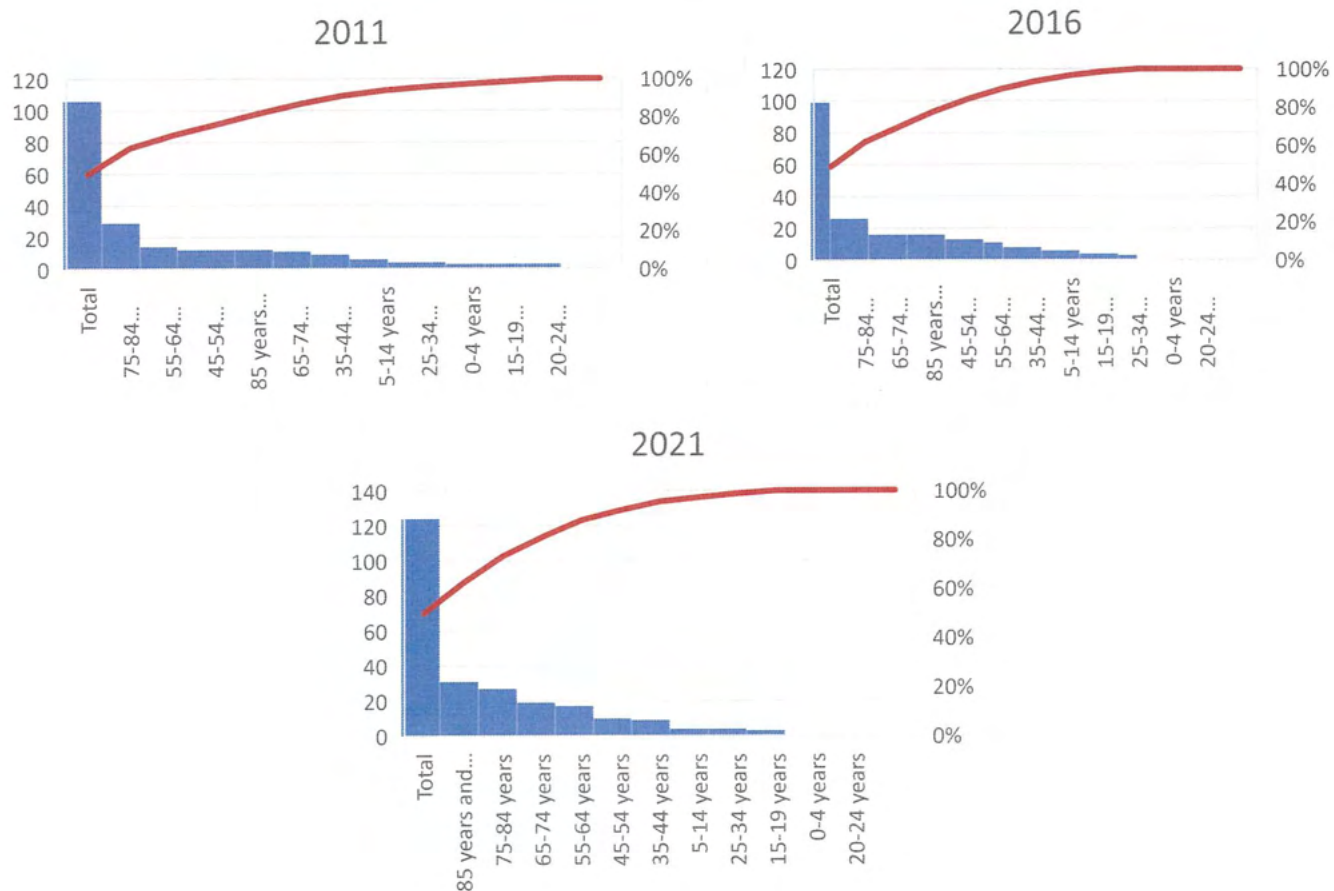
Information about disability in Balranald Shire is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2021 Census data. The Census records information on people who identify as needing help with mobility, self-care or communication due to disability or long-term health conditions.

5.6% of the population, or 124 people living in Balranald Shire, identified as needing assistance because of a profound or severe disability.

Need for assistance with core activities 2021

Assistance needed by age group (years)	Number
0 to 4*	0
5 to 14	4
15 to 19	3
20 to 24	0
25 to 34	4
35 to 44	9
45 to 54	10
55 to 64	17
65 to 74	19
75 to 84	27
85 and over	31
Total persons needing assistance	124

* Census data does not align with local anecdotal data which suggests there are children in the 0-4 year cohort living with a disability (in need of assistance with core tasks).



Persons with Long Term Health Issues – 2021 Census

Health Issue	0-14yrs	15-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65-74 yrs	75-84 yrs	85 yrs & Over	Total
Arthritis	0	0	3	5	17	44	56	35	23	183
Asthma	31	28	21	18	17	24	26	13	0	178
Cancer (including remission)	0	0	0	0	3	15	20	11	3	52
Dementia (including Alzheimer's)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	12
Diabetes (excluding gestational diabetes)	0	0	0	3	8	33	41	18	4	107
Heart disease (including heart attack or angina)	0	0	0	0	4	27	33	34	7	105
Kidney disease	5	0	0	0	3	4	6	5	0	23
Lung condition (including COPD or emphysema)(b)	0	0	0	0	0	7	11	10	7	35
Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)	3	17	15	12	26	20	12	4	0	109
Stroke	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	10	5	21
Any other long-term health condition(s)(c)	16	8	9	11	16	22	16	10	7	115
No long-term health condition(s)	308	138	186	136	155	153	105	18	6	1,205
Not stated	82	38	48	36	54	55	53	15	7	388
Total persons	434	220	274	212	289	333	289	117	47	2,215

Council Activity

Council works to provide opportunities and raise awareness of inclusion of people with disabilities.

Some examples include:

- Working in partnership to delivery health, wellbeing and inclusion services and programs – (Delivery Plan 2.1)
- Identify and close any access gaps to community services (Delivery Plan 2.1)
- Facilitate and foster collaboration in delivering a program of community events (Delivery Plan 2.2)
- Maintain and upgrade parks and sporting facilities (Delivery Plan 2.3)
- Strengthening Community Access, Inclusion & Wellbeing Advisory Committee

Community Consultation

Council advertised in local newspapers and also on local notice boards for interested community members to send in submissions about how Council could make its Shire more inclusive for residents. The previous Disability Inclusion Action Plan was mailed out to schools, Early Learning Centre, Medical Centre, Hospital, MacKillop Services and Aboriginal Lands Council asking for comments and/or feedback be provided to Council.

The responses we received were in regards to footpaths within Balranald and the lack of speech therapy and occupational therapy services available to residents of Balranald Shire.

Some of the ideas received from our Strengthening Community Access Inclusion & Wellbeing Advisory Committee include;

Footpaths and gutters

Promote the town as a Wheelchair accessible – as part of a tourism promotion

Access to meaningful employment, get school and students involved in volunteer activities with disabled community members

Advocate for our residents with a disability to our State and Federal Members when they come to town, to ensure Council is aware of any funding opportunities available to assist people identified with disabilities to join the workforce.

Investigate accommodation options for the younger/next generation

Disability parking areas, especially MaariMa

Wheelchair friendly access to businesses, have businesses to promote. Create a business accessible sticker






Advocate for social sporting opportunities rather than all competitive sports, eg bowls, basket ball for disabled persons

Work Experience for School children with disabilities

Employ a Council Community Disability Officer

Reporting our Achievements

Council will use a traffic light system for reporting our achievements annually to Council.

Symbol	Descriptor
	Complete
	On Track
	Not Commenced
	Behind
	Urgent Action Needed / Stopped

Action Plan – What Council will do

1. – Our Lifestyle

Strategic Goal	Strategies	Measurement	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Maintaining and beautifying our town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the river front • Maintaining public amenity and cleanliness of local streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include river front projects into Council's long-term capital works program • Levels of Service for street amenity and cleanliness are published and achieved 	Ongoing	CSP Objective 1 – Future Directions (1.1)
Improving access to a diverse range of housing opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a housing summit to generate innovative ideas • Develop a housing strategy • Review the Local Environmental Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing summit is held and generates ideas that are followed through • Housing Strategy is adopted by 2024 • LEP review facilitates community involvement and complies with planning laws • Increase in developable land and housing 	December 2024	CSP Objective 1 – Future Directions (1.2)
Improving local access to education and careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for vocational training, apprenticeships and traineeships • Identify opportunities for local people to work locally • Identify and promote online training opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational education pathways exist and are used by local people • Career guidance, scholarships and local placements are available for local people • Increase in local uptake of online training 	Ongoing	CSP Objective 1 – Future Directions (1.3)

2 – Our Community

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Focus on Community Inclusion and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership to deliver health, wellbeing and inclusion services and programs • Identify and close any access gaps to community services • Implement the Disability Inclusion Action Plan • Work in partnership with the Balranald Local Aboriginal Land Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community survey shows upwards trend on feelings of inclusion and wellbeing • Access to services improves • Local spaces and buildings allow physical access for everyone • Collaborative projects are undertaken to improve community wellbeing 	<p>October 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually</p>	CSP Objective 2 Future Directions (2.1)
Innovative and improve community services, activities and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and foster collaboration in delivering a program of community events • Prepare a rolling service review program to refresh Council community services and facilities • Council operates a dynamic library service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support regular and new events • Community events are well attended • Service review program is developed and published • Review availability of children's services • Improvements are made to community services and facilities 	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	CSP Objective 2 Future Directions (2.2)
Provide opportunities for sport and recreation across the shire	Maintain and upgrade parks and sporting facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital improvements to sport and recreation facilities 	Ongoing	CSP Objective 2 Our Community (2.3)

3 – Our Economy

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Increase tourism and visitation to the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and implement a local tourism and marketing strategy • Maximise tourism to Mungo National Park • Seek partners and funding to promote the area • Improve signage and town entrances for visitors • Identify and promote local heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the local tourism and marketing strategy • Regular consultation with key stakeholders eg Destination Riverina Murray, NPWS etc. • Investment in signage and entrances to local towns • Heritage assets are included in local marketing initiatives 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	CSP Objective 3 Our Economy 3.3

4 – Our Infrastructure

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Maximising grant funding to improve infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with regional partners to identify and apply for new government funding. • Maximise opportunities to apply for funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding attracted into the area. • Grant projects achieved on time and on budget 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	CSP Objective 4 Our Infrastructure 4.1

5 – Our Environment

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Celebrate and promote our unique local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and expand the walking trail network • Refresh the marketing and public art around the Southern Bell Frog and the Regent Parrot • Manage local trees to maximise public amenity and safety • Work with relevant state agencies to enhance key environmental assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking trail projects completed • Undertake marketing of environmental assets • Public trees are safe and attractive • Environmental projects undertaken in partnership with state agencies 	Ongoing (budget requirements) Ongoing Ongoing Annually	CSP Objective 5 Our Environment 5.1

6 – Our Council

Strategic Goal	Action	Measurement	Timeframe	Community Strategic Plan Link
Develop Capabilities	• Develop community leadership and volunteer capacity	• Support and Celebrate local Volunteers	Ongoing	CSP Objective 6 Our Council 6.1
Engage and Inform the Local Community	• Increase Opportunities for Council to listen to community views	• Increase in opportunities to express views and ideas between Council and the community	Monthly – Advisory Committee Meetings	CSP Objective 6 – Our Council 6.2

3 – Longer Term Action Plan

Goal	Action	Measurement
Maintain and upgrade parks and sporting facilities	Progressively upgrade all play areas within Shire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek Government Funding to upgrade play areas
Accessible Footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and expand existing footpaths/walking trails High use nature strips, and nature strips adjacent to the homes of people with mobility needs should be mapped and prioritised in consultation with those most impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects completed when grant funding received. Create a Footpath development plan to be outlining priority areas and dates which will allow the tracking of progress and the meaningful measure of outcomes.
Review the Library Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure our library has talking books and large print books accessible for everyone. 	Council reviews library inhouse service delivery
Explore opportunities for vocational training, apprenticeships and traineeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Industry partners and education providers to identify opportunities. Commit to employing people identified as having a disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for improved education and training Develop an employment Plan which outlines the employment opportunities for people identified having disabilities.
Focus on Community Inclusion and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in Partnership to deliver, health, wellbeing and inclusion services and programs Identify and close any gaps to community services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake annual community surveys to identify the needs Provide community information to facilitate access to services. Include all community members, including those living with disabilities through all planning and consultation processes Ensure all new community, tourism and cultural infrastructure and Events are designed and developed with the intention of full access to, and use by, all community members.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan includes timelines to guide the completion of the actions. The process will be monitored and evaluated through the Integrated Planning and Reporting cycle.

Implementation of the Plan will be undertaken by the responsible officers. Each action will be monitored and reported against for the periods 1 July – 31 December and 1 January – 30 June of each year.

Council will monitor the overall implementation of the Plan and the integration of its actions into Council's new Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.

Reporting

Outcomes and achievements will be reported in Council's Annual Report and General Managers six monthly report to the community. These reports will be available on Council's Website and at its Council Offices Building, 70 Market Street Balranald.

Review

The Plan will be reviewed annually in line with the Integrated Planning and Reporting cycle. An audit, evaluation and review of the Plan will be conducted at the end of Council's term.

Acknowledgement

Council would like to thank the many community members who provided their views, personal stories and ideas for positive change.

