

Inclusive Waimakariri

A plan to become a more accessible District 2025–2028

Waimakariri—Tāngata whaikaha pursue a good
life with support



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Acknowledgements



The Waimakariri District Council would like to thank the representatives of the following organisations for their contribution to the review of this strategy:

- Waimakariri Access Group
- CCS Disability Action
- Blind Low Vision New Zealand
- Older Persons Health
- IDEA Services
- People First
- NZ Disability Advisory Trust.



Introduction

What is Accessibility?

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible. In this context it refers to the removal of barriers that prevent people participating fully in community and civic life.

Accessible design benefits everyone, which includes families with young children as well as people with impairments and age-related disability.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016–2026 defines “disability” as:

“Disability is something that happens when people with impairments face barriers in society that limit their movements, senses or activities.

Disabled people are people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

An inclusive environment for all means providing equitable opportunity, regardless of a person’s abilities or circumstances. This includes changing Council and community attitudes towards disabled people and providing a plan to encourage and support the participation of disabled people in the democratic process and community life.

In light of current issues and barriers faced by disabled people, as well as growing demands, this plan sets out a vision for a society where all people can engage in personal, community and civic life with independence. It identifies key goals and objectives which together contribute towards achieving the vision and outlines a number of high level priority areas and Council actions for contributing towards an inclusive environment.



“Anyone is only a drunk driver, a work accident, or a banana skin away from being disabled.”

Source: Inclusive Communities Disabled Persons Assembly, August 2010

Why do we need an Accessibility Plan?

The Council's mission statement is “to make Waimakariri a great place to be, in partnership with our communities.” To give effect to this statement the Council needs to ensure its services, buildings, infrastructure and activities are accessible to everyone by working towards removing the barriers that prevent people from participating fully in community and civic life.

The Local Government Act 2002 gives local authorities the purpose of providing democratic and effective local government that recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities. It also provides for local authorities to play a role in promoting the wellbeing of their communities.

This plan will act as a guide to enhance people's independence and ability to participate, engage in, and benefit from Council services. Providing accessible services, communication channels, transportation options (including footpaths and road crossings), buildings and public spaces will make the Waimakariri District more inclusive for everyone. It will enhance the diversity of the district and make it attractive to residents and visitors of any age and ability.

Through this plan the Council is able to advocate for accessibility by leading by example and influencing and enabling others to be inclusive so that in the future more services and facilities are inclusive, not just those owned by the Council.



How has the 2017 Accessibility Strategy been reviewed?



The survey was distributed at the end of March 2021 and closed at the end of April. Some face-to-face interviews were undertaken, for example, with eight members of the Youth Space crew. Their support co-ordinator filled in the survey online during the meeting on their behalf. The survey co-ordinator also met with some other participants and completed the form for people who do not read or write.

Additionally, workshops were held with representatives of service providers to identify challenges and opportunities regarding accessibility for their clients in the district. The review has been undertaken collaboratively, beginning with a review of the associated action plan and the progress the Council has made towards achieving the strategies goals. This has been a two-way review with Waimakariri Access Group members reporting back to Council their views on the achievements of Council since the strategy was adopted in 2017.

The action plan was discussed with Council staff and their views on progress towards the goals set out in the strategy were canvassed. Feedback received through consultation has been considered and, where appropriate, reflected in the strategy. A survey, originally designed in 2017, was refreshed with an additional question regarding challenges experienced during the Covid lockdown. The survey was in Easy Read format and sought to receive feedback about Council's service provision from people in our communities who live with permanent disability. It created an opportunity to hear from people whose needs are often overlooked. The collated feedback helps to inform the Council about how

the delivery of its services could be improved, particularly with regard to removing barriers to inclusion in everyday community life.

The survey was distributed to key stakeholders and individual residents who expressed an interest. It was promoted through email groups and networks, Chatter newsletter, Compass FM, the Council website and via digital slides in the libraries and service centres and available online (although only one person took advantage of this).

A provision was made for parents or caregivers to assist with filling in the survey. No demographic or identifying data was requested but the survey was restricted to those people who identified as having a permanent disability, and lived in, or were visiting the district.



Setting the Scene

National context

Measuring inequality for disabled New Zealanders: 2018¹

This document compares a range of home, economic, and social outcomes for disabled and non-disabled people in New Zealand. It brings together data from three Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) surveys to explore differences between the lives of disabled and non-disabled people in Aotearoa. New insights from the 2023 New Zealand Disability Survey and relevant data from the 2023 Census are expected to be released in late 2025.

The goal of government policy and international agreements about disability is the improvement of disabled people's lives. Monitoring the difference between disabled and non-disabled people in a consistent way, and over a wide range of outcomes, is a key step towards achieving this goal.

In 2018, findings about disabled people could be published from the census for the first time due to the inclusion of the *Washington Group Short Set of questions on functioning*². By bringing together 2018 data sourced from census, the household labour force survey (HLFS) and the general social survey (GSS), it has been possible to provide an overview of disabled people's lives at a snapshot in time. The activities included are those that are most often found to limit an individual's participation in everyday life.

- Disability and age are strongly related, with disabled people being older on average than non-disabled people. This needs to be accounted for when comparing outcomes for these two groups.
- Compared with non-disabled people, disabled people fare worse across a range of outcomes relating to their homes and neighbourhoods, as well as their economic and social lives.

- Crime victimisation rates were similar irrespective of disability status, as were levels of face-to-face contact with family (living elsewhere).
- Compared with non-disabled people, disabled people were less likely to live in a suitable home that is warm, affordable, and free from damp and mould.
- Disabled people were more likely to live in neighbourhoods where they were relatively disadvantaged and in households where total income was considered to be inadequate.
- Lower levels of labour force participation and employment for disabled people resulted in greater dependency on government benefits, and kept average personal incomes low.
- Compared with non-disabled people, disabled people on average had lower educational attainment.
- Disabled people tended to have lower job satisfaction, but longer job tenure than non-disabled people.
- The underutilisation rate was higher for disabled people, suggesting a greater unmet need for work.
- On average, disabled people were more likely to be lonely and to experience discrimination.
- Disabled people reported having less access to emotional and instrumental support from others, and lower levels of trust in other people and in public institutions.

According to the 2018 census, 29 percent of New Zealanders have activity limitations. If people who experience temporary disability (e.g. from injuries or illness) are included, the number of people with disabilities in society is much higher. This shows that all of us are likely to experience a form of disability at some point in our lives. It is important that our local environment is inclusive to allow and encourage full participation in all aspects of community life.

1 Measuring inequality for disabled New Zealanders: 2018 (Statistics New Zealand, 28 October 2020)

2 (washingtongroup-disability.com/questions-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/).

The Disability Survey, a survey that was conducted by Statistics New Zealand in conjunction with the 2013 census, provided information focusing mainly on the prevalence and nature of disability. The survey also collected information on barriers that people with impairments encounter in their everyday life. This survey was repeated in 2023, the findings are yet to be published.



The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016–2026

The New Zealand Disability Strategy presents a long term plan for changing New Zealand from a disabling to an inclusive society. A fully inclusive society is the vision of the strategy and it suggests that this will be achieved when people with impairments can say they live in:

“A society that highly values our lives and continually enhances our full participation.”

The strategy emphasises the importance of the decisions made by territorial authorities and non-departmental public bodies that have an impact on the lives of people with impairments and can reduce a number of key barriers faced by people with impairments.

The strategy sees territorial authorities, as well as other public bodies, as vital in supporting and assisting with the implementation of the strategy. By implementing an Accessibility Strategy for the Waimakariri District and including complementary key goals and actions, the Council can contribute towards the achievement of the New Zealand Disability Strategy vision at a local level.

Outcomes – priorities for change

The New Zealand Disability Strategy identifies eight outcomes that will contribute towards achieving the vision of the strategy:

- **Education:** We get an excellent education and achieve our potential throughout our lives.
- **Employment and economic security:** We have security in our economic situation and can achieve our potential.
- **Health and wellbeing:** We have the highest attainable standards of health and wellbeing.
- **Rights protection and justice:** Our rights are protected; we feel safe, understood and are treated fairly and equitably by the justice system.
- **Accessibility:** We access all places, services and information with ease and dignity.
- **Attitudes:** We are treated with dignity and respect.
- **Choice and control:** We have choice and control over our lives.
- **Leadership:** We have great opportunities to demonstrate our leadership.

Whāia Te Ao Mārama 2018-2022

“Tāngata whaikaha pursue a good life with support”

The Māori Disability Action Plan³ is a culturally anchored approach to supporting Māori with disabilities (tāngata whaikaha) and their whanau because Māori are more likely to be disabled than the general population. Most tāngata whaikaha identify as Māori first, so access to Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) is important to them.

Whāia Te Ao Mārama recognises that everyone must work together to achieve the vision — tāngata whaikaha pursue a good life with support. It outlines what the Ministry of Health is committing to do from 2018 to 2022 and provides examples of actions tāngata whaikaha, whanau, health and disability providers, iwi and other organisations can take.



The six goals for this action plan are that by 2022 tāngata whaikaha will:

- participate in the development of health and disability services
- have control over their disability support
- participate in Te Ao Māori
- participate in their community
- receive disability support services that are responsive to Te Ao Māori
- have informed and responsive communities.

3 Ministry of Health. 2018. Whāia Te Ao Mārama 2018 to 2022: The Māori Disability Action Plan. Wellington: Ministry of Health. (health.govt.nz/publication/whaia-te-ao-marama-2018-2022-maori-disability-action-plan)

Accessibility Charter - Canterbury

On 3 November 2017 the Waimakariri District Council became a foundation signatory to the Canterbury Accessibility Charter – Te Arataki Taero Kore.

Vision

Our region will become a model of best-practice accessibility through our community and business leaders advocating for places and spaces that are accessible for all people.

Purpose

By signing this Charter, we are:

- Ensuring that places and spaces in our region become universally accessible
- Enabling residents and visitors to live, work, learn, explore and play equally
- Setting an expectation of best-practice design and development, which goes beyond minimum expectations of the Building Code.

Commitments and Actions

Our organisation supports the vision and purpose of this Charter. We will implement the following Charter Commitments and Actions and formally review our progress in these areas:

Hautūtanga – Leadership

Our leaders will demonstrate a pro-active commitment to best-practice accessibility when setting policy and practice expectations, budgets and accountability provisions.

Tohungatanga – Technical expertise

We will seek the technical advice and guidance of professional and independent universal-design experts, appropriate to the scale and type of projects we undertake.

Te Oranga o te Tangata – Health and Wellbeing

We will actively promote the link between the creation of accessible spaces and places, and the health and wellbeing of our people.

By committing to the Charter, accessibility becomes part of business-as-usual for the Waimakariri District Council.

Local Context

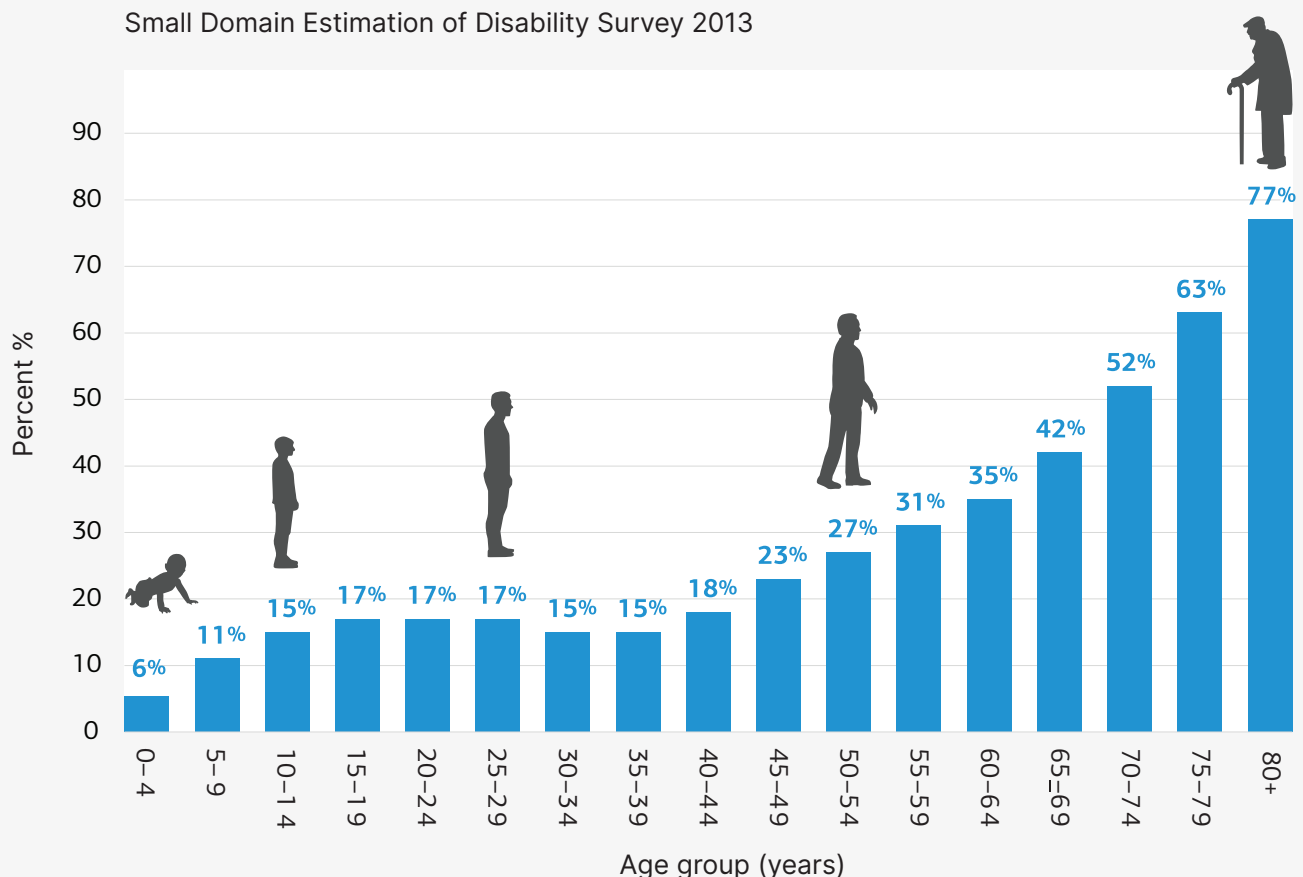
People with impairments in the Waimakariri District

The 2013 New Zealand Disability Survey is made up of two surveys: the 2013 Household Disability Survey taken on Census night and the Disability Survey of Residential Facilities. The data for the

Waimakariri District is a release from Statistics New Zealand using a statistical model to produce estimates for areas smaller than regions.

Prevalence of overall disability for the Waimakariri District

Small Domain Estimation of Disability Survey 2013



The above graph shows that there are approximately 12,890 people with impairments living in our District, 25.8% of a total population of 49,989 (2013 Census, usually resident population). The number of people with impairments increases with age. In fact, over half (53%) of district residents aged 65 and over have an impairment. The proportion is likely to be much higher when looking at those aged over 80 years.

The population of the Waimakariri district is increasing steadily. As a percentage of the total district population, people aged 65+ years have increased from 14% (n=5,967) in 2006 to 19% (n=11,500) in 2018. The number of people aged 65+ years is projected to increase to 25% (n=17,400) of the population by 2028, whereas those aged under 15 years is projected to decrease to 17% (n=11,800) of the total population (Statistics NZ medium projections). This is a key feature of an aging population.

With impairments being much more prevalent in older age, as shown in the graph, Waimakariri's increasingly aging population may mean greater demands on health and disability services and an even greater need to ensure the local environment is inclusive for all in order to enable people with impairments to lead an independent life.

Implementation of the plan

Council is accountable to disabled people and their organisations for the actions it has committed to in the plan. Monitoring is a two way process where Council reports to disabled people and their organisations; and disabled people report to Council regarding the impact and effectiveness of the plan.

In 2021 a survey (designed in 'easy read' format) was distributed to key stakeholders and individual residents who expressed an interest. The questions related to the key themes in the Council's Accessibility Strategy/Action Plan 2017-21 and sought to identify progress towards the goals identified in the strategy from the point of view of disabled people, their family and carers.

The survey report identified some notable improvements for people living with disability in the district such as:

- An increase in planning consultation with the Waimakariri Access Group before the design phases in Council-led projects (e.g. community facility and parks upgrades and improvements).
- Significant upgrades of toilet facilities, some Council facilities and reserves with particular mention of the accessible entry at the Rangiora Town Hall.
- Improved safety features at street crossings across the district.
- Receiving letter box drops and information in the newspapers.
- Improved emergency management with cell phone texts containing messages and information during emergencies.

And, highlighted some opportunities for Council to play a role in facilitating a more accessible district such as:

- Promoting, advising and advocating for barrier-free options to developers and residents building new houses to address the limited supply of accessible, future-proofed homes available in the District.
- Providing signing services at Council meetings. The growing use of subtitles on website videography is acknowledged.
- Producing Council information in more than one language, typically it is produced only in English.
- Ensuring Council documents are produced in formats that are easily read i.e. apply 'easy read' principles.
- Providing more accessible parking.
- Advocating for accessible and affordable public transport.

Since the last review in 2017, the Council has considered accessibility across many aspects of the work it undertakes with a goal of minimising the barriers experienced by people with impairments in our District.

Council staff have continued to undertake awareness training through the Waimakariri Access Group, which includes representation from CCS Disability Action and Blind Low Vision NZ. This training aims to heighten awareness of disability issues so staff members can consider the impact their work has on people with impairments and ensuring plans and projects do not have a negative impact on accessibility.

The Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide is under review by Waka Kotahi. The draft guidance is promoting pedestrian design principles where "designing an environment for pedestrians should take a safe system approach of harm minimisation and meet universal design principles to ensure they meet the needs of all people." The update is currently available in draft on their website as the Pedestrian Network Guide.⁴

4 nzta.govt.nz/walking-cycling-and-public-transport/walking/walking-standards-and-guidelines/pedestrian-network-guidance/

There is an ongoing programme of maintenance and/or reconstruction for footpaths to ensure they remain physically accessible, comfortable and safe. Associated with this is the installation of directional and tactile pavers.

Accessible routes to schools are prioritised which includes upgrading/installing footpaths and cycle ways.

The international standards for symbols and indicators are now incorporated into standard project briefs for all works.

All public transport buses provided by Environment Canterbury are 'kneeling' buses. Council has improved public transport infrastructure with more seats and shelters at bus stops along with tactile ground surface indicators (TGSi) to locate boarding position for blind or low vision patrons. Park and ride sites (established in 2020) included mobility parking allowances.

A local transport flier has been developed and distributed online and in hard copy.

The Council's aquatic facilities provide swimming lessons for the Special Olympics North Canterbury team. There are a number of aquatics instructors qualified to teach swimmers with disabilities. The Council's aquatic facilities are also recognised as a provider with the Cerebral Palsy 'Get Physical' programme in conjunction with the Halberg Trust.

While the Council already addresses some key barriers faced by people with impairments through its current activities, it is recognised that more can be done to contribute towards an inclusive environment for all. This will in turn contribute towards community wellbeing and achieving key community outcomes.



The role of accessibility in community wellbeing.



Community Outcomes describe how Waimakariri District Council aims to achieve meeting the current and future needs of our communities with good quality local infrastructure, providing local public services and performance of regulatory functions. Each community outcome is associated with one or more Wellbeing.

The Accessibility Plan contributes towards achieving a number of Community Outcomes, particularly:

Social: A place where everyone can have a sense of belonging:

- Public spaces are diverse, respond to changing demographics and meet local needs for leisure and recreation.
- Council commits to promoting health and wellbeing and minimising the risk of social harm to its communities.
- Housing is available to match the changing needs and aspirations of our community.
- Our community groups are sustainable and able to get the support they need to succeed.
- Our community has access to the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in society and to exercise choice about how to live their lives.

- People are able to enjoy meaningful relationships with others in their families, whanau, communities, iwi and workplaces.
- Our community has equitable access to the essential infrastructure and services required to support community wellbeing.

Environmental: A place that values and restores our environment:

- People are supported to participate in improving the health and sustainability of our environment.
- Land use is sustainable; biodiversity is protected and restored.
- Our district is resilient and able to quickly respond to and recover from natural disasters and the effects of climate change.
- Our district transitions towards a reduced carbon and waste district.
- The natural and built environment in which people live is clean, healthy and safe.
- Our communities are able to access and enjoy natural areas and public spaces.

Cultural: A place where our people are enabled to thrive and give creative expression to their identity and heritage:

- Public spaces express our cultural identities and help to foster an inclusive society.
- All members of our community are able to engage in arts, culture and heritage events and activities as participants, consumers, creators or providers.
- Waimakariri's diversity is freely expressed, respected and valued.

Economic: A place that is supported by a resilient and innovative economy:

- There is access to meaningful, rewarding, and safe employment within the district.
- Our district recognises the value of both paid and unpaid work.

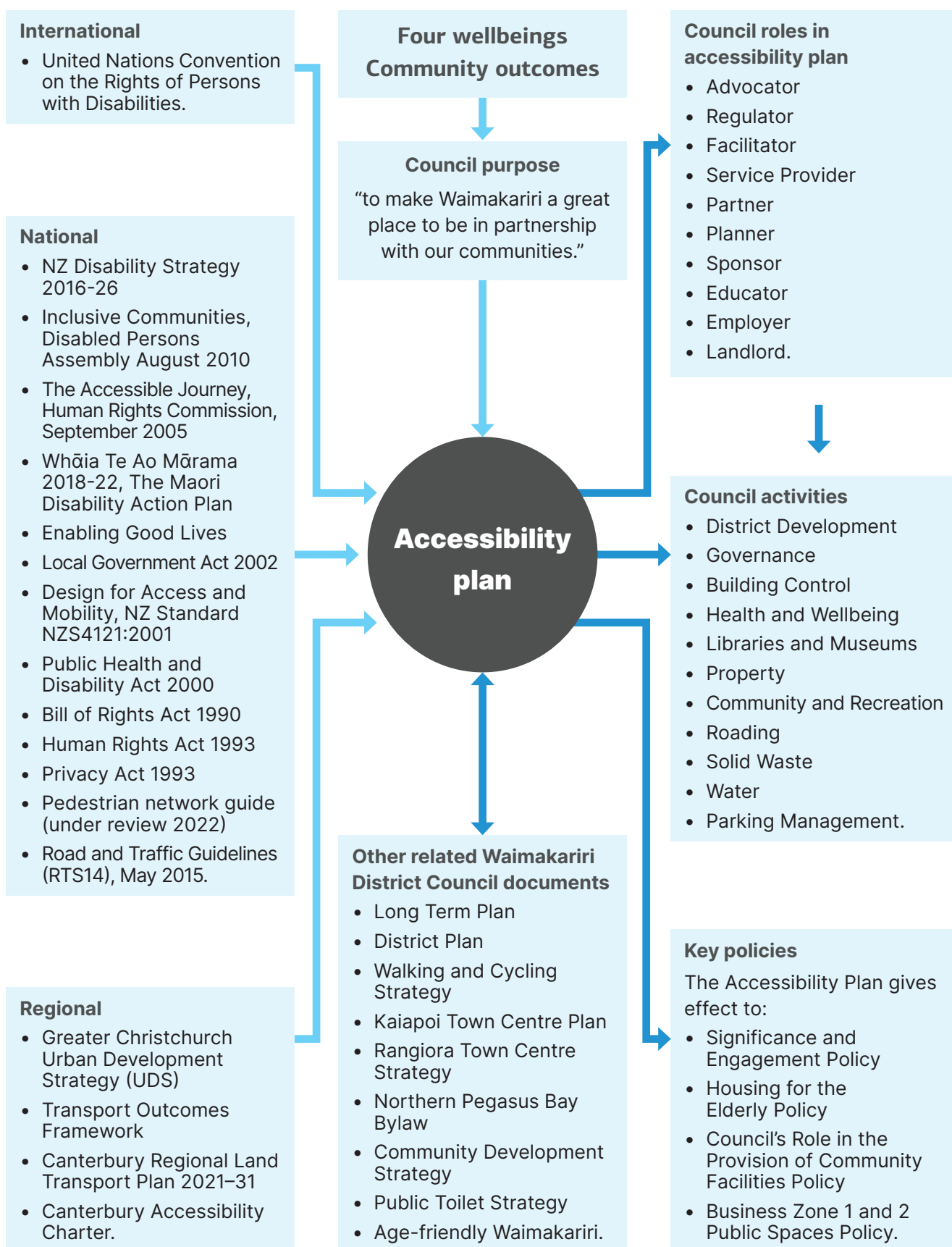
The high-level implementation table within this document outlines more specifically how key priorities and Council actions contribute towards achieving the above Community Outcomes.





Overall planning framework

The following statutes, policies, plans and strategies provide a framework for the development and implementation of the Accessibility Plan for the Waimakariri District.

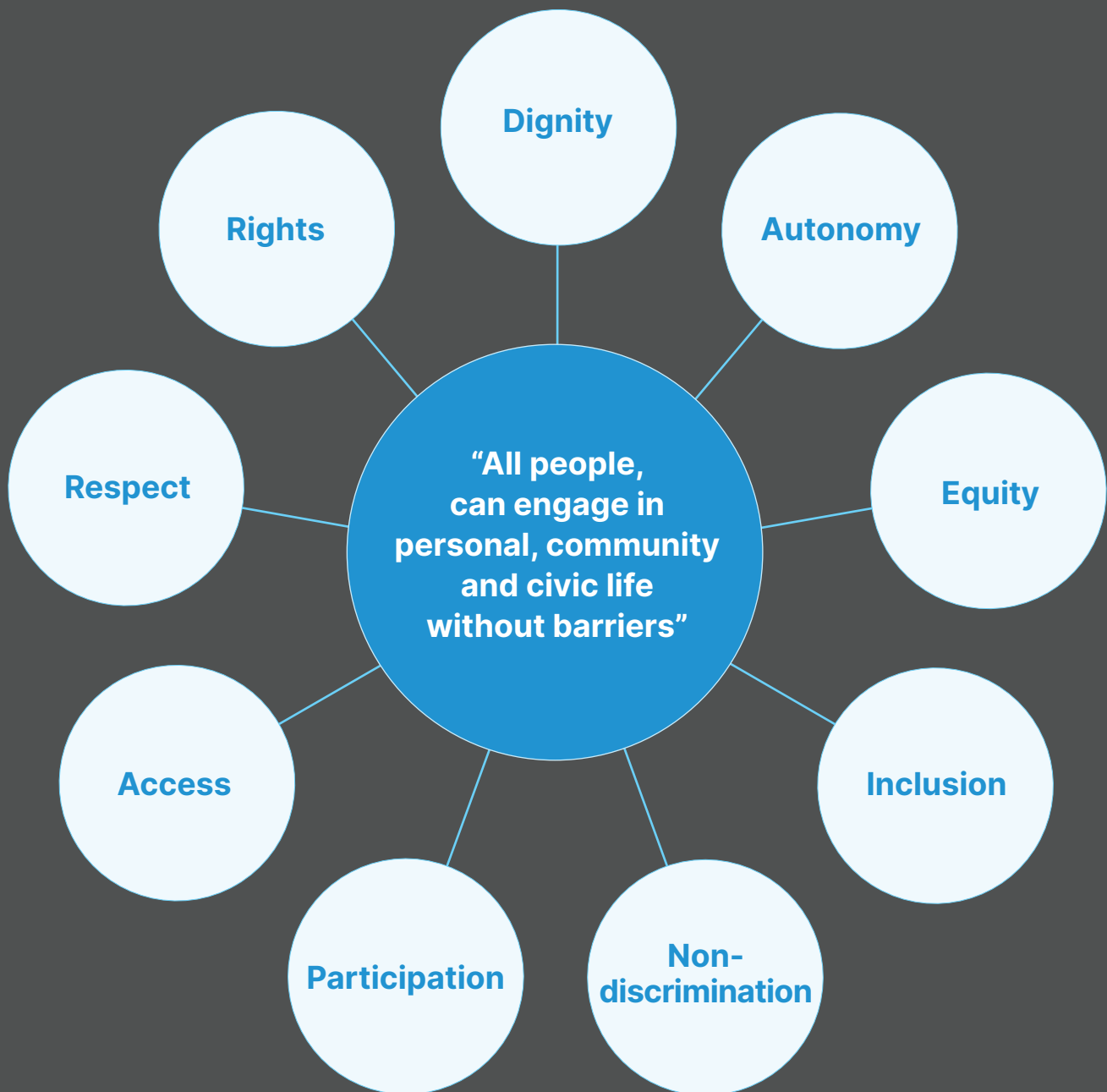


The Plan

The Waimakariri Vision

The Waimakariri District Council has a vision for an inclusive District where all people can engage in personal, community and civic life without

barriers. The associated nine key words represent overarching guiding principles that are accepted as vital and true for creating an inclusive society.



Goals

Goals

The following eight goals have been identified for the Council to create a more inclusive environment within the Waimakariri

District. These are accompanied by more descriptive objectives.

At a glance, the eight goals are:



Communication

The Council communicates a lot with the community, whether in person at Council service centres and libraries, through signs and advertisements, in newspapers, via the website or emails, through pamphlets, policies, strategies and plans.

Some people with impairments (intellectual, vision and/or hearing), who are elderly, or new migrants (with English as a second language), face barriers to being able to access or understand commonly used forms of communication. It is important that the Council communicates information in a way that is appropriate to people's needs.

While online services can dramatically improve the experience of those who engage digitally, communication still needs to be designed and provided in a way that accommodates everyone, including those who are not online. A recent report from the Citizens Advice Bureau "A CAB Spotlight Report into the Impacts of Digital Public Services on Inclusion and Wellbeing"⁵ discusses the broad impact of digital exclusion experienced by their clients.

Goal 1: Communication allows and encourages full access to information about Council events, services and facilities:

- Information about services, events and facilities is provided in a variety of ways and media to meet different needs.
- Information about Council services and events is publicised through disability networks.
- Targeted information for disabled people and service providers is provided.
- Council facilities have clear signs including internationally recognised symbols and indicators.

Consultation and decision making

The Council regularly consults with the wider community on issues that affect them. These issues may include proposed changes to services, proposals for new services, changes to the physical environment such as roads, intersections or spaces in their neighbourhoods, and more.

The Council also conducts a number of surveys that gauge the community's views about particular matters, or involves representatives in developing strategic directions to address particular issues facing the district and its residents.

It is essential that the Council ensures its consultation and decision making mechanisms are accessible to all people and that it specifically consults with people with impairments and relevant agencies on matters that impact their lives.

Goal 2: Everyone is able to fully participate in Council consultation and decisions that impact their living in the district:

- Council consultation processes do not create barriers that prevent anyone from participating in making decisions that affect their lives.
- Council engages in ongoing dialogue with disabled people and their agencies to ensure their needs are recognised and considered when making decisions.
- Carers of people who experience disability are able to contribute to decisions that affect them.
- Involve disabled people in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services, new developments and redevelopment.
- The Waimakariri Access Group is utilised as a disability reference group to ensure appropriate expertise is available for planning, reviewing and implementing services.

⁵ Citizens Advice Bureaux New Zealand (2020) *Face to Face with Digital Exclusion: A CAB Spotlight Report into the Impacts of Digital Public Services on Inclusion and Wellbeing*.

Access to Council service, programmes and events

The Council provides a number of district services such as water supply and sewer, collecting rubbish and recycling and renting Council housing. Council services, programmes and events play a significant role in the wider community in creating a functional and enjoyable district in which to live and create stronger communities.

It is important that access to services, programmes and events is inclusive for all and allows maximum opportunities for participation for people with impairments. For example, the increase in services that are accessible over the phone or internet have significant benefits for people with vision or mobility impairments. It is important to ensure services are delivered without discrimination against people with impairments.

Goal 3: Council services, programmes and events are accessible to everyone:

- Council services meet the specific needs of people with impairments.
- Council housing is of appropriate design, is accessible, available and safe for disabled people.
- Rubbish and recycling collection services are accessible and do not create hazards.
- Council-run and sponsored events and programmes are accessible to people with impairments and physical access needs are met.
- Recreation and sports programmes are accessible to everyone, including disabled people.



Physical access

The Council is responsible for providing and maintaining a number of public spaces such as roads, footpaths, parks and recreational areas, laneways, squares and on and off-street car parking. It also provides public facilities and buildings which house services including libraries, service centres, sports facilities, museums, swimming pools, town halls and information centres. At the same time, the Council regulates requirements for other buildings the public regularly uses such as commercial and retail facilities, health care services, cafés and restaurants.

Public spaces and facilities provide an important community function. They are places where people meet and socialise; where people learn, work, shop or do business; where people obtain health care or other services; or are simply a means of getting from one place to another. Physical barriers such as steps, heavy doors, lack of colour contrasting, high door handles or lift buttons, poor lighting, lack of accessible way finding and signage, can all become obstacles for people in accessing facilities and services.





Public spaces and buildings are heavily utilised by the community. It is essential that these are accessible for everyone to maximise the opportunity for all people to fully participate in this important aspect of community life. This means no-one is prevented from participation in recreational, social or employment activities because of architectural or attitudinal barriers.

Goal 4: Everyone has access to public facilities and spaces.

- Footpaths, crossings, paved areas and streets are designed, constructed and maintained in ways that are safe, usable and accessible for everyone.
- Specific road safety issues raised by people with impairments such as particular pedestrian crossings, intersections and footpath surfaces are addressed.
- Mobility car parking is accessible, safe, appropriately located and monitored.
- Footpaths and streets are unobstructed to enable people to move about safely and easily.
- Existing Council services, facilities and public spaces maximise the opportunities for access and participation of all people.
- Statutory requirements for buildings and amenities to ensure their compliance with the Building Act 2004 S118 relating to design for access and mobility are enforced.
- Appropriately designed changing facilities and public toilets are available at Council facilities.
- Public transport is accessible and affordable.

Advocacy

The Council has a role to advocate for access and equity issues such as, but not limited to, education, employment and training, cultural events and programmes and youth disability services, as they relate to disabled people in the Waimakariri District. This includes supporting advocacy groups and agencies such as the Waimakariri Access Group, Social Services Waimakariri and the Waimakariri Health Advisory Group. At the same time, disabled people need to be empowered to self-advocate to achieve independent living.

Goal 5: The rights of disabled people are supported and promoted through advocacy and empowerment.

- Advocacy is provided for policies, programmes, practices and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all disabled people.
- Disabled people have the opportunity to advocate on their own behalf.
- Disability advocacy services and agencies are supported.
- Advocacy is provided for the planning and development of an inclusive and accessible environment for everyone.
- Disabled people are portrayed by the media in a positive way, particularly through the Council's own publications and publicity material.



Prevention

The Council acknowledges that one fifth to one third of impairments are caused by lasting effects of injury as identified by the Ministry of Health. It is therefore important that injury caused by a variety of things including motor vehicle accidents, poor diet and health are minimised, thereby reducing the overall rate of incidence of some forms of impairments in the district.

Goal 6: Injuries are avoided and rates of disability, both long and short term, are reduced.

- Advocacy is provided for policies and strategies which influence health in order to improve people's standard of living and vulnerability to injury and disease.
- Preventative measures to reduce injury or disease which can lead to impairments are advocated.
- Healthy living is encouraged and promoted.
- Injury prevention programmes are supported.
- Road safety is promoted.
- Environmental health statutes such as food licensing, dangerous goods, sale of liquor, insanitary buildings, offensive trades and hazardous substances are enforced.
- Civil defence practices are in place in order to plan for and respond to emergencies.



Diverse workforce

For most people the chance to get and keep a job is central to their independence and participation in society. For people with impairments, this can often be far more difficult than for those without impairments. People with impairments are amongst those in society with the lowest employment rates.

It is widely recognised that there is a positive correlation between gainful employment and wellbeing. Positive attributes of employment include time structure, shared experiences, contacts and social networks, which often lead to an increase in self-esteem. Work can in itself be an important step in the road to recovery and rehabilitation, as well as providing obvious personal economic benefits.

People with impairments have the right to productive and meaningful employment that provides flexibility, equal opportunity and career path development. The Council is one of the district's largest employers. It provides a wide range of workplace opportunities for local residents. It is vital that the Council provides equitable employment opportunities for people with impairments in order to ensure that assumptions and stereotypes do not prejudice the selection of candidates. Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) allow the Council to recruit the best person for the job, once they (the Council) have made any reasonable adjustments.

Goal 7: The Council has an equal employment opportunities environment and a diverse workforce.

- Employment and development of staff with impairments is facilitated and key service providers and disability agencies consulted regarding the removal of barriers.
- Communication services, resources and flexible workplace options are available.
- Job modification, skills training and on the job training is available.
- The requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 are implemented.
- There is no discriminatory or insensitive behaviour towards disabled employees.

Cultural change

In many cases it is society's attitudes towards people with impairments that create problems or a "disability". Cultural change is one of the most fundamental steps in creating an environment that is truly inclusive for all, independent from whether an individual suffers an impairment or not.

Cultural change is about considering and appropriately providing for the needs of disabled people in everyday work. Attitudes and ignorance towards people with impairments must be challenged to avoid institutional discrimination. This will ensure all in Council understand why rights are necessary and what they mean.

Goal 8: Councillors and staff are upskilled in understanding and working with disabled people:

- All Council staff and elected members will undertake disability awareness training.
- Staff whose work impinges directly on the wellbeing of people experiencing disabilities undertake more specific training to ensure

they are appropriately educated about removing barriers faced by disabled people.

- Offer provision of Universal Design seminars for Council officers to improve staff understanding and ability to be responsive to needs of people with impairments are sponsored.
- Resource material and the expertise of the Waimakariri Access Group is available and communicated to Council staff. This aims to enhance awareness and understanding of potential barriers, appropriate consultation processes, available networks and strategies to integrate the needs of the disabled community into services, facilities and decision-making processes.

The following pages outline key priority areas and Council actions for achieving these goals.



"The training literally opened my eyes to the difficulties that were posed for others who have accessibility challenges, by things that I can easily negotiate when I'm out and about. It was certainly food for thought."

Kitty

"From the accessibility training, I gained a better understanding and perspective of those in our community who are living with visual, verbal, or physical impairments. The current design of everyday services and visiting retail shops are difficult for those with impairments."

Emily

Priority Areas and Council Actions



The Waimakariri District Accessibility Plan is one of several community focused development plans that sit under the Community Development Strategy. The Community Development Strategy provides a guiding vision and framework for a broad range of community development activities and initiatives across the district, with the individual plans giving effect to specific priorities identified within the broader Strategy.

The following table represents a high level schedule of actions. The priority areas and actions in this table build on existing good practice or are new initiatives to assist in achieving our vision of an inclusive community where all can engage in their personal, community and civic life with independence.

While some actions may already be underway, many can be improved; it is our priority following this Plan to create an Accessibility Policy for use within Council enabling staff to apply an inclusive lens over all Council business and ensuring it becomes a Business As Usual approach.

This table identifies how each action contributes to the District's Community Outcomes and aligns to the objectives of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. The success of this strategy is largely dependent on the whole of Council working in partnership with people with impairments to identify needs, priorities and practical responses from Council to support the vision of this strategy.



COMMUNICATION

Goal 1: Communication allows and encourages full access to information about Council events, services and facilities.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Incorporate different formats and access features in the Council website complying with the "New Zealand Government Web guidelines".	Communication Team	Our community has access to the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in society and to exercise choice about how to live their lives.	Accessibility We access all places, services and information with ease and dignity
Make key Council communications available in a range of accessible formats that are easier for the wider disabled community.	Communication Team		
Target communication for disabled people and their service providers about information that directly affects them.	Communication Team Community Team		
Ensure that Council facilities have accessible signage including internationally recognised symbols and indicators.	Greenspace Team Communication Team Project Delivery Unit		
Publicise information about Council services and events through disability networks, including the Waimakariri Access Group.	Communication Team Community Team		

CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

Goal 2: Everyone is able to fully participate in Council consultation and decisions that impact their living in the District.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Develop the role of the Waimakariri Access Group as a disability reference group.	Community Team Greenspace Team Planning Team	Our community has access to the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in society and to exercise choice about how to live their lives.	Choice and control We have choice and control over our lives. Leadership We have great opportunities to demonstrate our leadership.
Council units ensure that accessibility is considered when planning, reviewing and implementing services	Community Team Communication Team Greenspace Team Planning Team Project Delivery Unit		
Ensure that Council does not create barriers for disabled people to be able to participate.	All		
Participate in ongoing dialogue with disabled people, their support people and agencies in order to recognise their specific needs when making decisions that affect them.	All		

ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES, PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

Goal 3: Council services, programmes and events are accessible for everyone.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Ensure that services meet the specific needs of people with impairments and continue to audit physical access to libraries, swimming pools and community buildings.	Greenspace Team Aquatic Facilities Team Library Team	Public spaces are diverse, respond to changing demographics and meet local needs for leisure and recreation.	Health and Wellbeing We have the highest attainable standards of health and wellbeing. Accessibility We access all places, services and information with ease and dignity.
Ensure provision of Council housing that is of appropriate design, accessible, safe and available to disabled people.	Property Team		
Encourage good practice to ensure rubbish and recycling services are accessible and do not create hazards.	Utilities		
Ensure that Council-run and sponsored events and programmes are as accessible for disabled people and their participation is encouraged.	Communication Team Community Team Greenspace Team Library Team		
Facilitate provision of recreation and sports programmes that are accessible.	Greenspace Team		

PHYSICAL ACCESS

Goal 4: Everyone has access to public services, facilities and spaces.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Work towards a "barrier free" environment with accessible footpaths, public spaces and buildings including public toilets, ensuring appropriate facilities are available through planning and regulatory requirements.	Greenspace Team Roading Building Unit	Public spaces are diverse, respond to changing demographics and meet local needs for leisure and recreation.	Accessibility We access all places, services and information with ease and dignity
Identify and address in a timely fashion specific road safety issues that have been raised by disabled people.	Roading	Our community has equitable access to the essential infrastructure and services required to support community wellbeing.	
Work with local business to help them align with the objective of the Signage bylaw, which is "To seek to avoid public nuisance by ensuring advertising displays and signage on footpaths does not obstruct the passage of pedestrians and/or disabled people".	Environmental Services	Our communities are able to access and enjoy natural areas and public areas.	
Continue to implement a program of replacements that looks to bring all buildings up to current code	Building Unit		
Provide an appropriate number of mobility car parks that are suitably located, monitored and labelled.	Project Delivery Unit Roading Planning		
Work with Environment Canterbury (Canterbury Regional Council) to ensure public transport is accessible for disabled people as well as affordable.	Roading Elected Officials Community Team Project Delivery Unit Waimakariri Access Group Strategy and Business Unit		
Monitor and enforce the restrictions of mobility car parks.	Environmental Services		

ADVOCACY

Goal 5: The rights of disabled people are supported and promoted through advocacy and empowerment.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Consider equity and access for disabled people through policies, programmes, practices and procedures.	Mayor and Councillors All staff	Waimakariri's diversity is freely expressed, respected and valued. Our community has equitable access to the essential infrastructure and services required to support community wellbeing.	Education We get an excellent education and achieve our potential throughout our lives.
Support and encourage disabled people to advocate on their own behalf and provide the opportunity for this to occur.	Community Team	Our community has access to the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in society and to exercise choice about how to live their lives.	Employment and Economic Security We have security in our economic situation and can achieve our potential.
Support disability advocacy services and agencies	Community Team	Council commits to promoting health and wellbeing and minimising the risk of social harm to its communities.	Health and Wellbeing We have the highest attainable standards of health and wellbeing.
Facilitate increased representation of the stories, aspirations and needs of disabled people particularly through Council's communications function and in the local media.	Communication Team Community Team		Attitudes We have the highest attainable standards of health and wellbeing. Choice and Control We have choice and control over our lives.

PREVENTION

Goal 6: Injuries are avoided and rates of disability, both long and short term, are reduced.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Advocate for policies and strategies that influence health, such as access to education, employment opportunities, adequate income and safe housing in order to improve people's standard of living and avoid preventative disease and people being unwell that can lead to impairment.	Community Team Strategy and Business Unit	Council commits to promoting health and wellbeing and minimising the risk of social harm to its communities.	Education We get an excellent education and achieve our potential throughout our lives. Health and Wellbeing We have the highest attainable standards of health and wellbeing.
Support injury prevention programmes.	Community Team		
Promote road safety through monitoring, research, physical changes and educational programmes.	Roading Project Delivery Unit		
Support road safety through monitoring, research, physical changes and educational programmes.	Community Team Greenspace Team Aquatic Facilities Team Library Team		
Ensure environment health statutes such as food licensing, dangerous goods, sale of alcohol, offensive trades and hazardous substances are administered and enforced.	Environmental Services		
Maintain a civil defence capability to plan for and respond to emergencies.	Emergency Management		
Manage insanitary buildings	Building Unit		

DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Goal 7: The Council has an equal employment opportunities environment and a diverse workforce.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Ensure that communication services, resources and flexible workplace options are available.	Human Resources Health and Safety	There is access to meaningful, rewarding, and safe employment within the district.	Education We get an excellent education and achieve our potential throughout our lives. Employment and Economic Security We have security in our economic situation and can achieve our potential Choice and Control We have choice and control over our lives. Leadership We have great opportunities to demonstrate our leadership.
Implement the requirements of the Health and Safety Act and the Council's employment policies.	Health and Safety	Our district recognises the value of both paid and unpaid work.	
Ensure there is no discriminatory or insensitive behaviour towards disabled employees.	All staff		
Enable volunteering and internship opportunities for people with disabilities.	Human Resources All Council Departments		
Educate people leaders about the value of differently abled people in the workplace.	All Managers		

CULTURAL CHANGE

Goal 8: Councillors and staff are upskilled in understanding and working with disabled people.

Priority areas and Council actions	Who	Community outcomes	New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 (NZDS)
Encourage all Council staff and elected members to undertake disability awareness training.	Mayor and Councillors Human Resources	Waimakariri's diversity is freely expressed, respected and valued. Our communities are able to access and enjoy natural areas and public spaces.	Objective 6: Foster an aware and responsive public service.
Offer provision of Universal Design seminars to improve staff understanding and ability to be responsive to the needs of disabled people.	Management Team		
Promote and offer the expertise of the Waimakariri Access Group to Council staff.	Community Team Communication Team		

Monitoring and Review



What is the Accessibility Plan?

This plan will develop over time, issues and priorities may change, however, it is important that Council is accountable to disabled people and their organisations for the actions it has committed to.

Council staff annually report to Community and Recreation Committee and the Waimakariri Access Group on progress against the priority actions detailed in this plan.

The process will include:

- The establishment of an Accessibility Plan Project Control Group, consisting of a core team of Council officers and Waimakariri Access Group members.
- Engagement with people with impairments and those who support them.
- Inclusion of information in Council reports regarding consultation with people with impairments.

The plan will be reviewed three years from adoption by Council.



Glossary

Access / Accessibility / Barrier Free

These terms are used interchangeably throughout the plan. They refer to the removal of barriers, attitudinal or environmental, which increases the opportunity for people of all ages, life stages and abilities to participate in their community safely, easily and equitably.

Accessible Journey

In order to comply with access requirements (the Building Regulations 1992 First Schedule, Clause A2 p.9) a building must have an “accessible route”. This is defined as a “...continuous route that can be negotiated unaided by a user of a wheelchair, walking frame or guide dog.” The route must extend from a street boundary or car parking area to those spaces within the building required to be accessible to enable people with impairments to carry out independently, normal activities and processes within the building.

Approachability, Accessibility, Disability-friendly and Usability

These concepts enable a person with an impairment to approach, enter and use a building and its facilities and carry out the normal functions and activities for which the building was designed.

Disability

Disability is the outcome of the interaction between a person with impairment(s) and the environment and attitudinal barriers he/she/they/them may face. It is also the process that happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people may have.

Impairments

Impairments are something that individuals have, they are long term (greater than six months) and may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric or intellectual.



Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSi)

These provide blind, deafblind and vision impaired pedestrians with visual and sensory information.

There are two types of TGSi – warning indicators and directional indicators. Warning indicators alert pedestrians to hazards in the continuous accessible path of travel, indicating they should stop to determine the nature of the hazard before proceeding further. They do not indicate what the hazard will be.

Directional indicators give directional orientation and designate the continuous accessible path of travel when other tactile or environmental cues are missing. When combined with other environmental information, TGSi assist blind, deafblind and vision impaired people with their orientation and awareness of impending obstacles, hazards and changes in the direction of the continuous accessible path of travel.

Universal Design

Also known as human centred design. This holistic approach ensures buildings, public spaces and transport amenities are easy and intuitive to use for a wide range of people no matter their age, physical ability, or level of language comprehension.



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