



ACTION PLAN

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

July 2001 – June 2004

Byron Shire Council Action Plan – July 2001 – June 2004
In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

Requests and enquiries concerning this report should be addressed to:

Byron Shire Council
PO Box 219
Mullumbimby NSW 2482

Web page
www.byron.nsw.gov.au

Phone: 02 66267000 Fax: 02 66843018

Copies of this document may be purchased from Byron Shire Council at the above address.

This report was prepared by Robyn Masters, Community Development and Projects Officer, drawing on the information gained through the consultations and research.

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Executive Summary

This Action Plan has been developed in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and set out in a format recommended by the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework.

The Policy Objective set for the Action Plan is that 'Byron Council aims to create and promote opportunities, services and facilities which enable people with disabilities and their carers to participate in the wider community and to attain a better quality of life.'

The Action Plan has sought to review the responsibilities of Council under the Act and has developed 7 goals that Byron Council will aim to achieve. These are:

1. Council will ensure that the Disability Discrimination Act – Action Plan is resourced, implemented, monitored and reviewed.

2. Council will aim to undertake access audits of all areas of responsibility and progressively remove physical barriers to ensure access for all people to public facilities and promote continuous and safe pathways of travel.

3. Council will through its activities and work practices endeavour to promote an inclusive and positive interaction with people with disabilities and their carers.

4. Council will ensure staff are trained to have a high level of awareness of issues relating to access which will enable staff to appropriately address the diverse needs of people with disabilities as required by their position.

5. Council will provide and maintain effective communication assistance for people with a disability.

6. Council will provide a safe work environment which enhances the opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and ensures any discriminatory attitudes are addressed.

7. Council will ensure its complaints procedures are accessible to people with disabilities and effective communication maintained throughout the process.

To assist Council in achieving these goals an Implementation Plan has been developed. The implementation plan identifies barriers and performance indicators for each goal, then sets out strategies to achieve these goals. Each strategy identifies resources, the officer responsible for overseeing the implementation and sets out the timeframe for completion.

The following areas are included in the implementation plan:

- Monitoring, evaluation and review of Disability Action Plan
- Physical Access
- Promotion of positive community attitudes
- Training of staff
- Information about services
- Employment
- Complaints procedures

The implementation strategies will be incorporated into Council's Management Plan and budget process. This, together with the monitoring, evaluation and review process, will ensure the Action Plan remains active and responsive to the identified issues.

The Action Plan is developed to cover a 3 year period and will be forwarded to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission following adoption.

Acknowledgments

Council acknowledges the contribution of the Access Committee, Council staff, service providers and the broader community, who are the stakeholders in the implementation of this Action Plan. This Action Plan could not have been developed without the expertise of people with disabilities bringing to light the barriers that are faced on a daily basis and recommending the strategies to systematically remove these barriers.

In preparing this plan the following sources are also acknowledged:

- Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans – A Guide for Local Government produced by the Australian Local Government Association (1995)
- Disability Discrimination Act – A Guide to best practice in Local Government produced by the Australian Local Government Association 1994
- Bellingen Shire Council Action Plan
- Leichhardt Municipal Council Action Plan 1997
- Aged and Disability Department – various documents
- NSW Government Disability Policy Framework, 1998

This Plan has taken definitions, ideas and wording from these documents where appropriate for Byron Shire.

1. Introduction

The introduction of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the NSW Disability Services Act (1993) has made it necessary that government bodies ensure equitable access to services, programs and facilities for all community members.

Byron Shire Council has a commitment to meeting its obligations under these pieces of legislation and acknowledges that all members of the community, including those with a disability, have a right to accessible, equitable and non-discriminatory services. The Action Plan was developed to review Council's current services, identify barriers to accessing them and devise strategies, initiatives and policies to overcome those barriers.

The Byron Shire Access Committee, which is an established committee of Council, has contributed to the development of this Action Plan. The committee consists of community representatives with expertise and first hand knowledge of the issues facing people with disabilities, occupational therapists, those with professional expertise in the building industry, Councillors and relevant staff. Consultation with community members, service providers and Council staff has also been an essential component in identifying all areas which need to be addressed.

Council will submit the Action Plan to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission following adoption.

In order for the Action Plan to remain active the implementation of the strategies will be monitored by the Executive Team, evaluated for effectiveness by the Access Committee and reviewed and updated as required.

2. Policy Statements

Our Vision

A thriving community where residents and visitors can live, work and play in a sustainable environment and where Council delivers the highest standard of local government services and infrastructure.

Our Values and Guiding Principles

VALUES	GUIDING PRINCIPALS
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• respect biological diversity and ecological processes• promote a tolerant and resilient community• facilitate the development of a prosperous community ideally through the encouragement of local enterprise• be responsible custodians of the Shire's natural environment
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• treat all groups within the community in a fair and respectful way• actively inform the community what services are available and how they are accessed
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure ethical and accountable practice both as an employer and as a service provider• act in the public interest• make decisions which are timely, soundly based and consistent
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all actions are transparent and open to public scrutiny• provide a right of review in respect of decision making
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• embrace community partnership in the decision making process• value community involvement in service provision
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be guided by clearly communicated plans and priorities• provide best practice in service delivery• be customer focused

Disability Discrimination Act

Action Plan Policy Statements

Context

Byron Council is committed to the development and implementation of a disability action plan which takes into consideration the requirements of the relevant legislation and regulations - the Action Plan has been developed in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

The Action Plan is noted in Councils Management Plan and Council is committed to providing the necessary resources to enable the implementation of the Action Plan.

Policy Objective

Byron Council aims to create and promote opportunities, services and facilities which enable people with disabilities and their carers to participate in the wider community and to attain a better quality of life.

Policy Statements

The Action Plan identifies 7 goals that Byron Shire Council will aim to achieve. These are:

1. Council will ensure that the Disability Discrimination Act – Action Plan is resourced, implemented, monitored and reviewed.
2. Council aims to undertake access audits of all areas of responsibility and progressively remove physical barriers to ensure access for all people to public facilities and promote continuous and safe pathways of travel.
3. Council will through its activities and work practices endeavour to promote an inclusive and positive interaction with people with disabilities and their carers.
4. Council staff are trained to have a high level of awareness of issues relating to access which will enable staff to appropriately address the diverse needs of people with disabilities as required by their position.
5. Council will provide and maintain effective communication assistance for people with a disability.
6. Byron Council provides a safe work environment which enhances the opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and ensures any discriminatory attitudes are addressed.
7. Councils' complaints procedures are accessible to people with disabilities and effective communication maintained throughout the process.

3. Byron Shire Council Services

Environmental Planning Services

- Strategic, Environmental and Land Use Planning

Local Approvals and Compliance Services

- Building Services
- Development Services
- Health and Compliance Services
- Bush Fire Services

Water and Sewerage Services

- Water Services
- Sewerage Services
- Environmental Laboratory
- Waste Management
- Stormwater

Construction and Maintenance Services

- Works Support (Fleet and Plant, Emergency Services, Flood Control, Depot)
- Works Operations (Roads, Drainage, Parks, Cemeteries, Quarries)

Corporate and Community Services

- Administration
- Financial Services
- Human Resources
- Information Services
- Community Services
- Children's Services
- Property Management
- Caravan Parks

4. Community Profile

Disability in NSW: Where are we now?

The NSW Government Disability Policy Framework, 1998 outlines the following:

“What do we mean by disability?”

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the major source of data, through the census and in particular through the 1993 Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, which used these definitions:

‘A person was identified as having a disability if he/she has one or more of a group of selected limitations, restrictions or impairments which had lasted, or was likely to last, for a period of six months or more.’

How many people with a disability live in NSW?

In 1993 an estimated 1,015,600 people in NSW had a disability. This was 17% of the population. However while the available information about people with disability is being improved rapidly in quantity, quality and consistency, there are still important gaps in our knowledge. For example, we lack information about children under the age of five years, and about the real extent of disabilities amongst people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and of non-English speaking background.

Is Age a factor?

Both disability and handicap are strongly related to age. The rates for both increase rapidly for those aged 45 years and older (and even younger for people with disabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background).

In 1993 in NSW 47.5% of people aged 65 and over had a disability, and 65% of people aged 75 years and over. This compared to 7.8% of 5-14 year olds, 6.4% of 15-24 year olds, 8.3% of 25-34 year olds, 11.9% of 35-44 year olds, 18.1% of 45-54 year olds, 28.5% of 55-59 year olds and 35.5% of 60-64 year olds.

The highest rate of profound and severe handicap occurred in the 65 and over age group”

(Source: NSW Government Disability Policy Framework, 1998)

Key Attributes relevant to Byron Shire

The ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables for NSW (1998) showed that the proportion of the population with a disability has increased to 19.3%. This is reflected on the Far North Coast where there are an estimated 48,528 people with disabilities in the Far North Coast, being 19% of the total population. Of these 22,487 (8.8% of the total population) are estimated to have a moderate, severe or profound level of disability, and as a result are likely to require some level of specialist service provision. (Ref. ABS synthetic estimates).

The highest rate of profound and severe handicap occurs in the 65 and over age group. This is particularly significant to the Far North Coast, which has a higher proportion of those aged 65 and over, many who choose the coastal towns and villages for their retirement.

As can be seen in Figure 1 on page 11 'Age Groups – Byron Shire 1996' in the 1996 census the proportion of the population in Byron Shire aged over

- 55 years was 21.2%
- 65 years was 13.5%(3,704)
- 75 years was 5.3%

Figure 2 on page 12 shows the change in population between 1986 and 1996.

- Significantly, the number of people aged 65 and over increased by 47.2% between 1986 and 1996 compared to the NSW state increase of 28.2%
- The Lismore/Byron/Tweed areas also have a high proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.
- According to Centrelink Populations Database (Quarter 4, 1998) Byron Shire (postcodes 2479, 2481, 2482 and 2483) has approximately 4,000 residents on either an aged or disability related pension.
- Figures 3 and 4 on pages 13 and 14 show the proportion and number of people aged over 65 across the Shire.
- Table 1 on page 15 shows the Care Services available within Byron Shire for Frail Aged People, 1997

Profile of Staff

Byron Council employs 220 equivalent full time staff of which there are approximately 50% each within the administrative and operational areas. Council does not currently keep a record of the number of staff with a disability, and there has been few staff that have required some form of workplace adjustment. One of the strategies of the Disability Action Plan will be to keep a record of the number of staff with a disability, and to set targets for the employment of staff with a disability and for those requiring workplace adjustment.

Figure 1. – Age Groups Byron Shire 1996

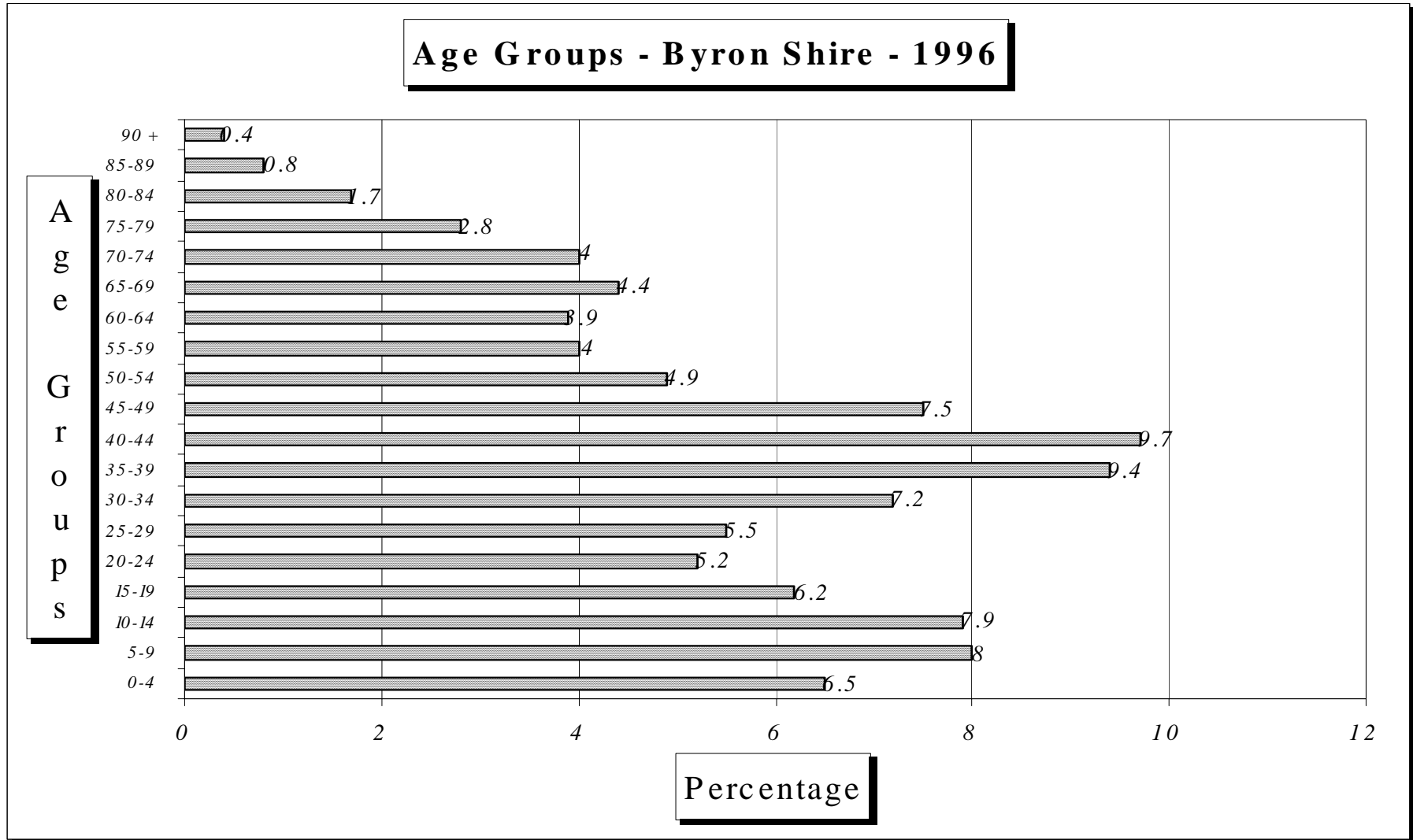


Figure 2. – Change in Population 1986 - 1996

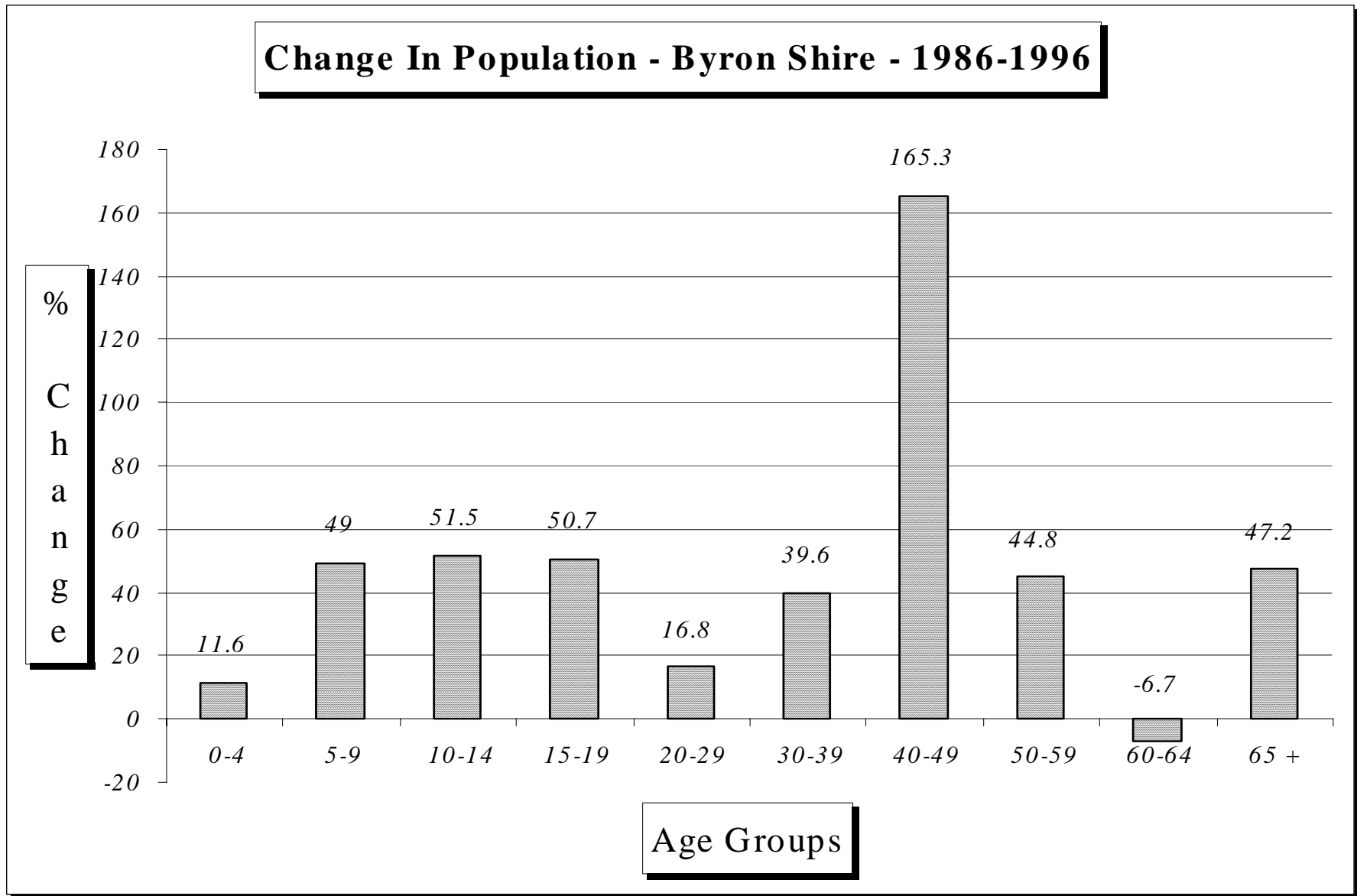


Figure 3. – Population Aged 65+ (as %) 1976 - 1996

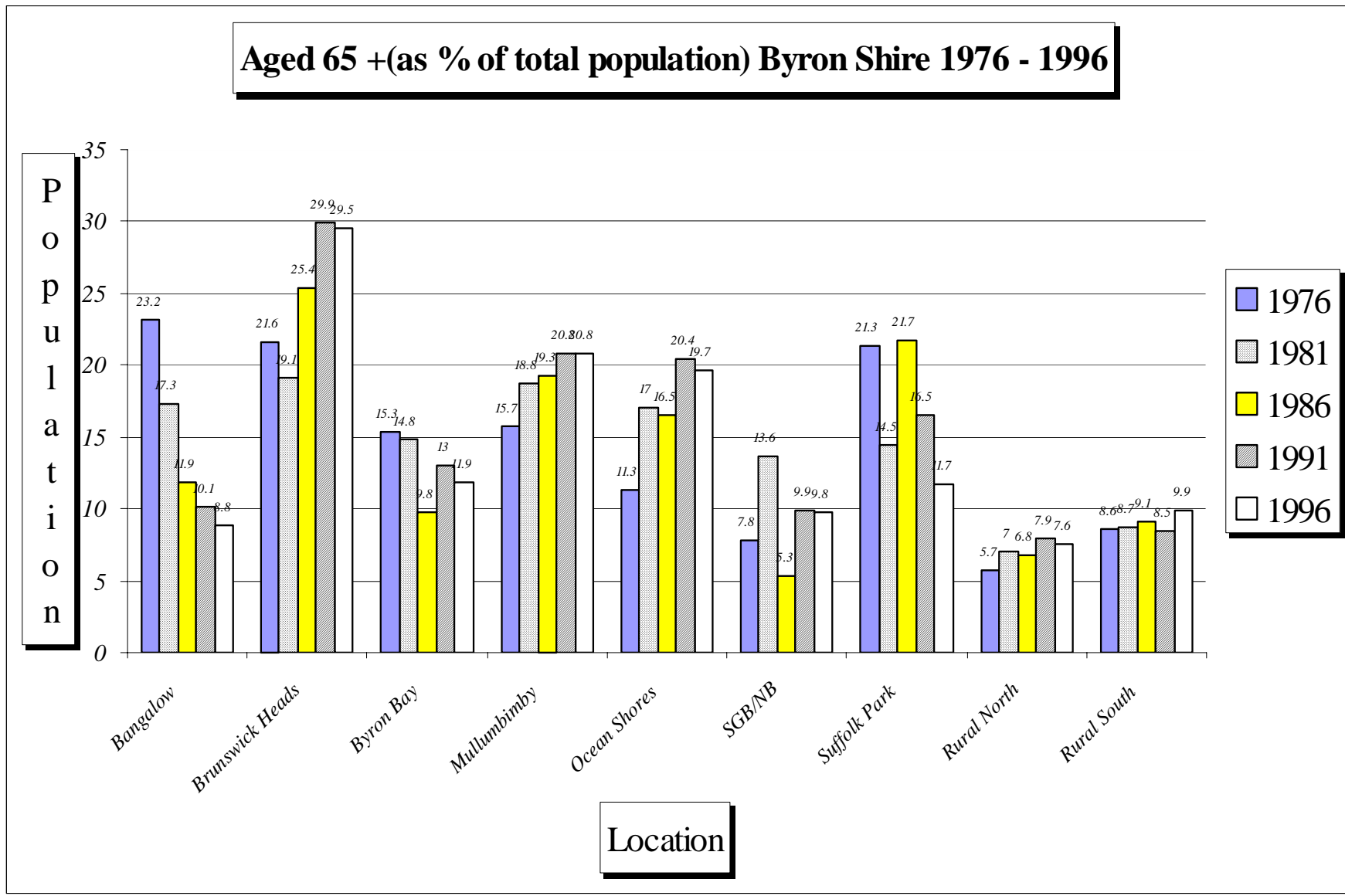


Figure 4 – Population Aged 65+ 1976 – 1996

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996
Bangalow	131	107	78	83	80
Brunswick Heads	302	358	403	495	550
Byron Bay	387	471	349	651	673
Mullumbimby	319	421	469	542	581
Ocean Shores	29	129	301	508	592
SGB/NB	12	34	20	107	168
Suffolk Park	51	99	195	200	298
Rural North	133	263	280	354	369
Rural South	121	180	288	294	364
	1485	2062	2383	3234	3675

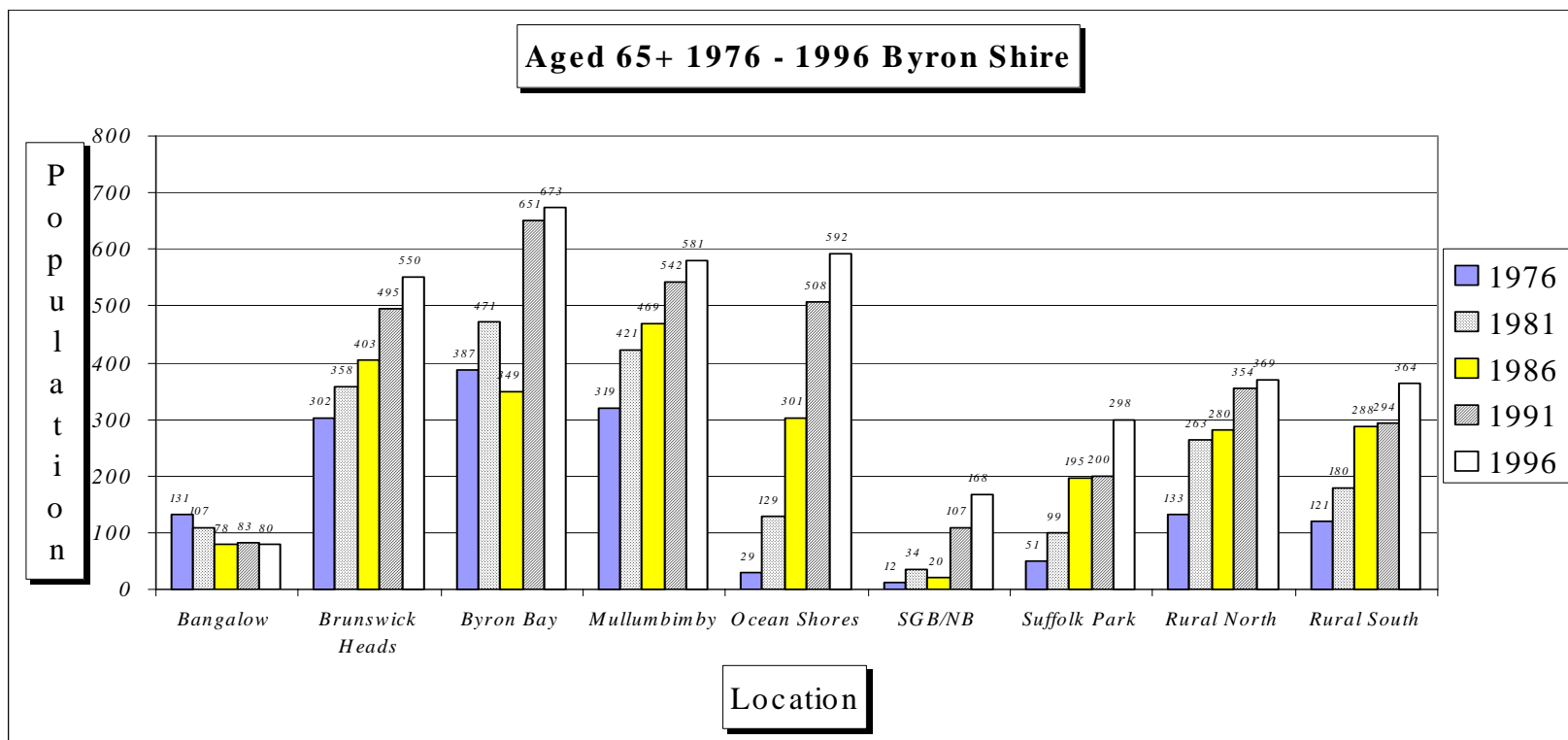


Table 1. – Care Services for Frail Aged People 1997

NSW North Coast Regional Coordinator Program

1998 Compendium of Socio-Economic Data for the North Coast of NSW

Table 27. Care Services for Frail Aged People: Population, Places, Ratios and Need, November 1997

	NESB			Low Care Places			High Care Places			Comm. Care Places			Total Services		
	Total	Pop. Aged	Pop Aged												
	Pop.	70 +	70 +	Total	Ratio	Need	Total	Ratio	Need	Total	Ratio	Need	Total	Ratio	Need
Ballina	34,702	4,597	90	170	36.98	60	136	29.58	48	30	6.53	16	336	73.09	124
Bellingen	12,252	1,278	16	49	38.34	15	40	31.3	11	6	4.69	7	95	74.33	33
Byron	27,565	2,521	84	120	47.6	6	90	35.7	11	0	0	25	210	83.3	42
Casino	10,772	1,285	31	58	45.14	6	98	76.26	-47	15	11.67	-2	171	133.07	-43
Coffs Harbour	58,337	5,956	203	247	41.47	51	180	30.22	58	18	3.02	42	445	74.71	151
Copmanhurst	3,966	250	3	0	0	13	0	0	10	1	4	2	1	4	24
Gloucester	4,815	530	3	20	37.74	7	25	47.17	-4	0	0	5	45	84.91	8
Grafton	17,111	2,075	19	121	58.31	-17	126	60.72	-43	13	6.27	8	260	125.3	-53
Greater Taree	42,410	4,655	86	166	35.66	67	178	38.24	8	35	7.52	12	379	81.42	86
Great Lakes	28,609	4,705	75	142	30.18	93	138	29.33	50	30	6.38	17	310	65.89	160
Hastings	58,012	8,653	103	307	35.48	126	316	36.52	30	45	5.2	42	668	77.2	197
Kempsey	26,431	2,680	39	139	51.87	-5	100	37.31	7	0	0	27	239	89.18	29
Kyogle	9,717	832	16	52	62.5	-10	0	0	33	10	12.02	-2	62	74.52	21
Lismore	42,955	3,570	175	164	45.94	15	265	74.23	-122	25	7	11	454	127.17	-97
Maclean	15,988	2,349	29	100	42.57	17	60	25.54	34	12	5.11	11	172	73.22	63
Nambucca	17,610	2,351	28	101	42.96	17	81	34.45	13	8	3.4	16	190	80.82	45
Nymboida	4,358	236	3	0	0	12	0	0	9	1	4.24	1	1	4.24	23
Richmond River	10,056	1,009	16	39	38.65	11	0	0	40	0	0	10	39	38.65	62
Tweed	66,866	9,692	196	253	26.1	231	352	36.32	36	39	4.02	58	644	66.45	325
Ulmara	6,146	472	0	20	42.37	4	0	0	19	3	6.36	2	23	48.73	24
North Coast NSW	498,678	59,696	1,215	2268	38.67	719	2185	37.13	201	291	4.79	308	4744	80.59	1224
Western Sydney	622,352	38,272	8,776	1626	42.49	288	2603	68.01	-1072	365	9.54	18	4594	120.04	-767
South Western Sydney	669,012	38,411	11,858	1451	37.78	470	2460	64.04	-924	340	8.85	44	4251	110.67	-410
Hunter	507,066	48,003	2,531	2087	43.48	313	2447	50.98	-527	247	5.15	233	4781	99.6	19
Illawarra	353,970	33,621	3,735	1331	39.59	350	1478	43.96	-133	234	6.96	102	3043	90.51	319
New England	175,211	14,766	219	741	50.18	-3	682	46.19	-91	130	8.8	18	1553	105.17	-76
New South Wales	6,035,642	525,464	63,996	21889	41.66	43.84	29798	56.71	-8780	3467	6.6	1788	55154	104.96	-2606
Notes:	<i>Total Population: Population from ABS 1996 Census</i>														
	<i>Population Aged 70 +, 1996 Census</i>														
	<i>NESB Population Aged 70 + : from ABS 1996 Population Census</i>														

5. Legislative Framework

Byron Council is committed to the development and implementation of a Action Plan which takes into consideration the requirements of the relevant legislation and regulations as follows.

Under the **NSW Local Government Act 1993, the NSW Local Government (General) Amendment (Community and Social Plans) Regulation 1998** Council has a requirement for access and equity planning and reporting.

The Commonwealth **Disability Discrimination Act 1992** covers all service providers in Australia, whether public or private sector and makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of a disability. The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as:

- a. 'total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that:
presently exists; or
previously existed but no longer exists; or
may exist in the future; or
is imputed to a person.'

This Act is particularly relevant to local government in the areas of: -

- Accommodation
- Employment
- Access to premises used by the public
- Provision of goods, services and facilities
- Buying or disposal of land
- Administration of commonwealth laws and programs
- Provision of information eg. In "plain English" formats.

Other legislation contains clauses for public authorities in respect of the provision of non-discriminatory and equitable service provision to people with disabilities. These are: -

The NSW Disability Services Act (1993) which states 'a person is in the target groups if the person has a disability (however arising and whether or not of a chronic episodic nature):

- a. that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments; and

- b. that is permanent or is likely to be permanent; and
- c. that results in:
 - 1. a significantly reduced capacity in one or more major life activities, such as communication, learning, mobility, decision-making or self-care and
 - 2. the need for support, whether or not of an ongoing nature'

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977) – the definition provided under this Act mirrors the Disability Discrimination Act definition.

Equal Employment Opportunity Act (1984) – objectives of this part relevant to Council are:

- a. to eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, marital status and physical impairment in councils; and
- b. to promote equal employment opportunity for women, members of racial minorities and physically handicapped persons in councils.

6. Development Process of this Action Plan

Access Committee Workshop

Byron Shire Council is fortunate to have an active and effective Access Committee. The Access Committee membership is broad and includes a number of residents with disabilities and expertise in disability issues, an Occupational Therapist and other professionals with a knowledge of the building requirements. It has been part of the agenda of this committee to develop an Action Plan and to consistently draw to Council's attention the need for improved access.

Prior to the development of this Action Plan the Access Committee held an experiential workshop with Directors, Councillors and other key staff. There was a high participation rate and the workshop was effective in raising awareness of the broad range of issues that effect people with disabilities. Through experiencing first hand the impact of trying to negotiate the Council administration building, and the local shopping centre in wheel chairs, or with limited vision the participants experienced a range of access limitations. Through gaining a greater understanding of the access limitations the workshop was also effective in creating a favourable climate for the implementation of this Action Plan.

Draft Plan

A Draft Action Plan was developed in consultation with the Access Committee. This Plan was endorsed by the Executive Team prior to being considered by the elected Council. The Draft Action Plan was then considered by Council and placed on public exhibition for 1 month. During the exhibition phase consultation was undertaken with key organisations, staff and with a diverse number of people with disabilities.

7. Implementation and Review

The Executive Team will have the responsibility for ongoing monitoring of the Action Plan ensuring their areas of responsibility are on target. Council's commitment to monitoring of the Action Plan is further demonstrated through performance measures being included in the Directors performance agreements covering their area of responsibility.

Councils' Annual Report will include progress against performance indicators as part of Council's requirement to report on access and equity issues.

The Access Committee will play a role in evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies undertaken as part of the Disability Action Plan and recommending any changes to strategies to increase effectiveness. The role of this committee will also include further participation in the development of various policies and training packages as recommended in the Action Plan.

The Disability Action Plan will be reviewed and updated every 3 years in consultation with the Access Committee, Senior Staff and the community.

8. Communication Strategies

Council will provide written information to all staff and progressively provide training to increase awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992). It will be the responsibility of Directors to ensure each staff member within their department is aware of their responsibility under the Action Plan and to monitor progress on implementing identified strategies.

Copies of the Action Plan will be:

- will be available to all staff via the internal DOCS system;
- distributed to relevant departments and groups upon request;
- will also be available from Council, on Byron Council's web page and upon request in large print and on computer disk;
- placed in key locations across the Shire including all Access Points and libraries during the exhibition period. The availability of the draft Action Plan for comment will be advertised through the local media.

Contact details are:
Byron Shire Council
PO Box 219
Mullumbimby NSW 2482

Web page: www.byron.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 02 66267000 Fax: 02 66843018

SECTION TWO

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

IMPLEMENTATION OF DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

1. Priority Area of Action

Goal / Outcome

Council will ensure that the Disability Discrimination Act – Action Plan is resourced, implemented, monitored and reviewed.

Identified Barriers

- Staffing and financial implications to enable implementation are yet to be fully accounted for.

Performance Indicators

- Identified access barriers are progressively eliminated following implementation of strategies.
- Performance measures included in the Directors performance agreements are met.

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
1.1 Council will progressively budget for the implementation of the Action Plan on an annual basis.			ongoing
1.2 Implementation Strategies will be incorporated into Council's Management Plan and budget process.		Director of Corporate and Community Services	2001 and ongoing
1.3 Performance measures will be included in each director's performance agreement - covering their area of responsibility for the implementation of the Action Plan.		General Manager	2002 and ongoing
1.4 The Executive Team will establish a process for monitoring each department's progress in implementing strategies and provide information in Council's Annual Report as well as make information available to the Access Committee.	Staff time	Executive Team	2001/02
1.5 Evaluation – The Access Committee in conjunction with Council's Community Projects Officer will evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies in eliminating access barriers.	Staff and committee time	Community Projects Officer	Annually
1.6 Review – The Access Committee in conjunction with Council's Community Projects Officer will assess the overall effectiveness of the Action Plan and recommend updates.	Staff and committee time. \$1,000 toward consultations and preparation of report.	Community Projects Officer	2004

PHYSICAL ACCESS

2. Priority Area for Action

Goal / Outcome: Council aims to undertake access audits of all areas of responsibility and progressively remove physical barriers to ensure access for all people to public facilities and promote continuous and safe pathways of travel.

Context: Council oversees a broad range of areas of responsibility which have the potential to impact on people's physical access to public buildings and pathways of continuous travel. These include the following areas:

- Council Chambers and Administration building
- Parks and Gardens
- Signage
- Beach Access
- Playgrounds
- Engineering works
- Footpath Systems
- Road Networks –curbs and gutters
- Planning and Approval processes
- Public Events
- Child Care
- Libraries
- Community Centres
- Swimming Pools
- Public toilets and showers
- Caravan Parks
- Parking

Identified Barriers:

- There are a number of identified barriers to Council facilities, however these have not been documented to date.
- B.C.A. and Australian Standards do not reflect requirements of the D.D.A.

Performance Indicators

- There is a systematic removal of physical barriers within Councils' area of responsibility.
- All planning approvals comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) ensuring access to all public facilities.
- Public access pathways are free of obstacles which would otherwise hinder a safe and continuous pathway of travel.

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
2.1 Resources are identified via a number of sources including fees from footpath dining, crown reserves (where applicable) and other funding sources to conduct an audit and rectify physical barriers.	Staff time and resources	Director of Corporate and Community Services	December 2001
2.2 Conduct Access Audits of all areas of Council responsibility in order to identify physical barriers.	Staff time and resources – To be funded from additional fees collected from footpath dining - approx. \$10,000 to undertake audit.	Executive Team - The audit involves the participation of a Council engineer, architect or other professional with experience in disability access, occupational therapist, 2 members of access committee.	June 2002/03
2.3 Criteria are established and priorities identified for the systematic removal of physical barriers. eg. Installing hearing loops, modifying the front counter. A works program is developed for high priorities and presented to Council for budget consideration.	Works program of approx. \$50,000 per annum taking into account all of Council's operations.	Executive Team	Works program adopted by Council for 2003/2004 budget.
2.4 Council's Development Control Plan No.1 is amended to ensure all approvals incorporate access to all public premises and facilities.		Director of Environmental Planning Services	June 2002
2.5 A Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan is developed for Byron Bay.	Formulated as part of the Traffic Study as per S94 plans.	Director of Construction and Maintenance Services Traffic Advisory Committee	June 2003

2.6	Policies and procedures are developed to ensure public access pathways are free of obstacles which would hinder a safe and continuous pathway of travel.	Staff review of Footpath Dining Policy Staff review of Signage Policy	Director of Corporate and Community Services Director of Local Approvals and Compliance Services	June 2002
2.7	Procedures are developed to ensure applicants for building or development approval are aware of their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.	Staff time	Director of Local Approvals and Compliance Services	September 2002
2.8	Investigate further strategies which would facilitate opportunities for people with disabilities and their carers to participate in the wider community and to attain a better quality of life. Include the following areas: - signage - public events - streetscapes/parking/ lighting - waste disposal/garbage pick-up - shortage of public seating - beach access		Executive Team / Access Committee	ongoing

PROMOTING POSITIVE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

3. Priority Area for Action

Goal / Outcome: Council will through it's' activities and work practices endeavour to promote an inclusive and positive interaction with people with disabilities and their carers.

Context: As the level of government closest to the community Council has a particular responsibility to promote positive community attitudes. This responsibility covers Councils role as an employer and as a provider of services and facilities that have access to the general public. Council also has the potential to develop a close relationship with the media in the promotion of positive attitudes within the broader community. Byron Council is fortunate in that they have a committed and vibrant Access Committee which has been responsible for a number of events and media releases which promote positive attitudes.

Identified Barriers: Not all staff have a high level of awareness of the issues.

Performance Indicators

- Community members with disabilities increasingly participate in a broad range of Council committees and events.
- Attitudinal barriers have been eliminated from our service provision.
- Council, in conjunction with the Access Committee initiates a number of positive media releases.

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
3.1 Conduct staff survey to assess attitudes to people with disabilities.	Staff time	Human Resources Officer and Community Projects Officer	June 2002
3.2 Material produced by Council will be inclusive and promote positive attitudes to people with disabilities.		Executive Team	ongoing
3.3 Council will consult with people with expertise in the field of disability when it does not have the necessary information or skills to facilitate integration of a person with a disability into any of its programs.		Executive Team Human Resources Officer Community Projects Officer	ongoing

TRAINING OF STAFF

4. Priority Area for Action

Goal / Outcome: Council staff are trained to have a high level of awareness of issues relating to access which will enable staff to appropriately respond to the diverse needs of people with disabilities as required by their position.

Identified Barriers

The Council has provided limited training to staff and the elected Council on the Disability Discrimination Act and EEO policy.

Performance Indicators

- All staff throughout the organisation are aware of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, particularly on issues pertinent to their position.
- Staff respond appropriately to the diverse needs of people with a disability.

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
4.1 Written material is distributed to all staff related to increasing awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).	Staff time	Human Resources Officer Community Projects Officer and Access Committee	June 2002
4.2 Regular article is submitted to the Council staff newsletter as a way of raising staff awareness of the issues included in the Disability Action Plan and the role of the Access Committee.	Staff time	Community Projects Officer and Access Committee	ongoing
4.3 A half-day induction program is run for all new staff every 6 months on Disability Awareness Training including awareness of meeting the needs of customers with a disability.	Staff time and \$2,000	Access Committee	ongoing
4.4 All staff throughout the organisation are progressively trained on the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and on issues pertinent to their position, such as staff being trained on how to use hearing loops and-TTY – telephone typewriters and communication with customers with a disability is addressed to reduce access barriers.	Staff time and \$ 2,000	Access Committee	ongoing
4.5 Conduct post-training survey to reassess staff attitudes to people with disabilities.	Staff time	Human Resources Officer/ Community Projects Officer and Access Committee	June 2002

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
4.6 Amend staff performance appraisal survey to include appraisal of service to people with disabilities.	Staff time	Human Resources	April 2002

INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES

5. Priority Area for Action

Goal / Outcome: Council will aim to provide and maintain effective communication and assistance for people with disabilities.

Context: Council produces numerous documents - meeting agenda's, advertisements and planning documents – and also has a strong commitment to community involvement in the development of many planning documents. Given Councils' commitment to community involvement Council will aim to provide information in a number of written formats and develop ways of consulting with the community that is inclusive of all people, such as ensuring venues are fully accessible and recognising that increasingly the Internet is being used by people with a range of disabilities. Council has recently established a web page and this Action Plan promotes the use of Council's web page as an essential component for the delivery of information.

Identified Barriers

- Existing information is rarely produced in forms other than written format.
- Community Consultation processes may present a number of barriers to the full participation of people with a disability.
- Staff have not had access to training on disability awareness and therefore may not be providing information that is accessible.

Performance Indicators

- All documents produced by Council will be available in other formats where possible and as requested.
- All documents that are open to public comment will be placed on Council's web page.
- Community Consultation and Council committee meetings will ensure they enhance participation.
- The front counter at Council's administration building is adjusted to enable access to people in a wheelchair.

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
5.1 Councils' key documents are made available in alternative information formats eg. large print, on audiotape and on computer disk as requested. Residents are informed of the availability of documents in alternate formats.	Within existing budget	Director of Corporate and Community Services	2002/03
5.2 The Access Committee will establish a network of key people and organisations with expertise in disability issues which can provide a feedback on the effectiveness of Councils' information dissemination.		Access Committee	July 2002
5.3 Public forums will be held in venues which are fully accessible.		Executive Team	ongoing
5.4 All documents that are open for public comment will be placed on Councils' web page.		Executive Team	ongoing

EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE COUNCIL

6. Priority Area for Action

Goal / Outcome: Byron Council provides a safe work environment which enhances the opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and ensures any discriminatory attitudes are addressed.

Context: Council does not maintain information on the number of staff with a disability, and there has been few staff that have required some form of workplace adjustment. One of the strategies of the Disability Action Plan is to set targets for the employment of staff with a disability and for those requiring workplace adjustment.

Identified Barriers

- Council does not have a policy on providing reasonable adjustment for staff and Councillors with a disability.
- Council does not maintain information on the number of staff with a disability or requiring reasonable adjustment.
- Most staff information is provided in written form only, which may present a barrier for staff with poor literacy, learning difficulties or sight impairment.
- Council does not have a forum for proactively addressing E.E.O. issues within the organisation.

Performance Indicators

- Affirmative recruitment and selection practices are in place - eliminate any discriminatory barriers.
- Increase in the number of staff with a disability.
- Increase in the number of adjustments undertaken.
- Staff with disabilities have equal opportunities to training, career development and advancement.

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
6.1 Set target for employment of staff with a disability.		Consultative Committee	December 2001
6.2 Identify skill shortage within the organisation and employ or train staff in additional skills where demand identified –eg. sign-language interpreters.		Human Resources Officer / Community Projects Officer and Consultative Committee	June 2002
6.3 Job descriptions – include statement in all directors contracts/ job descriptions referring to relevance of action plan and staff’s responsibility to implement their part of action plan.		Human Resources Officer	September 2001
6.4 n accurate profile of work place adjustments is kept.		Property Officer / Manager – Information Services	ongoing
6.5 Develop policy and procedures on reasonable adjustment relevant to all disabilities defined under the D.D.A. Include recommendations on varying job design, work schedules adjustments – large screen computers, zoom text software with speech capabilities, ergonomic chairs, telephones with large buttons and adjustable speakers.		Community Projects Officer and Access Committee	June 2003

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
6.6 Job information packages to state that Council will make reasonable adjustment.		Human Resources Officer	ongoing
6.7 Improve range of methods for information dissemination to staff – verbal, plain English, large print.		Executive Team	ongoing
6.8 Recruitment and Selection package to advise staff to focus on inherent requirements for the job and ensure interview questions are non-discriminatory.		Human Resources Officer	ongoing
6.9 Develop policies and procedures to ensure staff with disabilities have equal opportunities to training, career development and advancement.		Consultative Committee	ongoing

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

7. Priority Area for Action

Goal / Outcome: Councils' complaints procedures are accessible to people with disabilities and effective communication maintained throughout the process.

Identified Barriers

- Frontline service providers, such as Customer Services Staff, require staff training on communication with customers with a disability.
- Limited knowledge of whether complaints system is being accessed by people with a disability.

Performance Indicators

- Decrease in number of complaints made in regard to access and other disability related issues.
- Improved delivery of services to people with a disability.
- Improved communication processes for people with a disability.

Strategies	Resources	Officer Responsible	Timeframe
7.1 Council develops a plain English pamphlet explaining their complaint procedures, which is also made available on Council's website.		Director of Corporate and Community Services	June 2002
7.2 Information is collected on customer complaints about staff attitudes and behaviour towards people with disabilities.		Director of Corporate and Community Services	ongoing
7.3 An annual evaluation of the 'Complaints System' is undertaken to identify the nature and response to complaints raised by people with a disability or their carers.		Director of Corporate and Community Services	ongoing
7.4 Front line service providers trained on communication skills and responding to the needs of customers with a disability.		Director of Corporate and Community Services	ongoing
7.5 Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted and include questions on staff attitudes to people with disabilities.		Director of Corporate and Community Services	June 2003