



MINUTES

The Minutes of the **Access and Inclusion Committee** meeting held in the Ros Crichton Pavilion, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney on Tuesday 25 February 2025.



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1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting opened at 5.35pm.

In Attendance

Chair: Councillor MaryAnn Beregi

Councillor: Mayor, Zoe Baker

Committee Members: Jaci Armstrong

Jillian Christie

Naomi Deck

Judy Harwood

Kate Hooke

Alistair Lee

Kate Wilson (remote)

Council staff:

Gary Parsons, Director Open Space and Infrastructure

Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Planning and Environment

Gabrielle Rennard, Service Unit Manager Community Resilience and Sustainability

George Carrick, Access and Inclusion Coordinator

David Manson, Manager Parks and Reserves

Peita Rose, Minutes Secretary

2. Apologies

Therese Cole, Chief Executive Officer

Councillor Antonini

Councillor Holding

Councillor Santer

Councillor Welch

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 October 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

Mover: Naomi Deck

Seconder: Kate Hooke

4. Disclosures of Interest

Nil.

Brendan Metcalfe, Director State Rezoning, NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Brendan Metcalfe, Director State Rezoning, NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure addressed the Committee on their concerns regarding the Crows Nest TOD, as noted in the Committee's formal submission to the Department.

Brendan advised that the NSW Government has established the NSW Movement and Place (TfNSW) framework. The framework includes various resources that are relevant to the items raised by the Access and Inclusion Committee submission.

- [Design of Roads and Streets](#)
- [Walking Space Guide](#)
- [Network Planning in Precincts Guide](#)

Brendan noted the following with respect to the Crows Nest TOD:

- There is a good opportunity through the Crows Nest TOD redevelopment to improve productivity and equitable access through the precinct.
- Many older buildings were not constructed with current standards in mind, but redevelopment offers enhanced connectivity.
- Network planning in precincts should include a higher level of guidance on safety and the effective integration of active transport networks.
- Promoting active transport in key public spaces is important, as it emphasizes cohesive transport networks, rather than on individual streets and roads.

Brendan advised the Department have introduced the Crows Nest Design Guide which provides a guide for access and diverse housing. The following points were noted for consideration in response to the queries raised by the Access and Inclusion Committee regarding improving access within the precinct.

- Introducing a requirement for diverse housing to be delivered within a percentage of homes beyond any quantum required by the National Construction Code.
- Opportunity for potential changes to the Design Guide.
- Whilst the Design Guide takes precedence, the DCP serves as a supplement, relevant objectives such as ensuring equitable access for all abilities in the provision of carparking.
- The midrise pattern book is currently being finalised. It sets higher standards than usual, showcasing good examples of potential developments within the precincts. These developments are typically six stories high and feature a dedicated pathway, along with varying heights throughout the precinct. These examples can be referenced, adapted, and applied in future projects.

Questions from Committee

Footpath setback:

- Walkability,
- Shade,
- Grass for assistance dogs to go to toilet.

Brendan advised that the design guide does have a specific section on setbacks, but they are generally at the higher level, not street level. On the Pacific Highway, the setback is zero as there are commercial premises on the ground floor, which is in the 'Design Guide' on Page 33. There is a balance between addressing the pedestrian environment and how Council decided to approach its public domain improvement plan, or the local street area. Through development there is an opportunity to enhance the footpaths width, providing more space, for example, by restricting A-frame signage.

In the residential design there is an opportunity for greater setbacks but with commercial building, the building line is at the front of the building.

How does the government ensure that the small area of the TOD you are responsible for is effectively integrated with North Sydney Council Plans?

Brendan advised that they are focusing on factors such as built form, land use types, maximum building heights, floor space ratio, access points and the number of people expected, as well as interaction with the public domain which is the responsibility of North Sydney Council

Pacific Highway is a long block with a 300-metre stretch of buildings. Our goal is to establish a public thoroughfare through this area, ensuring the building designs are integrated and aligned with the concepts outlined in the design guide.

Sound

Alistair mentioned that large expanses of bitumen, cement and building setbacks can create echoes and traffic noise issues and this can cause difficulties and issues for people who are vision impaired, and rely on sound to guide and assist them. Is this something that can be investigated and explored further?

Alistair also suggested inviting Brendan's team to a site meeting to discuss these concerns.

Brendan acknowledged this and stated he would consult with his development team to see if they have already considered these issues.

Electric Bike, Scooters

Alistair mentioned reading an article suggesting that Planning is considering changing to the rules around cyclists riding on footpaths.

Council's Director Planning and Environment responded, noting that it is a contentious issue, as people riding on footpaths can create challenges, especially with scooters, which are already banned. While shared bikes, like lime bikes are beneficial for mobility, the issue arise when bikes are dumped, obstructing pedestrian movement. The challenge lies in accommodating these new mobility options without disrupting others.

People are increasingly adopting additional mobility options, and as a Council, we must find ways to accommodate them safely.

Brendan advised that the Design Guide, set specific standards that must be followed. While the Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) cannot override the Design Guide. The Design Guide takes precedence, but the DCP can add further clarification and specifics.

Levies

Alistair asked if there is any reason why levies can't be raised with developers to ensure that Council's planners are protected from backlashes and to prevent Council's from bearing unreasonable costs that they are obliged to pass onto the ratepayers?

Council's Director Planning and Environment responded that development contributions levies are very tightly regulated, with rules on how they can be raised and what they can be spent on. There are also thresholds, such as the maximum that Councils can charge in the metro area, which is \$20,000 for an additional unit. These parameters have been in place for a decade and cannot be exceeded.

Alistair suggested that more information should be provided to the public about this.

Naomi noted that this Committee takes pride in identifying opportunities, and rather than avoiding change simply because it hasn't been done before, she sees it as a chance to be at the forefront of development and community interaction. Naomi encouraged everyone to think outside the box, remove barriers, and explore what can be done to make it work. It's important to consider that one in six people live with a disability, and that one person affects a broader network of family, colleagues, and friends.

Brendan expressed excitement about opportunities presented by the redevelopment, viewing it as an opportunity for renewal.

Councillor Beregi thanked Brendan for his time and emphasised that there is a desire for improvement and collaboration. One of Committee's key goals is to ensure inclusivity and accessibility across all aspects of Council's services and infrastructure, hopefully to a point one day where this committee might be no longer necessary, and the principles are embedded from the start. Accessibility and inclusion should be a proactive approach, not a retrospective consideration. Retrofitting is costly, disruptive, expensive and never as effective as incorporating these considerations into the design from the beginning. It's about shaping how people think and how development is approached.

5. Reports

5.1. Gender Equity and Accessibility Audit of Council Sporting Facilities

AUTHOR	George Carrick, Access and Inclusion Coordinator
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Background

At its meeting on the 11 November 2024 the Council resolved the following:

- 1. THAT** Council conduct an urgent review of allocation of sporting fields, facilities and amenities including changing rooms and toilets, to be undertaken before the commencement of the winter season to measure access to facilities for training and competition for girls and women and that the review include a breakdown of training and playing hours, times of day allocated between genders and that the review initially focus on Cammeray Park, Anderson Park and North Sydney Oval (including Ovals 1 and 2).
- 2. THAT** Council undertake an audit in relation to opportunity for access to sporting fields and facilities for people with a disability including policies and actions of any sporting clubs hiring Council fields and facilities.
- 3. THAT** Council also review any Hiring Policies and Conditions of Use to ensure that they align with gender equity and access and inclusion principles.
- 4. THAT** a further report be provided to Council and the Access and Inclusion Committee for consideration prior to commencement of the winter sporting season.

This report responds to the above resolution.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Access and Inclusion Committee note the report and provide feedback on how Council may most effectively work towards sporting facilities, policy and processes being inclusive and accessible.

- Council's website to note all the accessibility features available and how to access venues.
- Currently no adult change table at any public park or amenity within North Sydney.

Resolved to Recommend:

1. THAT the Access and Inclusion Committee note the report and provide feedback on how Council may most effectively work towards sporting facilities, policy and processes being inclusive and accessible.

Mover: Kate Hooke

Secunder: Jaci Armstong

Result: Unanimous

5.2. Key Projects and Works

AUTHOR	George Carrick, Access and Inclusion Coordinator
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Background

In mid-2024, Council undertook a comprehensive community engagement program, the 'have your say', on North Sydney's next ten years' campaign, to understand the needs and priorities of our community. Following the preparation of the resulting Strategies from this engagement, Council endorsed for public exhibition, seven 10 Year Informing Strategies. This exhibition process occurred between 27 November 2024 to 10 January 2025.

Each strategy includes an overarching outcome of where we want to be in 10 years and strategic directions with clear measurable objectives, that outline how we will strive towards the outcome. Under each strategic direction are specific projects and initiatives that will help us achieve the objectives. There is also a list of Council's existing services that support each strategic direction.

An overview of the draft Strategies was provided to the Access and Inclusion Committee in early December 2024.

At its meeting on 10 February 2025, Council endorsed the draft Strategies.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the Access and Inclusion Committee note the report.

The Committee reached a consensus that, from an efficiency perspective, holding additional one-hour presentations or consultation meetings via Teams works well. It was suggested that the focus be on specific plans, which would help keep the committee's attention on the project at hand and make it easier to address key issues quickly. Ideally, papers should be circulated at least one to two weeks in advance, accompanied by specific questions for the committee to focus on and provide feedback on during the meeting. The meeting would last for one hour, with any remaining questions to be discussed afterward.

Resolved to Recommend:

1. THAT the Access and Inclusion Committee note the report.

Mover: Kate Hooke

Seconder: Jaci Armstrong

Result: Unanimous

6. General Business

6.1 Recent employment of two people with disability in partnership with Jigsaw Australia

North Sydney Council recently employed two Jigsaw graduates in a two-year full-time role. One in the Finance Team, and one in the Parks and Reserves Team.

A Motion was moved by Alistair Lee and seconded by Naomi Deck,

1. THAT Council welcomes the appointment of two new staff members in partnership with Jigsaw, and that the Committee encourages Council to liaise with Jigsaw and other providers/agencies in relation to ongoing opportunities to appoint people with a disability to Council roles.

Voting was unanimous.

Resolved to Recommend:

1. THAT Council welcomes the appointment of two new staff members in partnership with Jigsaw, and that the Committee encourages Council to liaise with Jigsaw and other providers/agencies in relation to ongoing opportunities to appoint people with a disability to Council roles.

6.2 Farewell Naomi Deck

Councillor Beregi thanked Naomi Deck for her contributions toward the committee, noting she was one of the committee's foundation members, is inspirational and will be missed.

Naomi thanked everyone and stated that she was proud to be a member of the committee. Naomi said that being part of the Committee has been a positive experience as it is focused on making positive, forward looking changes, not only for Committee members' experiences, but for the experience of our friends, family and the broader community.

6.3 Confirmation of meeting date change

The change of meeting dates was noted and adopted as fourth Tuesday of the month 25 February, 27 May, 26 August and 25 November 2025

Other General Business

- **Design of Bike Ramp**

Councillor Beregi advised that she, along with the Mayor and Councillors Antonini, Carr, Santer and Welch met with the designers of the bike ramp which is currently being installed at Milsons Point.

The Mayor advised that Councillor Beregi referenced the AIC Committee during the meeting and advised of concerns regarding the design of the raised pedestrian crossing and bike/car/pedestrian interface at the point where cyclists exit onto Alfred Street South. Transport for NSW were very interested to hear the issues being raised from an accessibility design and safety issue which hadn't been considered. Councillor Beregi advised that she explained the conflict between bikes, pedestrians and cars with the level crossing. TfNSW and the designers indicated that they would like to understand this more and possible resolution options.

Councillor Beregi suggested that they come to a meeting with members of the AIC and the invite was extended. TfNSW and the designers were interested in an opportunity to do something more collaborative and will follow up.

- **Access to the Beach and into the Water**

Councillor Beregi advised that the Mayor and herself were at a recent conference where one of the stalls was promoting their product which allows access from the beach into the water for people with accessibility issues. She stated that they had offered to demonstrate the product to the Council and suggested inviting members of the AIC. The possibility of partnering with neighbouring Councils and sharing the cost was discussed noting that the infrastructure is portable and can be used at multiple locations.

- **Signage on footpaths**

Councillor Beregi advised that residents had contacted her as they were concerned about signs, particularly construction signs/a-frames, on roads and footpaths which were obstructing access and causing pedestrians to walk on the road. She noted that permission for these signs formed part of the traffic control management plans (TCMP's) for development sites. In many cases, the signage extended over half the footpath, and how our footpath policy conflicts with our Traffic Management Construction Plan Policy.

The Committee requested that the Council's Traffic Management Team meet with them to explain the issues and how we can navigate our way through. Clearly, signage is required, however the location of the signage can't be allowed to cause an unsafe pedestrian experience and obstruct footpath users.

7. Closure

The meeting concluded at 7:00pm.